JASO

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CONTENTS (continued)

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY:
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL WORLD
AMONG POLISH IMMIGRANTS TO THE NEW WESTERN TERRITORIES

The case of migration which I will describe here is in some
respects peculiar. Its specific character was the outcome of a
political event. The essence of the matter was that a group was
forced to emigrate from its own territory to a new one, which was
almost simultaneously, and involuntarily, abandoned by the commun-
ity which had previously defined its cultural character. None of
the generally known theoretical models of migration can be applied
to these events. We should not expect assimilation, accommodation,
integration, segregation or any of the pluralistic situations in a
case of this kind, because the immigrants found themselves in unin-
habited territory. However, this territory was not deserted in the
cultural sense; it was not a domain of Nature. It was culturally
organized, because its former inhabitants left almost untouched the
material structure of their world, which later became the new
environment of the immigrants.[1]

What, then, would be the object of reference for the immig-
rants to help them in the reconstruction of identity? Could it be
the abandoned native land and its culture, which did not fit into
the material structure of the new territory? Or should the immig-
rants perhaps have continued the tradition of their new territory -
for them a strange place which they treated as the property of
somebody else, namely the former population?

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[1] On the significance of territory in the formation of identity see
Smith 1986.

As a result of political decisions made in Yalta and Potsdam in 1945, 1.5 million people were displaced from Polish lands east of the River Bug to the newly acquired Western Territories, while simultaneously the German population of these territories was forced to leave. The right to leave the Soviet Union, which incorporated land previously belonging to Poland, was open to Poles and Jews who in 1939 had lived within the Polish borders. They were allowed to take their livestock, equipment, and two tons of luggage per family. The new Polish government tried to organize this migration along the same lines of latitude, so that people would find climate, geographical environment and other physical conditions similar to those to which they were accustomed in their old territories. The urban population moved mostly to big cities in the Western Territories (mainly Wrocław), but the majority of immigrants were peasants who settled in villages and small towns.

Not long afterwards the German population of the land incorporated into Poland was, by the terms of the Potsdam Treaty, expelled. In 1945, within the administrative borders of Poland, there were 3.5 million Germans. Among that number, 1,239,000 lived in the Sudeten region, where I carried out my research.[2] In the Middle Ages, Lower Silesia belonged to the Piast dynasty, who were related to the kings of Poland, and it was inhabited mostly by Slavs. This region largely changed its character over the centuries and became overwhelmingly German: in the twentieth century there there were only a few people in Lower Silesia who declared their identity to be Polish. In 1945 the Polish authorities found only 7,000 such people, so this region was decidedly German as far as population and culture were concerned. During the first years of Polish administration of these territories, practically all the Germans were forced to leave. They had to abandon their homes and leave behind all their property, with the exception of personal hand-luggage. The German emigrants thus left behind the material structure of their culture, untouched and undestroyed by the war. In their place came the Polish population, which consisted mostly of whole communities displaced from behind the River Bug, mainly from Eastern Little Poland and Podolia. As a rule whole villages and small towns were removed to one particular area. At the same time other settlers from different parts of Poland and from abroad came to the Western Territories. The two main groups consisted of immigrants from over-populated central and southern Poland and returning emigrants from France (Markiewicz and Rybicki 1967).

People from the Eastern Territories comprised the majority of immigrants, and they arrived in integrated communities, usually with a priest as spiritual leader. They brought with them their material and spiritual property. These predominantly rural communities were accustomed to traditional self-sufficient agriculture which, in the excellent soil of Eastern Poland, provided an adequate means of subsistence. These people also had a strong sense of national identity and of patriotism, and a keen political

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[2] Fieldwork was conducted in the town of Lubomierz, Lower Silesia, in the autumn of 1986.

awareness. They decided to leave their native land because it was
annexed by Soviet Russia, which was considered an age-old enemy and
which represented an alien political and economic system. But
their feeling of identity linked them strongly to their former land.

In contrast, the settlers from central Poland did not constit-
ute an integrated group. They settled individually and frequently
ran away, back to their former homes, sometimes taking with them
some of the goods formerly belonging to the Germans.

The returning migrants from France were an interesting group,
which consisted largely of coal-miners who had migrated in the
first quarter of the twentieth century for economic reasons and
who had worked in French mines. In France they passed through a dif-
icult period of accommodation, during which they partly assimilated
to French society and partly preserved their Polish national
identity. Strong competition in the French labour market made them
aspire to obtain maximal wages for hard work - a cult of work it-
self, of discipline, and of efficient organization. In the period
of economic depression in the 1930s many of them adopted the com-
munist ideology, which was later associated with patriotism after
the outbreak of World War II. After the war a large number of
these people returned to Poland, responding to an appeal issued by
the communist authorities, who regarded them not only as qualified
coal-miners but above all as an important political force, because
they were already convinced of the rightness of communist ideology
and ready to realize it in practice. Such an attitude was quite
exceptional in Poland at that time, since the vast majority of the
nation was hostile to communism. Several tens of thousands of
these miners settled in the city of Wałbrzych (Markiewicz 1960).

However, in the region of my research, near Jelenia Góra,
there were very few returning emigrants: the dominant group was
made up of immigrants from east of the River Bug. In the first
year after settlement they co-existed with the Germans, although
relations were not good. The Soviet military authorities treated
these territories as an occupied country, collecting and removing
valuable items to Russia, such as machinery and other useful equip-
ment. It was not long before groups of people, including criminal
elements from other areas of Poland, came to pillage the goods
left by the Germans. The immigrants in turn found houses and
households very different from those to which they had been accus-
tomed, and so found it difficult to make themselves at home in the
strange environment. Lack of skill rendered them unable to make
much use of the equipment and machinery - such as mechanised farm
equipment - which remained.

Before the war, the region of Jelenia Góra had been quite ad-
vanced agriculturally and popular with tourists, but the newcomers
preferred to rely on their old system of agriculture. The settlers
found the German method of agriculture strange, even incomprehens-
ible, and many wanted revenge on the Germans for what they had done
to the Poles during the war. The result was a peculiar 'we are the
masters now' mentality which led them to expect that the Germans
should work for them. Units of the Polish army and police main-
tained order generally but also made sure that the Germans worked
hard and did not resist the Poles.

After a time the Germans were returned to Germany, leaving the as yet unadapted Poles to work the area. Most of the settlers from central Poland ran away, taking equipment from craft workshops, but those from the east had nowhere else to go and so were forced to remain. They tried to impose their traditional way of life in the new place, but without success. Agriculture deteriorated, for traditional methods were not efficient in the poorer soil of the New Western Territories. Moreover, there was a common conviction that the Western Territories belonged only temporarily to Poles, and that at any moment the Germans would come back. Such a belief created a feeling of uncertainty which did little to foster a constructive attitude. It was thus very difficult for the immigrants to find their feet in the new land. Emotionally, the consciousness of their tradition linked them to the abandoned country in the East. This sense of displacement was reinforced by the fact that the new land was in essence German. The towns had a strange architecture: buildings were large, multi-storeyed and built of bricks and stones, in contrast to the low wooden buildings with thatched roofs to which the immigrants were accustomed. Tools and machines were useless to their new owners. Furthermore, the former German community had been almost twice as large as the new Polish one. The towns and villages there seemed too vast for their new inhabitants.

Paradoxically, such an attitude was supported by the policy of the central authorities. Of course, the authorities were very interested in strengthening the presence of the Poles in the Western Territories. Nevertheless, on the one hand, they did not understand the problems involved in social and cultural adaptation, or the immigrants' need to regain identity; and on the other hand, peculiar features of the central administration were particularly unfavourable to these needs.

First of all, the Western Territories were very well preserved in comparison with the other parts of Poland which had been virtually destroyed by the war. They were equipped with all the material requirements for sophisticated living - good roads, railways, electricity, running water, etc. - and therefore they did not need reconstruction. Consequently, during the first few years after the war no money was invested there, so no changes were possible - even if there had been any social forces interested in such changes.

Secondly, the efficiency of communist authorities depends on the degree of centralization. The decision-making process in political, social and economic matters is monopolized by centres of power dominated by the Communist Party. The Party itself is organized according to the Leninist principle of 'democratic centralism', which means that policy-making bodies (central committees or regional committees) elect leaders (in an open vote, usually approving the choice made by the Politburo), who then have exclusive rights of decision and control.

In central and local administration, which is controlled by

the Party, all orders come from the centre and must be obeyed. In both social and economic affairs these directives are not general but very detailed and do not allow local managers much flexibility or margin for their own decisions. In turn these local leaders, subject to Party discipline, and obeying orders, execute the same monopoly power over their domains, uncontrolled by local communities. There is no legal, democratic mechanism by which communities or individuals can influence the decision-making process unless the individuals themselves become officials and gain power in the centralized structure. Such a principle applies not only to vital political matters but to all aspects of public life and, especially, to all the economy. No public activity, individual or collective, is allowed without permission from the authorities (local, regional or central as the case may be, depending on the importance of the matter from the point of view of the central power élite). Officials in the Party and administration are accustomed to operating only in this centralized system of clear rules which they understand, and in which they are at the same time powerless executors of orders from higher officials and all-powerful dictators of their own domains, be it a region, a town, a village, a factory.

Individual or collective attempts at introducing any changes or carrying out any ideas from outside the bureaucratic system are regarded as a threat to the monopoly of power. The same applies to any private initiative in the sphere of economy. Private enterprise not only does not correspond with communist principles but, more to the point, makes a break in the system of control and provides an owner with means independent of an official's decision. Therefore the system of laws, norms and regulations prevents individuals and groups from organizing themselves or doing anything in public life without being directed and controlled by the authorities. Local autonomy does not exist, and there is no means for activity independent of the bureaucracy.

Over forty years of this policy has deprived individuals and local communities of all subjectivity and initiative and, eventually, even of the will for creative activity. People have to obey orders, wait passively for decisions to be made by somebody else at the centre of power, and watch the results without a chance to try and organize their neighbourhood in the way they themselves think to be appropriate. Whatever happens is decided and executed by the bureaucrats. Therefore, when in the 1950s the Western Territories, together with the rest of the country, were subjected to industrialization, the people's attitude towards their land and their new life was in no way influenced. The reconstruction of an identity under the new circumstances requires the opportunity to unite in action, but atomisation and deprivation of subjectivity makes this process impossible.

What, then, was the view of the new world in the mind of an immigrant from the east? The four important elements of such a view were: 1) Former social space; 2) Present social space; 3) Other societies; and 4) The political system and political authorities.

1) The links between the immigrants and the country which

they were forced to leave were exceptionally strong. They brought
to the new territories an idealized picture of their native land,
the border-lands, which had been the scene of a long struggle with
foreign powers for the freedom of the nation and freedom of .
religion. The Polish eastern lands symbolized patriotism, Polish-
ness and Catholicism, the more so as they had just been invaded
once again by a foreign power. Their idealized image portrayed
these lands as the most beautiful country, with the richest soil,
inhabited by good, friendly and hospitable people. The cities of
eastern Poland were a symbol of genuine high Polish culture. The
inhabitants of this country would never have left had they not been
forced to by the political situation. They could not live under
the Russian administration because Russians were, for them, a trad-
itional enemy, both national and political. They left because they
did not want to witness the destruction of their beloved land, but
they continued to grieve for it.
      2) The immigrants at first perceived the new land as a
strange, hostile place, belonging to somebody else. They settled
there because they had no other choice, but they did not, and could
not, identify with it emotionally or put any effort into it, esp-
ecially as they expected the return of the Germans at any moment.
Soon, however, under the influence of the cult of the land, which
is deeply rooted in the peasant mentality, they began to treat the
land itself as their own property, the object of work amd of value
in itself. Land should be cultivated and give crops; it must not
be wasted. This attitude was expressed in the strong resistance to
attempts to introduce collective agriculture, which was regarded as
an effort to deprive the owners of their legal property - a compen-
sation for the land taken from them in the east - and also as pos-
ing a risk of the land itself being wasted in the state farms.
Many leaders of this opposition came from among those people who
had earlier spent some time in labour camps in the Soviet Union and
had learned a lot about state farms through first-hand experience.
However, this proprietary attitude to land did not extend to the
material culture left by the Germans: German houses, households,
tools, city-planning, small towns, even churches - nothing fitted
into their symbolic world, and therefore did not become an object
of creative activity. The whole cultural space was left to its
fate, while the new inhabitants lived nearby in improvised build-
ings. They ran these new households provisionally so as to ignore
the existing order, leaving it untouched. In the small towns most
houses remained empty, and in those which were inhabited, only a
few rooms were used. The policy of town authorities unintention-
ally favoured such passive indifference. Since the population of
immigrants was much smaller than the former population of Germans,
many houses were uninhabited. If damage occurred to any one house,
the authorities preferred to order or advise people to move to an-
other which was still in good condition, instead of providing the
means and materials for repair. The damaged house was left to its
fate. No wonder whole districts of towns disappeared after a time.
      Churches were traditionally centres of social space and re-
mained so in the new territories. But even in the areas where
Roman Catholics had been in the majority before the war their

churches were treated by the immigrants as strange, German. Too
many things were different, despite the similarity of religion.
Architectural style and ornamentation of interiors were different,
inscriptions, epitaphs and tombstones in cemeteries were strange,
and even pictures and sculptures represented alien saints with un-
familiar names. The new community tried to introduce some changes
which, however, did not consist in restructuring the interior or
replacing the decoration but rather in adding their own interior
design over the original German layer, which was left intact, but
ignored. For example, the immigrants put up folk paper decorations
for church interiors brought from their churches in the east, not
caring whether the new decorations harmonized with the architect-
ural style.

3) The world-view of the immigrants from eastern Poland was
also shaped by the other groups of people with whom they had to co-
exist in the new land. At first, immediately after the settlement,
the Germans were the main problem. They were regarded as enemies
who had destroyed Poland and on whom revenge should be taken.
Hence the rise of the 'we are the masters now' attitude mentioned
above, and the tendency to exploit Germans as a cheap but qualified
labour force. However, the German way of life did not become the
pattern for the immigrants, because it was, of course, too closely
associated with the former enemy. For this reason, few elements of
German culture were adopted, although such a course of action could
in fact have helped the immigrants to adapt. After a time the
Germans were expelled, whereupon they ceased to exist in the im-
migrants' consciousness as partners in interaction. They remained
only as former but legitimate owners, the creators of a strange
culture which happened to have become an unwanted environment.

By virtue of having involuntarily abandoned properties in the
east, the immigrants demanded a privileged position in the new
place. Being an integrated group, they usually dominated other
settlers and thus controlled the community. In contrast, the
settlers from central Poland were not a group in the sociological
sense of the term, but rather an aggregate of individuals attempt-
ing to find their place in a new world.

Returning migrants, in turn, were treated very distrustfully
by the immigrants from the east for at least two reasons: first,
they were seen as foreigners, as Frenchmen, and secondly, they were
communists, that is, enemies of traditionally accepted values and
norms. Perhaps not surprisingly, the migrants returned that host-
ility, imposing on the immigrants the negative stereotype of a Pole
which had once been attached to them in France (a Pole was a drunk-
ard, an idler, incapable of working efficiently and in an organized
way). Consequently, the returning migrants remained in enclaves
and for a long time did not join the rest of the community.

4) The political authorities were also generally regarded as
strange, foreign and hostile. They represented foreign, Soviet,
raison d'etat, the interests of a different state and nation, and
they were responsible for organizing and authorizing a new social
order that was totally contradictory to everything that was be-
lieved to be Polish and right. Therefore, the immigrants opposed
their religion to the atheism of the authorities, their cult of

national tradition and patriotism to communist class ideology.
They openly defended their national identity, religion and private
property, fighting, often with success, against attempts at the
collectivization of agriculture. The immigrants were also charac-
terized by a peculiar nationalism. Its cause was, of course, the
principle of the adjustment of political borders to cultural ones.
The immigrants' system of values so strongly linked them to their
former land that their land became a central element of their sym-
bolic culture. The native land could exist for them only as a sym-
bol, becuase it was no longer the material base of their existence.
However, that symbol so strongly influenced their world-view and
actions that the new territory could not be accepted: despite being
a material object of labour, the new land never became part of
their culture. To accept it as their own would have been incompat-
ible with their conception of land that really was their own, in
their consciousness - the land which had been left behind. A co-
herent model of the world cannot withstand such disharmony. The
effect of such a state of consciousness was an essentially nation-
alistic demand for the restoration of borders from before the war
and for the return of all lands to their legal owners. That demand
remained unsatisfied.

After the period of settlement in the Western Territories, some
minor changes occurred in the social situation. The Stalinist
period brought an attempt at the collectivization of agriculture,
which resulted in its almost total ruin, at least in the region of
my research. The authorities also tried to industrialize the
region. This process was subject to central administration and was
based on a labour force and technical personnel brought in from
other parts of Poland, while local communities were left to their
passive indifference. Moreover, industrialization ignored the in-
terests and desires of the local people. Villages and small towns
looked exactly as they did at the time of settlement, although
their general condition deteriorated. The people lived mainly by
traditional agriculture and were very poor.
     When Gomulka took power in 1956, he waived compulsory collect-
ivization and tried to stimulate the economic development of the
Western Territories. That was the time of intensive state propa-
ganda promoting the ideology of the intrinsic Polishness of these
lands, now christened 'The Regained Territories'. However, this
propaganda was not accompanied by actions which would have made
possible any social activities of a genuine and spontaneous charac-
ter. The authorities, still thinking that all initiatives should
be taken by the political centre, continued to recruit local polit-
ical and administrative leaders from outside the region. The lack
of opportunity to organize and develop local and individual eco-
nomic and social activity did not favour the community associating
with its new land, nor the redefinition of its identity. The older
generation still lived as it had always done, in an aura of the
past. Their hearts were in the east. The lack of goals and

chances for activity, together with the absence of traditional com-
munity support, were the cause of a particularly severe anomie and
social pathology. Alcoholism assumed astonishing proportions,
especially among the younger generation. Individuals of initiative
emigrated to big cities in different regions of Poland, but the
rest lived on passively, showing no enterprise.

Some favourable changes occurred after 1970, when the Polish
and West German governments signed a treaty which legalized Polish
administration of the Western Territories. This treaty resulted in
a significant relief of the feeling of uncertainty and the lack of
stabilization. Unfortunately, the treaty brought no significant
changes in the central administration, so it did nothing to in-
crease the opportunity for spontaneous organization at the local
level or the realization of individual initiative. Investment was
far lower than in other parts of Poland, and the attempts at indus-
trialization, undertaken with staggering incompetence and with no
knowledge of the social context, or even the features of the natur-
al environment, resulted in total fiasco. To the present day, in-
vestment remains at such a low level that to reproduce the present
state of material structure at the present rate of building would
take about 850 years. As a result of the predominant apathy and
the absence of social activity, coupled with a feeling of aliena-
tion from the established traditions of the area, the Solidarity
Movement received little support - or even response - in that
region. The new inhabitants continued to cling to the belief that
none of their aspirations would ever be realized: a feeling of
futility prevailed.

An analysis of the present situation allows us to distinguish
three generations with clearly different attitudes and aspirations.
The older generation of original immigrants is slowly retiring from
active life. They do not believe they will ever have a chance to
return home, although they would relish the opportunity to live as
they did before the war. They just want to end their lives in
peace and have no expectations.

The middle generation, the children of the immigrants, is
characterized by apathy and passiveness. The more ambitious among
them escape to the cities: the population of this area is decreas-
ing by one per cent per annum.

However, the third generation, the young people brought up in
the new land, is trying to build a new identity. Their model of
the world has changed considerably. For the original immigrants,
its most important elements were, as we saw, the native land, its
former owners, other groups of settlers, and the political author-
ities. At present, for the grandchildren of the original settlers,
the native land in the east belongs to a myth of origin and ances-
try: it is a symbol of and vehicle for tradition, but no longer a
living idea of a place to return to. The new land is their land,
in the sense that they were born and brought up there. It does not
symbolize the tradition of the community, nor continuation, but
nevertheless it does constitute the material ground and space in
which the younger generation wants to build its identity. They
have no problems with others, because all the groups of settlers
have by now united and integrated under a sort of cultural

dominance of the immigrants from the east and their descendants. This process of integration is one of the phenomena which are still to be investigated. For the time being, it is clear that the main role was played by those minor manifestations of social activity which were allowed by the authorities. United efforts in the building of schools, roads and churches, and mutual help on the farms, have also contributed to the integration of the communities. The Germans, in turn, are generally treated by the young people as the former legal owners of the land who have been expelled because of a particular course of historical events which could not be helped. The present situation has to be taken as such, and both Poles and Germans should accept it and organize their lives in accordance with the new circumstances.

The last and most important element of the world-view which shapes the actions of the younger generation is their vision of the political situation. The present political authorities are generally regarded as making this much-needed new organization of life more difficult. Both the incapacitation of society and the deprivation of initiative, as well as the unsuccessful economic policy, are judged negatively.

Nevertheless, one can see, perhaps for the first time since the war, some traces of human creativity in the region of Julenia Góra. More people are showing some concern about their houses and environments. Small private enterprises such as craft workshops, greenhouses, modern farms and new houses are being built, though these attempts encounter many difficulties because of the prevailing financial and administrative limits. What is important, however, is that at least there are now people who want to be active, to organize themselves, and who have found some point to and chance of success in such actions.

Conclusions

What conclusions may one draw from this process of seeking identity? The construction or re-construction of identity first of all requires, I suppose, a creative attitude on the part of the people. But such an attitude is only possible if certain conditions are satisfied, namely, legal and administrative conditions. A coherent world-view which generates actions is also necessary. Such a world-view, its elements, the way in which people interpret the reality of their lives, determines their images of goals, the chances and directions of activity, and consequently, the actions themselves. It is also essential that people have a symbolic ground, a tradition to which members of the group may refer in their actions. What could be such reference for the immigrants whose situation I have described?

They found themselves in a strange land. It was not a no man's land, a domain of Nature, waiting to be culturally organized. It was somebody else's land, the domain of a strange culture. Their own culturally shaped land, which was a natural base of

action for that peasant community, had been taken away from them. Furthermore, three factors counteracted the reconstruction and redefinition of their identity: the centralized policy of the authorities, the obligatory character of the migration, and the feeling of temporariness together with an uncertain future. The chance for the younger generation stems from the disappearance of the second and third factors. Obligatory migration for them does not exist - they do not remember it, nor do they see their situation as temporary and provisional. They may find a symbolic basis for action in the global culture of the Polish nation and its traditions, in Polishness understood as a general concept, without reference to a specific land, as in the case of their forebears. So, given legal and economic conditions which would allow people to organize and which favour initiative, perhaps through increased activity there will emerge, after a break of half a century, a new, true, community in the Western Territories.

ZDZISŁAW MACH

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CONSPIRACY MYTHS AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Conspiracy myths have been a common, often influential, and some-
times dominant feature of political culture (certainly in Europe
and America) in recent centuries. A stream of examples could be
cited, from the Popish Plot scares of the early modern period,
through the anti-conspiratorial rhetoric prevailing at the time of
the American and French Revolutions, through the nineteenth cent-
ury with its anti-Masonic near-orthodoxy on the Right and its anti-
Jesuit near-orthodoxy on the Left, through the Dreyfus Affair with
its spectacular free-for-all of conflicting and interlocking con-
spiratorial theories, through the sinister heyday of the *Protocols
of the Elders of Zion* after the First World War, through Stalinism
and McCarthyism, to the conspiracy theories of extreme Right and
extreme Left and of the occultist fringe today. Jews, Freemasons,
Illuminati, Jesuits, Communists, Capitalists, Trotskyists, Zion-
ists, the British Establishment or the French Two Hundred Families
- all these, and others, including the supposed members of hyphen-
ated or composite entities known only to conspiracy theorists, such
as 'Judaeo-Masonry', have recurrently been cast in the role of con-
spiratorial prime movers of history or current affairs.
     The purpose of this essay is not to give a historical survey
of conspiracy theories, nor is it to attempt an explanation (psy-
chological, sociological or political) of their past or present,
nor to assess their impact on political or other behaviour. It is
simply to do some of the necessary preparatory groundwork for such

projects, by describing, in more detail than is sometimes given, just what conspiracy theories are, and how they work.

Already, I am using   two terms - 'conspiracy myth' and 'conspiracy theory' - which call for definition. A myth is a story which people take to be true, and which they use as the key to an understanding of the way things are or happen. Conspiracy myths are *historical* myths, by which I mean that the stories they tell are typically set not in some primordial and clearly extra-historical mythical time of origin, nor in the self-recapitulating time of eschatology,[1] but in the datable past, in something which at least superfically resembles historical time. A conspiracy myth tells the supposedly true and supposedly historical story of a conspiracy and of the events and disastrous effects to which it has given rise. The interpretation of fresh events or developments (either past ones in retrospect or new ones arising in the present) in the light of such a myth, and in such a way as to assimilate them to the myth, is what I mean by a conspiracy theory. In other words, the term 'conspiracy myth' refers to a pre-existing structure, the term 'conspiracy theory' to the use of that structure in the practical analysis of history or current affairs.

I want to ask two questions: 1) What sort of an explanation or interpretation is it when events are explained or interpreted in terms of a conspiracy myth? 2) How do such explanations or interpretations actually work?

The Properties of Conspiracy Myth: Intentionalism,
Dualism, Occultism

My starting-point in answering the first question is a definition of 'conspiracy'. I am not here concerned with the term's linguistic origins, nor with the history of its past meanings, nor with how it is used in a specifically legal context, but simply with what we mean when we use the term in everyday usage or in terms like 'conspiracy myth' and 'conspiracy theory'.

For these purposes, I think, a conspiracy may be defined as a collaboration, intended to be secret, between a number of people, for the purpose of realizing a shared plan. Conspiracies, in other words, are by definition deliberate, concerted, secretive. You cannot conspire on your own, or publicly, or accidentally (though you can, of course, be an unsuspecting tool of a conspiracy by other people).

Defined in these terms, conspiracy may perfectly well be regarded as a social or political tactic available to all and used by any number of different groups to attain any number of different ends. This is not, however, how conspiracy is presented in

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[1] It is, of course, possible for the events recited in a conspiracy myth to be placed in an eschatological context. For an example, see my remarks on the anti-Jesuit beliefs of early nineteenth-century 'Jansenists' (Cubitt 1984: 305-54).

conspiracy myths. A conspiracy myth tells the story of one con-
spiracy as if it were the only one, as if conspiracy were the mono-
poly and the distinguishing behavioural characteristic of a single
group, perpetually opposed to the rest of society and driven by
some abnormally insatiable passion, like the lust for world domina-
tion or the desire to destroy civilized society. It is to conspir-
acy of this sort that conspiracy theorists attribute events.

What sort of account of the world is it, then, that conspiracy
myths offer - and that conspiracy theorists, by their analyses, ac-
cept and perpetuate? It seems to me to have three major properties.

First, of course, it is an *intentionalist* account, one which
explains events as the product of intentions. As Abbé Barruel, one
of the founding fathers of modern conspiracy theories, put it in
1797:

> We will affirm and demonstrate that of which it is important
> that the peoples and their leaders should not be ignorant; we
> will tell them: In this French Revolution, everything, down to
> its most appalling crimes, everything was foreseen, premedit-
> ated, contrived, resolved on, ordained in advance: everything
> was the product of the deepest villainy, for everything was
> prepared and brought about by men who alone held the thread of
> conspiracies long woven in the secret societies, and who knew
> how to choose and hasten the moments favourable to their
> plots (Barruel 1973 [1797-8], I: 42).[2]

Viewed from this angle, conspiracy theories are about causes.
Their roots in broader currents of causal theory are well brought
about by the American historian, Gordon S. Wood. Wood argues that
men of the Enlightenment sought to base a science of human affairs
upon the same paradigm of mechanistic causality that the scientific
revolution of the late seventeenth century had established in the
physical sciences: one which excluded both divine intervention and
chance, and posited an indissoluble connection between effect and
cause. Since they were unwilling to sacrifice the principle of
free will, which they believed to be the necessary basis for moral-
ity, they could extend this paradigm to the human sciences only by
assigning to human motives the role of causes. The notion of a
moral resemblance between effects and causes thus became estab-
lished: good social effects were assumed to derive from good human
intentions, bad effects from bad intentions. Since these inten-
tions were not always superficially obvious, they often had to be
deduced from the effects which caught the eye: the earlier Puritan
alertness to discern God's will beneath the surface of events gave
way to an 'Enlightened' readiness to detect hidden human designs.
In this way, according to Wood, eighteenth-century secular thinking
was 'structured in such a way that conspiratorial explanations of
complex events became normal, necessary and rational' (Wood 1982:
411).

The subsequent recession of the eighteenth-century notions of

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[2] My translation.

causality described by Wood may well have helped make conspiracy theories less universally acceptable. Nevertheless, the need to find causes and the habit of identifying them with intentions remain distinctive features of the thinking of those who still find such theories attractive. As one of the rank-and-file National Front members interviewed by Michael Billig in the mid-1970s put it, when explaining his acceptance of a conspiratorial explanation of current affiars, 'wherever there is an effect, there's always a cause. And for a long time I used to see the way this country was going. I thought: "why the devil is it? Why? There must be a cause."' (Billig 1978: 316)

To stress the intentionalism of conspiracy myths is to dwell on their explanatory function. That they also have a descriptive function is clear when we consider their second property, which I would call that of *dualism*. The relationship between the effectively non-conspiratorial majority of society and the perpetually conspiring minority naturally lends itself to formulation in terms of morally absolute binary opposition: Good against Evil, Christianity against Anti-Christianity, the Free World against Communism, Revolution against Counter-Revolution. Leo XIII's encyclical *Humanum genus* of 1884, which gave a virtual seal of approval to a whole tradition of anti-Masonic conspiracy theory, put it thus:

> After the human race, through the envious efforts of Satan, had had the misfortune to turn away from God ... it became divided into two distinct and mutually hostile camps. One of these steadily combats for truth and virtue, the other for all that is opposed to virtue and truth (Leo XIII 1952 [1884]: 1).[3]

It was, of course, the latter camp that the Pope considered was gathering in modern times under the leadership of Freemasonry.

This binary vision in conspiracy myths is commonly reinforced in two ways. First, by emphasizing, or at least implying, the natural unity and cohesiveness of the non-conspiratorial majority: their readiness, if freed from conspiratorial interference, to engage collectively in whatever is the crucial social and moral endeavour of the times, be it building the socialist society, living the Christian life, carrying the White Man's burden, or continuing the traditions of the Founding Fathers. 'Our great fatherland is joyously flourishing and growing. The fields of innumerable collective farms are rich with a golden harvest' (People's Commissariat of Justice 1936: 120), observed State Prosecutor Vyshinsky, going on to acclaim the 'indestructible, genuine unity and solidarity of the masses of the people with the great Stalin, with our Central Committee, with our Soviet Government' (ibid.: 122). This unity was what rendered so despicable the plotting of 'a contemptible, insignificant, impotent group of traitors and murderers' (ibid.: 119), the Trotskyite conspiracy in one of its successive embodiments, the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre. In

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[3] The translation used here is by the anti-Masonic author, Rev. Denis Fahey.

portraying conspiracy as directed against a real or potential moral
harmony of this sort, conspiracy myths offer excuses for the non-
appearance of Utopia.

Secondly, the binary vision is reinforced by the implication
that whatever cannot be harmoniously assimilated to the pole of
Good must be viewed as a cunningly laid stepping-stone towards the
pole of Evil and thus as an integral part of the Evil conspiracy.
Protestantism and deism are lumped together with atheism; liberal-
ism and internationalism become branches of Communism. Thus an
editorial by John Tyndall in the British neo-Nazi periodical *Spear-
head* in 1966, entitled 'The Many Faces of Bolshevism', asserted:

> The Communist of these times seldom works under the overt
> banner of the Communist party. Instead he seeks to spread
> Communist ideas by the use of popular phrases and the appeal
> of popular sentiments. His weapons range over a vast number
> of respectable and apparently non-political institutions and
> bodies (Tyndall 1966a: 2).

Tyndall went on to conclude that 'the "humanitarian liberal" is in
fact Bolshevism's favourite face today. The saintly look of "love"
hides the dark heart of hate. *Don't let it fool you*' (ibid.; orig-
inal emphasis).

This last sentence raises a further point. The conspiracy
theorist believes that the non-conspiring majority is being fooled,
on a colossal scale, and that being fooled is the key to all its
problems. As John Roberts writes in his study of *The Mythology of
the Secret Societies*,

> At the heart of the mythology lies the recognition of de-
> lusion. Its central image is of a community unaware of its
> true nature. Apparently self-conscious and self-regulating,
> it is, unknown to itself, in fact directed by concealed
> hands (1972: 353).

This brings us to the third property of conspiracy myths, which may
be referred to as their *occultism*. Conspiracy myths encourage the
drawing of a sharp distinction between the appearance of human af-
fairs and their true nature. Any conspiracy theory involves a
claim to provide access to a reality which is, by its nature,
hidden. We find this expressed, in somewhat titillating form, in
an advertisement for a number of works emanating from the stable of
a veteran specialist in the genre, Henry Coston:

> Are you one of those who like to understand? One of those who
> insist on knowing more than the newspaper with its big head-
> lines ever tells you? Do you want to cast your eye behind the
> scenes, to discover who is pulling the strings? In a word, do
> you have a character, a personality capable of overcoming all
> the factitiousness and frivolity of our epoch?[4]

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[4] My translation. The advertisement, entitled 'L'histoire secrète

If so, these books are for you. The image of string-pulling used here is one which conspiracy theorists find useful for conveying their sense of concealed reality; that of sapping or mining is another (with the emphasis this time more on danger than on control).

What is concealed by the conspiracy's secrecy is not simply the conspiracy's own existence, but the way things really are in the world. The hidden truth which the conspiracy theorist purports to reveal has, as my earlier argument implies, both explanatory and descriptive properties. It reveals both the secret causes of sur-face events and the true - binary - alignment of forces, which makes both sense and nonsense of the ostensible alignments of con-ventional politics: nonsense, in that it shows that these are not the true alignments; sense, in that it shows how their appearance has been deliberately contrived for sinister purposes. Also im-plicit in each conspiracy theory, of course, is the notion that, if only the conspiracy could be fully exposed, it would become powerless, and the disparity between appearance and reality would disappear. Control over events and over society would return from the hidden depths to the surface, to the hands of those - be they the people or some paternalistic authority - with whom it should reside.

Any conspiracy theory, I would suggest, necessarily has the three properties I have identified - intentionalism, dualism, occultism - implicit within it. But it is the conspiracy myth that binds these properties together, not any prior and necessary con-nection or affinity between them. Their psychological and cultural roots are likely to be quite different. What makes a man a pas-sionate intentionalist, for example, need not make him an equally passionate dualist or occultist, though his desire to have a solid intentionalist explanation of events, with an impressive weight of tradition behind it, may prepare him to accept a certain level of dualism and occultism in the myth which provides that explanation. It is not surprising, then, that some conspiracy theorists play down one or other aspect - that some conspiracies are presented in a way which makes them seem less secret, or less rigidly con-trolled, or less irredeemably wicked than others.

Efforts to provide a historical or any other explanation of conspiracy theories' appeal and durability do well to bear the im-plications of this in mind. To take one example, it is possible, while accepting Wood's sensitive argument about the philosophical basis of eighteenth-century conspiracy theories, to question what seems to be the implication at the end of his article: that once the intentionalism of the Enlightenment began to break down, in the face of the sheer magnitude and complexity of the events of the French Revolution, conspiracy theories were bound, after an initial period of desperate extravagance (the moment of Barruel and others)

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de notre temps', is to be found on page 173 of *Prélats et Franc-maçons*, a work published by Coston under the pseudonym of Georges Virebeau (Virebeau 1978).

to recede gradually to the lunatic fringe.[5] Quite simply, this re-
cession shows very little sign of having happened during the nine-
teenth and early twentieth centuries; conspiracy theories became
more elaborate, but without becoming less influential. This may
well be because, whatever the Revolution did to people's causal
assumptions, it did little to dissuade anyone from occultism, and
a great deal, through its aggressive insistence that it was replac-
ing an old and corrupt world with an entirely new one, and through
the genuinely dramatic transformations that accompanied that claim,
to condition post-Revolutionary Europeans to think in dualist terms
of old against new, Revolution against Counter-Revolution. General-
izing wildly, one might see an eighteenth-century commitment to
intentionalism yielding to a nineteenth-century Manicheanism as the
principal underpinning of conspiracy theories.

Whether one does see that or not, it seems clear that an under-
standing of conspiracy theories' variability, of conspiracy myths'
flexibility, should underlie any attempt to account for their in-
fluence, either in general or in particular circumstances. We have
so far, however, explored only one sort of variability. We encount-
er another if we turn to the second question posed earlier in this
paper, and try to give an account of how conspiracy theories actual-
ly work in practice. How, given the prior existence of a conspiracy
myth, is the action of the conspiracy which it describes detected in
fresh sets of events?

*The Mechanics of Conspiracy Theory: Conspirator-
Centred and Plan-Centred Styles*

On the basis of the definition of a conspiracy which I suggested
earlier, it can be said that any conspiracy contains three elements
in conjunction: 1) a *conspiratorial plan* (this may be more or less
detailed. The planning may extend not simply to the conspiracy's
ultimate aims, but also to the strategic means of realizing them,
and even to more routine tactics); 2) a *conspiratorial group* (this
is sometimes a group defined by its members' involvement in the
conspiracy, for example, the Illuminati; sometimes one with a prior
identity, for example, the Jews); and 3) an *effort at secrecy* (this
may be designed to conceal the conspirators' identity, or the nature
of their plan, or both).

The third of these elements - secretiveness - is a general
characteristic common to, and similar in, all conspiracies (though
it may protect different aspects of the conspiracy in different in-
stances). The other two elements, however, are specific to partic-
ular cases: each conspiracy (whether real or imagined) receives its
distinct identity from a unique pairing between one particular group
and one particular plan. To attribute a given event to a particular
conspiracy, we must be able to specify both these elements and to

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[5] This is my reading of Wood 1982: 431-2 and 441.

connect them both somehow or other with that event.

So long as one has no notion, or only vague notions, of who might be conspiring, what they might be conspiring about, or what sorts of things would need to be conspired about in order to happen, this sort of attribution is quite difficult to make. With the aid of a conspiracy myth, it becomes much easier. For, with such a myth, two things are given in advance. The first is the essential unity of all effective conspiracy, under a regime of monopoly: if something is perceived to be the product of conspiracy, the question 'which conspiracy?' will not arise, since only one conspiracy of any significance is considered possible. The second is the indissolubility of the connection between the conspiratorial group and the conspiratorial plan: it is no longer considered that either might exist without the other. It follows that the presence of either element can be deduced from the observed presence of the other: it is no longer necessary to have direct evidence of both before particular events can be laid at the door of the conspiracy. Once a particular conspiracy myth is established, in other words, it becomes possible to assimilate fresh events to it by two quite different, though not mutually exclusive, means. Thus, to take a concrete example, the claim that François Damiens had been an agent of the Jesuits when he tried to assassinate Louis XV in 1757 was supported in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by two different types of argument. On the one hand, circumstantial evidence was amassed, purporting to show connections between Damiens himself and the Jesuits. It was pointed out, for example, that he originated from the town of Arras, whose inhabitants were notorious for their susceptibility to Jesuit influence, that he had once been a Jesuit *pensionnaire*, and that Jesuits were reported to have been seen in plain clothes leaving the back door of their residence in the rue Saint-Antoine at the time of his attack. On the other hand, on the basis of prior attributions to the Jesuits of a whole string of earlier regicidal *attentats* (notably those against Henri IV), it was argued that Damiens' crime was one of a notoriously and typically Jesuit sort.[6]

The two types of argument used in the case of Damiens are characteristic of the reasoning of conspiracy theorists more generally. It is through them, and through the interaction between them, that the content of conspiracy myths is inflated and their pretensions to make sense of things enhanced. It may help us to observe this process in practice if we isolate, for purposes of comparison, two styles or ways of presenting or developing the sense of being confronted with a conspiracy, which recur throughout the literature and rhetoric of conspiracy theories, and each of which crystallizes around one of these two types of argument. I will refer to these as the 'conspirator centred' and the 'plan-centred' styles.

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[6] See Monglave and Chalas 1825: 305-6 for some of these arguments. They are, however, typical of a whole tradition of anti-Jesuit writing. Van Kley 1984: 86-8 surveys some of the evidence used to incriminate the Jesuits in the immediate aftermath of the assassination attempt.

In the conspirator-centred style, the conspiracy theorist
gives one to understand that his ability to make sense of things is
dependent upon what he knows, or can find out, about people. Con-
sider, for example, Hitler's account, in *Mein Kampf*, of his own
conversion from a 'weak-kneed cosmopolitan' into an anti-Semite.
This allegedly happened when he became aware that the commanding
positions in various areas of Viennese life - notably the press,
the arts, prostitution, the white slave traffic and Social Demo-
cratic politics - were occupied by Jews:

> Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in
> cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it?
>   If you cut even cautiously into such an abcess, you found,
> like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden
> light - a kike (1969 [1925-6]: 53).

Hitler, then, wishes his readers to believe that what enabled
him to see what was happening in Vienna (and, refracted through
that, what was happening more generally) was essentially his ability
to recognize Jews as Jews. The labelling of conspirators and sus-
pects on the basis of supposed membership of, or affinity or connec-
tions with, the conspiratorial group is central to the 'conspirator-
centred' style. A work like Edouard Drumont's *La France juive*, the
classic best-seller of late nineteenth-century anti-Semitism, relies
heavily on this style, as in the following passages:

> The 4th of September [1870], as was to be expected, placed in
> power the French Jews: the Gambettas, the Simons, the Picards,
> the Magnins, to whom, if one is to believe Mr Bismarck, who is
> generally considered pretty well informed, one must add Jules
> Favre. Hendlé, Jules Favre's secretary, is Jewish. Camille
> Sée, the secretary general of the Ministry of the Interior, is
> Jewish (1887, I: 387).

> If the contracts to supply the army had been retained by [the
> manufacturers of] Besançon, there was a cause, and that cause
> was a Jew, the Jew Veil-Picard, the famous Veil-Picard whom we
> encounter at every moment in this book, wherever anyone is
> speculating, or jobbing or plotting a financial affair (1887
> II: 161).[7]

The strong odour of card-index in these passages emphasizes
the general tendency of writers in the 'conspirator-centred' style
to cultivate a pragmatic, empirical air. Such writers pose not as
theoretical interpreters of history and society, but as alert ob-
servers and piecers-together of tell-tale detail. They ask for,
and tell other people, the answers to such questions as these: who
is a Jew or a Freemason? Who has a Jesuit confessor or a Communist
lover? Who had a meeting with whom? They like to map human net-
works of evil influence, and to compile lists: of Freemasons in

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[7] My translations.

public life, of Communists in the American film industry, of old
Etonians in the Cabinet, of Jewish Bolsheviks, and so on. In short,
dedicated practitioners of the 'conspirator-centred' style soar
above the terrain of history and current affairs like birds of prey,
not to assess the topography but to pick out the vermin.

In the plan-centred style, on the other hand, the emphasis is
on the layout of events; it is in the things that happen, rather
than in the people who are around when they happen, that a sinister
pattern is first detected. The contrast between the two styles can
be illustrated by comparing the familiar efforts to demonstrate the
'Jewishness' of the Russian Revolution by listing prominent Jewish
participants with the following passage from a minor conspiracy
classic of the 1930s, Emmanuel Malynski and Leon de Poncins' *La
Guerre occulte*:

> The aristocrat Lvov, the learned bourgeois Miliukov, the revo-
> lutionary lawyer Kerensky, the terrorist Chernov, Lenin and
> Trotsky, Stalin and Company were and are only the successive
> executors of the same uninterrupted original plan.
>
> The narrators and historians who speak of the uncertain
> steps of the Russian Revolution up to the arrival of Lenin are
> in the deepest of error, and this is because they consider it
> at its beginning in terms of the interest of the middle class,
> subsequently in terms of the interest of the peasantry and
> finally in terms of the interest of the proletariat. But if
> they considered it from beginning to end solely and exclusive-
> ly in terms of international Judaism - which required the suc-
> cessive elimination of the dynasty, of militarism, of the pro-
> pertied aristocracy, of the participating bourgeoisie and of
> small peasant property - they would have no difficulty in
> establishing that the Russian Revolution is a dynamic continu-
> um, meticulously regulated with admirable coherence, and that
> no movement of elimination was ever carried out without a pre-
> vious movement of elimination having already suppressed all
> risks (1936: 213-4).[8]

The way Malynski and de Poncins talk about conspiracy, actual con-
spirators hardly seem necessary. For them, it is not the observ-
able actors of modern history that are Jewish so much as that
history's whole course; the Kerenskys and Lenins are merely the
instruments of a plan which originates outside them and whose opera-
tion is detected simply by watching the direction in which events
are tending.

Not all specimens of the 'plan-centred' style are as purely
and blatantly teleological as this. Conspiracy myths order the con-
spiratorial group's past misdeeds into a check-list of symptoms, by
the use of which the conspiracy theorist considers it possible to
detect the group's presence and action on subsequent occasions.
Thus, for example, regicide and a casuistical permissiveness in

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[8] My translation.

moral theology have been taken as sure signs of Jesuit influence,
and John Tyndall observed in the liberal society of the 1960s a
string of 'secret tools of the Bolshevik conspiracy against civiliz-
ation', among them 'the destruction of private enterprise', 'total-
itarian thought control', 'the levelling-down of education' and
'the breakdown of family life' (1966b: 4 and 5). Sometimes, such a
symptomatology is enshrined in a specific text, which conspiracy
theorists present as the conspiratorial plan itself, or part of it.
The most famous such text, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,
has provided a model of conspiracy whose methods include capital-
ist manipulation, the impoverishment of the aristocracy, the instig-
ation of war and revolution, the encouragement of vice and the pack-
ing of underground railway systems with high explosive.[9]   An-
other alleged blueprint, the so-called *Monita Secreta* of the
Jesuits, originally fabricated in the early seventeenth century but
still influential in the nineteenth, places particular emphasis on
the Jesuits' efforts to persuade rich widows to part with their
fortunes.[10] Conspiracy theorists who give credence to such texts
usually justify doing so by arguments similar to that advanced by
Henry Ford in 1921: 'The only statement I care to make about the
Protocols is that they fit in with what is going on. They are six-
teen years old and they have fitted the world situation up to this
time.'[11] The tightness of the perceived fit between the conspira-
torial plan contained in the text and the pattern of events (in
the case of the *Protocols*, such events as the Russian Revolution
and the foundation of the League of Nations) is taken simultaneously
to confirm the text's own claims to authenticity and to make sense
of 'what is going on'.

      If we isolate them as I have done, the 'conspirator-centred'
and the 'plan-centred' styles seem to show us conspiracy theorists
in very different moods: in the one case vindictive, inquisitorial,
keen to denounce, bearing the promise of witch-craze and Stalinist
purge; in the other, gentler, more scholarly, more concerned to
understand what happens than to focus animosity. It is seldom,
however, that either style is sustained in anything like a pure
state. The chief purpose in distinguishing them is to observe
their interaction.

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[9] On the *Protocols* and their history, see Cohn 1967. The standard
English version of the text is the translation by V. Marsden (1972
[1921]). Inasmuch as the *Protocols* contain not only a description/
prescription of conspiratorial tactics, but also a prediction of
political and social developments under the influence of those tac-
tics, the interpretations of current affairs which they inspire of-
ten resemble those inspired by eschatological texts.

[10] The *Monita* may be conveniently found (in French) in Larousse
1865-90, vol. ix: 961-4. For a discussion of their nineteenth-
century influence, see Cubitt 1984: 497-509.

[11] Quoted (from the *New York World*, 17 February 1921) in the 'Intro-
duction' to Marsden 1972 [1921]: 12.

There are few better descriptions of the way in which reasoning built up in the plan-centred style can issue suddenly in the identification of alleged conspirators than the critical account which the young François Guizot gave in 1821 of the Bourbon authorities' abusive resort, in conspiracy trials, to what were known as *faits généraux*. Justice demanded, Guizot wrote, that people should only be convicted if the existence of a conspiracy could be proved on the basis of evidence which concerned them directly. Unable to prove this, yet anxious to find conspirators in order to justify political repression, the prosecuting authorities simply concocted a supposed conspiracy out of circumstances (*faits généraux*) many of which had nothing to do with the accused, and then, on the basis of some often quite accidental connection with one part of this construction, associated the accused with the whole of it (Guizot 1821: 38-9).

> When politics, alarmed over such and such a set of *faits généraux*, requests justice to investigate them in order to look for crimes whose elements it suspects are contained within them, it is inevitable that justice will come across men and acts which, while completely unrelated to the crime it is seeking, are not at all so to the *faits généraux* amongst which it is seeking it .... To encounter a man where one is seeking a crime, and to be tempted, because one encounters him there, to proceed against him: the passage between these two things is short and slippery. Pushed on by politics, justice has often passed along it (ibid.: 48-50).[12]

This 'short and slippery passage' from finding a man entangled in a conspiratorial pattern to labelling him a conspirator has been just as often trodden by conspiracy theorists. So has the equally short and slippery one in the opposite direction, from labelling someone a conspirator to imagining that all of his acts are part of the conspiracy (and hence, by extension, that analagous acts by others suggest that those others are also involved in it).

It is clear that conspiracy myths, inasmuch as they form the basis for conspiracy theories, have an inbuilt tendency to expand through these sorts of associational shift. Bankers become Jews, anticlericals become Freemasons or *maçonnisants*, Liberalism becomes creeping Communism, Catholic piety becomes Jesuit manipulation, and so on. Spirals of guilt by association can be built up, in which actions or doctrines compromise people and people compromise actions or doctrines with equal facility. This can happen either slowly, over the long life of a conspiracy myth, or, under certain conditions, suddenly and uncontrollably, in an explosion of conspiracy theory with devastating social or political consequences, as happened, for example, in Revolutionary France or in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Once the existence of a far-reaching Trotskyite conspiracy against the Soviet regime was established as myth, and the stirring-up of opposition to the Party General Line as

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[12] My translation.

represented by Stalin identified as one of its chosen methods, the mere fact of opposition became sufficient proof of conspiracy. Indeed, the opposition did not even have to be explicit: in a classic display of teleological reasoning, the mere expression of views which allegedly *ought* logically to have led one into opposition could be taken to constitute 'objective' opposition, and hence conspiracy. The prosecution in the Moscow show trials was able to rely on a combination of 'plan-centred' reasoning of this sort, used to incriminate prominent individuals like Bukharin with more obvious 'conspirator-centred' methods, which required the accused to be persuaded or forced to denounce each other and to admit to meetings which established links in the alleged conspiratorial network.[13]

Conclusion

Examples like this remind us that the two styles - conspirator-centred and plan-centred - are not two different types of conspiracy theory, any more than the three aspects of conspiracy myth identified earlier constituted different types of myth. They are simply styles, rhetorical ways of expressing different emphases within a structure which neither of them on its own adequately represents. One style concentrates on whom to blame, the other on what to blame them for. The impulses to which they correspond - inculpation on the one hand, clarification or interpretation on the other - are in this context neither independent of each other nor opposed, but closely and dynamically connected. The obsessive reading of sinister patterns in events supports and encourages the insatiable hunt for guilty persons. Nevertheless, it is not the same thing.

Much remains to be explained about why the tendency of conspiracy theorists is sometimes to go from the general to the particular, and sometimes from the particular to the general. Why is the message of conspiracy theory sometimes stated in the form of Whittaker Chambers's assertion that 'Alger Hiss is only one name that stands for the whole Communist penetration of government',[14] and sometimes in the inverse form, that the name of one of those involved in the Communist penetration of government is Alger Hiss? What are the circumstances - psychological, sociological or historical - under which conspiracy theorists rest content with vague and general specifications of conspiracy's human face ('the Jew', or 'the Jews', or 'Judaeo-Masonry', or 'the hidden enemies of the state'), while energetically denouncing the action of this hidden hand in an expanding range of events or facets of modern life? What, on the

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[13] My remarks here are to some extent influenced by the discussion of the arguments and reasoning used in the show trials by Leites and Bernaut (1954).

[14] Quoted in Navasky 1982: 7.

other hand, prompts them to want to break down the conspiracy into an ever-increasing series of individual faces?

It is beyond the scope of this paper to try to answer these questions. I have sought simply to show that they arise, and (in the second part of the paper as in the first) to suggest that conspiracy theories and the myths that inspire them must be discussed not, as they often are, as a rigid and rather simple system with simple implications, but as a complex and variable phenomenon, with complex and variable cultural significance.

G.T. CUBITT

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THE MYTH OF THE SPY

The topic of this essay raises enormous expectations which are dif-
ficult to fulfil. Moreover, two concepts of myth will be used
here, only one of them being, strictly speaking, anthropological.
According to the first concept, any irrational conviction held by
others is commonly referred to as a myth. This is in contrast to
our own beliefs, which are supposedly rational and based on science
or reason. Such an understanding of myth is not acceptable to an
anthropologist, but will appear occasionally in my analysis.
Secondly, myth is taken in the sense of a configuration of rational
and irrational elements which play an equal role and are governed
by the internal logic of the myth.

It is obvious that, as Segal pointed out, 'Any modern group
must elaborate its own emotional attitude to the world, and this
attitude may develop, under suitable conditions, into myth' (1977:
62). It is difficult to find a sphere of human activity more prone
to creating contemporary myths than spying. The collection and
processing of intelligence materials is surrounded with a mystique
which is constantly exploited by journalists trying to satisfy the
insatiable fascination of the public, by writers of thrillers and
film-makers, by left-wing critics and, occasionally, right-wing
apologists. This preoccupation with spies and spying is rarely
accompanied by any real knowledge or understanding. While not pro-
fessing to possess either, I would like to draw attention to some
aspects of this phenomenon which may be studied with interest by

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anthropologists. I am referring here primarily to the mythical
culture of the world of intelligence and to the mythical way the
public looks at that world. Mythology basically translates things
or occurrences which are less understood into those which are
better understood, those which are half-grasped by the human mind
into those which are easier to comprehend, and, particularly, those
which are difficult to solve into those which are easier to solve.
Thus we have the general principle of mediation present in all
mythologies.

Mythology satisfies our curiosity, but it also, through this
gaining of knowledge, creates an orderly vision of the world and
rejects the existence of disorderly elements and chaos. In some
ways, this is very much the function of 'intelligence'. It is easy
to notice various similarities between the mythical world and the
world of intelligence. Both operate within closed systems, with
their respective worlds organized according to special principles
which are quite formalized. Like myth, intelligence as an organiz-
ation constitutes a coherent system with its own set of rules, its
own vision of reality and of the world, and its own morality. It
may be studied, and I would suggest it should be studied, as a
closed formal system - much as we study myth.

Numerous elements are common to both. For instance, even be-
lief in the mythical beginning can be found in the world of intel-
ligence. One can refer here to recent events, for example, Peter
Wright's demand (1987) - in purely mythical fashion - that we re-
turn to *illo tempore*, to the primeval age before the British
secret service (MI5) was corrupted, before (as he has it) the serv-
ice became riddled with traitors, in other words to a state of ori-
ginal purity, the mythical ideal. He does not realize, I think,
that he is talking about the mythical idea and not reality, because
there never was a purity of the service - its 'corruption' began
with its creation. The service has not become desacralized and im-
pure with age - it never *was* sacred (i.e. unblemished by human
weakness and treachery). As Mieletinski (1981: 211-12) says:

> Myth - in going beyond the accepted forms of life - creates
> something in the nature of a new fantastic 'higher reality'
> which, in a paradoxical fashion, is perceived by adherents of
> a particular mythological tradition as the primeval source and
> ideal prototype (that is 'archetype' not in the Jungian, but
> in the broadest sense of the word) of these forms. Thus
> modelling constitutes a characteristic function of myth....
> Every significant change ... is projected into the past, onto
> the screen of mythological time, and is included in the nar-
> rative in the past tense and into a stable semantic system.

Myth and intelligence are both characterized by a certain in-
version of values. Things which are good in reality are not good
in myth and they are not good in the world of intelligence either.
This becomes obvious when one compares a few simple oppositions
like open:close, truth:lies, good:evil, public:secret, legal:
illegal. Actions which are illegal in normal life are perfectly
acceptable, in fact even necessary, in the intelligence world,

which is basically (among other things) the officially sanctioned theft of information. What is good and what is evil is relative and perceived in an instrumental fashion. The same, of course, applies to myth, where the hero achieves his feat and receives a reward through doing things which are perceived in the real world to be wrong - by cheating, lying, stealing. The reason for this lies in the internal logic of myth, which is shared by people gathering intelligence. In both, the end justifies the means (provided that certain well-established and necessary procedures are adhered to) and the hero (or the spy) can do no wrong.

Intelligence, like myths, shows the true meaning only to the initiated, basically to members of the same group - the spying community (or the ethnic group). Thus, although myth is a great simplifier, it also confuses, because in a way the function of both intelligence and myth is to hide the meaning from the uninitiated. But the meaning is there, the meaning does not disappear, because, as Roland Barthes has said (1973 [1959]: 121-2), 'However paradoxical it may seem, *myth hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear .... The relation which unites the concept of the myth to its meaning is essentially a relation of *deformation*' [original emphases]. This is exactly what happens in the world of intelligence, where appearances, illusions and deceptions constitute essential and inherent parts of the game.

Furthermore, these distortions create ambiguities - both worlds are characterized by them. Indeed, like tricksters in myths, spies act as great mediators between these ambiguities. There is a need in their occupation to see the world in dual terms, and dichotomies are ever-present there, just as in myth. There is also a need to hide these ambiguities from people who should not perceive them, i.e. from the uninitiated (a category which includes politicians, among others).

One example of the inherent ambiguities pervading intelligence is, apart from the values mentioned earlier, the perception of data. It is very difficult to explain the data gathered in any one particular way. Everything can be looked at from two or more perspectives and will show two (or more) different aspects. There is a great emphasis on circumstantiality and the balance of probabilities. An extreme example of this ambiguity is reflected in the case of double or triple agents, whose loyalty one can never be absolutely sure about - any contact with the opposition contaminates. As a character in one of John Le Carré's novels observes: '*Gentlemen, I have served you both well*, says the perfect double agent in the twilight of his life. And says it with pride too' (1981: 120). We have here a suspension of moral judgment and an example of radical relativity. The means/end rationality becomes confused, and so do the values of good and evil, as in some trickster stories.

There is another kind of myth, in the more popular meaning of the word, the myth of rationality, to which even anthropologists, who one would have thought should know better, fall victim. This is a methodological question discussed by Alan Dundes, who has aptly remarked:

> Typically, a myth is not believed to be true by an analyst,
> who somehow assumes that it is or was believed to be true by
> some native group. With such reasoning 'other' peoples have
> myths, while we the analysts have religion and/or science.
> The fallacy here is that we analysts also have myths - whether
> we believe them to be true or not (1984: 98).

This is a post-Enlightenment legacy which can be described as a
proposition: myth means lack of rationality, while science equals
rationality.

The same happens in the world of intelligence. A good example
of such an arrogant attitude is the treatment of data collected by
the Israeli secret service Mossad, just before the outbreak of the
Yom Kippur war in October 1973. The information about Arab prepar-
ations for an attack was available to Israeli analysts. But the
analysts considered this information to be part of an Arab myth, an
Arab posture which the Israelis could study in a way 'scientific-
ally', and not treat as reality. There were certain assumptions
made about the 'Arab mind', about Arab behaviour and their reac-
tions, which made it impossible in the minds of the analysts to
accept what this information really meant (an imminent attack).
Instead, they looked at the data as if it had a mythical character
('Arabs are different from us', 'inferior militarily', 'could not
have kept such an operation secret from our superior agents', 'they
are just trying to cause us financial trouble and to disrupt our
lives'). The analysts and politicians were proven disastrously
wrong, mainly because, when balancing probabilities, they opted for
the mythical view of the 'other', the Arabs, one which was until
then ingrained in their minds (especially after the overwhelming
Israeli victory during the Six-Day War of 1967).

In fairness, one should add that the task of intelligence
officers is not made easier by the impossible expectations imposed
on them by their governments, which themselves look at secret ser-
vices in a thoroughly mythical way and ask them to do the impossi-
ble. An intelligence service is supposed to provide information,
explanations, predictions and warnings - but preferably those which
suit the political powers of the time. Others are largely ignored.
There is a tendency to disregard the unpleasant, often until it is
too late, by saying that people from intelligence services do not
understand the real world, they live in a separate, unreal world
(that is, not the world of the politicians), and therefore their
suggestions can be disregarded.

There is, of course, an inherent opposition between the polit-
ical (and even more so, the diplomatic) world and that of intel-
ligence, because all covert actions are dangerous to diplomacy
(even though diplomatic cover is often used for protection) and to
politics, since they create big problems for politicians if dis-
covered by the hostile intelligence service. At the same time,
politicians need intelligence officers, with whom they have a love-
hate relationship. Like tricksters, spies move dangerously across
the boundaries of the sacred-secret world and back again, using
certain paraphernalia (the equivalents of magical objects), guided
by the motto that virtue lies in not being caught.

On both sides of the political spectrum there are myths - erroneous convictions - about intelligence services. Most of them are generated by what can be vaguely described as 'the left'. One of them, possibly the most important, is that the intelligence service is an all-encompassing organization trying to subjugate society and control it by its own secret and wicked rules (possibly in order to deliver it to the right, but often in order to assume ultimate control for itself). Secret services are assumed to be working against the interests of democracy, if the democratically expressed will of a majority of citizens does not suit their purposes. In the British context, the Zinoviev letter, leaked by the intelligence services in order to bring down the Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald in 1924, has achieved great notoriety as an example of such an action (Andrew 1985: 301-16). It has even been claimed that the letter was, in fact, a forgery produced by British intelligence, but in the light of known evidence this claim is not very convincing. More recently, certain unverifiable allegations have been made that MI5 tried to overthrow the government led by Harold Wilson.

At the same time, there is another myth (fallacy) which states that a hostile intelligence service does not in reality inflict much damage on one's own country. Here we face an opposite perception about the main features of the service. For instance, it is not uncommon to read that whatever damage Philby did to the British intelligence service was not really in the realm of operations, but only in the political sphere, by creating lasting suspicions between the British and the Americans (especially their agencies the CIA and the FBI). This is a quite widespread and popular view which conveniently forgets, apart from the damage to the security of the state and the service, the death of scores of people betrayed by Philby.

Another popular myth-fallacy of the left is that intelligence services badly need each other in order to justify their own existence and that they are totally unnecessary. To support this claim Khruschev is occasionally quoted as having allegedly suggested to Kennedy that they could exchange the lists of agents operating on their respective territories and nothing would happen because the agents were totally irrelevant - they only needed each other. The *raison d'être* of the CIA is, on such an argument, the existence of the KGB and vice versa.

Thus, as some people on the left see it, there is a conspiracy on the part of the intelligence community against the general public and their elected representatives. Intelligence is seen simultaneously as efficient and inefficient - efficient against its own domestic enemies, but inefficient as far as foreign enemies are concerned. Conversely, the activities of foreign services are not particularly important, probably - at least partially - for the same reason.

The political right has different mythical preoccupations. One is with infiltrators and deceivers, who try to damage valuable sources of information by discrediting them and question reliable assessments of data, creating discord and an atmosphere of suspicion within the intelligence service. Two famous examples of this

were Anatoli Golitsin and Yuri Nosenko, both KGB agents, who defec-
ted to the West in the early 1960s. Each was suspected by some
people in American and British intelligence of being a Soviet
plant, while others valued their services highly and regarded them
as genuine defectors. Nosenko was for years accused of being sent
to the West to discredit Golitsin, and nobody could establish how
much truth there was in his allegations. In the intelligence busi-
ness, as in myth, there are ambiguities - things appear to be and
not to be at the same time, and truth, if it is found at all, is
very elusive and illusory.

The second mythical concern of the right is with deep penetra-
tion agents or sleepers, popularly called 'moles'. The best-known
case in Britain is the chase for the Fifth Man (to complement
Maclean, Burgess, Philby and Blunt) and/or the mole in MI5 who,
according to Chapman Pincher (1984) and Peter Wright (1987),
reached the elevated position of Director-General (allegedly Sir
Roger Hollis). The question which has often been posed in connec-
tion with this mole-hunt is what damages the service more - the
search for the traitor, or his actual existence (that is, assuming
there is a deep-penetration agent placed in such a position)? One
could argue that constant suspicion and endless inquiries paralyse
the organization just as much as the mole in its midst. On the
other hand, it is almost certain that any evidence against a sus-
pect will be inconclusive, due to the nature of his activity. Un-
less the person admits his guilt, it is always difficult to come up
with hard proof. It is sufficient to recall the cases of Philby
and Blunt - the former provided the final proof of his guilt by de-
fecting to Moscow, the latter exchanged his confession for immunity
from prosecution. Neither of them could have been prosecuted suc-
cesfully in court for lack of admissible evidence. Because of the
ambiguous nature of intelligence, it is easy to hide the truth. It
is equally impossible to prove guilt or to clear one's name com-
pletely - *vide* the case of Hollis.

The fallacy about the efficiency of the service exists on the
right as well as the left. This myth is easily disproved on a num-
ber of levels. Let us take the example of the Israeli secret ser-
vice Mossad, thought by many to be the most efficient in the world
- another mythical perception. At the strategic level, the fact
that in the early 1970s Mossad was largely preoccupied with chasing
Palestinian terrorists resulted in the organization ignoring real
preparations for war on the part of Syria and Egypt. At the opera-
tional level, Mossad provided a spectacular example of total in-
efficiency during the so-called Lillehammer affair in 1973, when a
group of Israeli agents killed a Moroccan waiter living in Norway,
mistakenly believing him to be the person who masterminded the
massacre of Israeli athletes during the Munich Olympics. The
fiasco was compounded by the fact that some agents were captured,
tried and sentenced. There is little doubt that the whole thing
was carefully set up by Israeli's enemies in order to discredit
them and, probably more importantly, to distract their attention
from the war preparations of the Arab states.

At the tactical level, or the level of tradecraft, stories
about inefficiency are numerous and sometimes amusing. As

Constantinides showed (1986), no intelligence service is immune to ridicule, and there has been little improvement over the years.

For instance, during the First World War a German agent pretending to be a worker travelled in a first-class train carriage to a place on the US-Canadian border to conduct an act of sabotage. When asked after his arrest why he was travelling first-class while wearing workman's clothes, he replied that a German officer always travels first class (ibid.: 101). Things had not improved much by the time of the Second World War. A German agent was captured in 1940 in Ireland, first because he had a previous espionage record known to the British, and secondly, because he parachuted in wearing his jackboots and black beret, and with a pocket full of his medals from the First World War (ibid.: 100). The Soviets are known to have provided one of their agents going to Switzerland with a Finnish passport supposedly issued in Canada. The Swiss, however, quickly discovered that the agent could speak neither Finnish nor English (ibid.: 101). Another Soviet blunder involved an agent who in order to leave Nazi Germany was provided with a Portuguese passport describing him as one-armed, while in reality he had two (ibid.: 102).

At the same time, one should not assume that intelligence services are inefficient by nature, because it is obvious that one hears more about the problems than the successes, due to the secretive nature of the profession. Also, the border between the two is very fine indeed. A most bizarre example of fieldcraft which appears on the surface to be incredibly foolish was reported by the French press in 1986. A French diplomat in China became a victim of the so-called 'honey-trap' and fell in love with a Chinese opera singer employed to entrap him. He was subsequently persuaded that only by supplying information to the Chinese secret service would he be able to see his beloved and prevent her prosecution. However, as was discovered during the trial in Paris, the Chinese opera singer was actually a man - a fact which the diplomat had been unaware of for twenty years. Constantinides, who quotes this story, comments:

> One can well imagine the reaction of the superiors of the Chinese officer who proposed this variation of the sexual entrapment ploy as an operation. Initially, they must have considered it as the height of operational folly and as intelligence tradecraft run amok. Perhaps the lesson in this instance is that tradecraft first seen as folly assumes the mantle of the unconventional if it succeeds (ibid.: 107).

Intelligence, like myth, is basically a complex system which requires simplification if it is to neutralize various human fears and reach the general public or the politicians. This simplification/translation is done by someone who is initiated into the system: in intelligence, this means a spy and/or an analyst. In myth there are mediators or tricksters and heroes telling tales. In

this respect, the spy plays the role of a trickster or mediator who resolves the differences by making them increasingly less complex. He is also, of course, a possessor of secret knowledge (as in myth) and power, which helps him to solve the problem but which makes him necessarily, both in myth and intelligence, a dangerous person. He is able to achieve all this because by becoming a spy he enters a hermetic universe that can only be entered by overcoming immense difficulties, like the initiation ordeals of archaic and tradition- al societies. In this, he is a bit like the member of an intellec- tual élite reading *Finnegan's Wake* or listening to atonal music. And the spy clearly perceives himself as a member of such an élite, superior to the rest. In this respect, the world of intelligence resembles that of conspiracy. In the real world, intelligence de- mands secrecy - in a way, the more secret the information the more valuable it becomes - but at the same time, these demands create a variety of rituals, just like myth, in this case often related to tradecraft or fieldcraft, which cannot be explained in purely functional terms. We learn about the most bizarre instances of ritualistic fieldcraft imaginable when agents behave in a highly unnnatural manner, supposedly in order to avoid detection, but actually attracting people's attention by doing so.

It would be ludicrous to claim that all intelligence services live in an unreal world, but I would argue that it could be useful to examine any intelligence service as an organization which cre- ates a variety of myths and is governed in some way by a higher meta-reality created by the myth. Myth then becomes a higher form of truth. Intelligence services could then be looked at in the same way as myths, in the sense of a closed system of rules in which supposedly reasonable and apparently unreasonable elements are mixed in a way in which an anthropologist can analyse them. I believe that this kind of examination can be most productive if conducted by a structuralist or a semiotician, because as Umberto Eco (1979: 7) said when describing the latter discipline:

> *Semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie.* If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot in fact be used 'to tell' at all. I think that the definition of 'a theory of the lie' should be taken as a pretty comprehensive program for a general semiotics. [original emphasis]

Since intelligence services are largely occupied with practis- ing and studying lies and half-truths and their relations to real- ity, I think structuralist anthropology could in turn study these organizations fruitfully. Like many other organizations, they are not immune from acquiring a life of their own. Segal has written:

> The semiotic approach to the study of mythology examines myth in the general context of human group behavior as a system that models the surrounding world or portions of it in the minds of individuals belonging to the group. It is of partic- ular interest to study how the world picture, as it takes

shape in the group, influences people's behavior toward the world (1977: 59).

This would seem to be quite applicable to research into intelligence services which is therefore of more than just purely academic interest. The spy might well be addressed with the invocation from the temple of Apollo in Delphi, 'Know thyself'; for if he does not, he might end up like the hero of de la Fontaine's adage: '*Il connaît l'univers et ne se connaît pas*'.

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W.T. BARTOSZEWSKI

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COMMENTARY

PRACTICE IN GEERTZ'S INTERPRETATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

In her influential article, 'Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties', Sherry Ortner calls Geertz's interpretative anthropology an important step in a general trend toward a practice- or actor-centred approach (Ortner 1984). In her opinion, however, Geertz has not developed a theory of action or practice as such, although he has 'elaborated some of the most important mechanisms through which culture shapes and guides behaviour' (ibid.: 152). I agree with Ortner that Geertz has not elaborated his view of practice systematically. This in fact applies to many aspects of Geertz's interpretative anthropology. Though Geertz has expounded on some elements of his anthropology explicitly and systematically, he generally prefers to develop it in response to immediate research needs, and to convey it through concrete examples. He even tends to speak in somewhat derogatory terms about articulating general theory (Geertz 1983: 5). His increasingly dominant focus on the literary dimensions of cultural anthropology may imply a further shift away from systematic expositions on theoretical and methodological issues (Geertz 1988). Moreover, Geertz hardly applies the term 'practice' himself. Nevertheless, in my opinion, on the basis of Geertz's explicit programmatic statements and of his thematic and ethnographic essays a systematic theory of practice can be reconstructed.

This article is my reconstruction and analysis of this 'Geertzian theory of practice'. For this purpose I define practice as 'intentional behaviour', and use it as an equivalent of two terms that Geertz applies frequently and interchangeably: 'conduct' and 'action'. A 'theory' I define as a more or less coherent set of core concepts and epistemological and methodological priciples which both imply and are implied by the core concepts. These concepts and principles, which form the 'hard core' of a theory, are

further specified and elaborated by supplementary concepts, research strategies and methods, and rules of argumentation.[1]

Geertz's general theory of practice begins with the key concept of culture. Crucial in the context of a theory of practice is his emphasis on the public and intersubjective character of culture. Culture consists of interrelated symbols, which in Geertz's view refer to both conceptions and their vehicles of expression. These vehicles are quite essential, since they fix conceptions into concrete, tangible forms, and thus make their communication possible. The forms through which meaning is expressed are therefore a necessary condition for culture's intersubjectivity. In Geertz's theory, culture is further tightly linked to the concrete, public activities of everyday life. The relation between culture and practice is in fact so close that Geertz denies them an autonomous existence apart from each other. Practices cannot exist apart from culture because through it they find order and direction. This is related to Geert'z view of culture as the defining property of man. Man depends on culture in all aspects of his life, including his practices. This does not imply a cultural deterministic point of view. Culture is not so much a determining force but a framework in terms of which a group of people live their lives. Culture offers man some options for ordering his practices, but which of these options man actually selects depends on many factors. Ultimately it depends on man's own choice. The number of options a specific culture offers its participants for ordering their practices is, however, limited; culture exercises substantial constraints on their conduct.

As practices cannot exist without culture, culture cannot exist without practices. The public character of culture is fully realised only in concrete practices. Through its presence in the flow of practices, culture is made manifest to man, or, in other words, it is through practices that the participants receive the necessary information from their culture to cope with their lives. Moreover, both cultural continuity and cultural discontinuity are brought about as a result of the cumulative effects of the individual applications of culture in concrete practices. This holds true for the content of cultural conceptions, and also for the relations between conceptions and their concrete forms of expression. In Geertz's opinion there is no intrinsic relation between a particular conception and its symbolic form. In the flow of human

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[1] Personally I prefer the term 'theoretical orientation' to 'theory'. Since Ortner and others speak of 'theory', I will use the term in this article to avoid confusion. Research strategies I define as the suggestions regarding particular aspects of the socio-cultural world which provide productive starting-points for anthropological analysis. Rules of argumentation I paraphrase as the specific means through which the anthropologist orders his research findings, and clarifies these to the reader.

practices, man as a social being selects the specific forms that
he finds appropriate to serve as means for the expressions of part-
icular conceptions. This holds true for the structural inter-
relations between symbols as well. These interrelations are
brought about in the process of human conduct, and cannot be separ-
ated from it. As in the application of cultural meaning in his
daily life, man has a fundamental freedom in changing and reproduc-
ing his culture, in terms of its content, its internal structure,
and the relations between conceptions and their forms of expression.
Through practices man ultimately acts as the subject of culture
rather than as its object.

   The epistemology of Geertz's interpretative anthropology is
closely related to his view of the public, intersubjective charac-
ter of culture. Geertz aims to produce knowledge about a culture
from the perspective of its participants. Yet he emphasizes that
the epistemological gap between the participants and the outsider-
anthropologist will always remain. Geertz also renounces personal
identification with the participants as a sound basis of anthropo-
logical knowledge. Nevertheless, the basis of knowledge of a cult-
ure is ultimately alike for the participants and the anthropologist.
This basis is the public character of culture. Through the very
same symbolic forms and concrete practices from which the partici-
pants receive cultural information, the anthropologist obtains
access to their culture, at least in principle.[2] The analysis of
practices has, therefore, the methodological top priority in
Geertz's interpretative anthropology. Geertz's anthropology is
therefore interpretative in Dilthey's classic sense: a science con-
cerned with the understanding and explication of cultural meaning
through the systematic study of its concrete manifestations.[3] In
this context Geertz compares the anthropologist to the literary
critic who tries to explicate the meaning of individual literary
texts. Unlike the latter, however, the anthropologist is not pre-
sented with already existing texts to interpret. He is like a
philologist who reconstructs texts from scattered pieces of manu-
scripts. Anthropology, then, is like both reconstructing and

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[2] Geertz explicitly acknowledges that the production of anthropo-
logical knowledge tends to be more complicated in actual practice.
A lot of anthropological knowledge is based not on the direct ob-
servation of symbolic forms and meaningful conduct, but more in-
directly, on the accounts of meaningful conduct provided by spec-
ific participants. The anthropologist, furthermore, belonging to
another culture, is in fact quite dependent on the help of the
participants of that culture in the proper understanding of the
meaning of the practices that he does observe, and on their will-
ingness to give him access to their lives.

[3] Rickmann 1976: 9-10. Geertz does not follow Dilthey's distinc-
tion between understanding and interpretation. He applies the term
'interpretation' to both Dilthey's definition of understanding and
to interpretation proper.

interpreting texts, consisting of observable practices, not of written linguistic signs or recorded sounds. Geertz therefore also speaks of anthropology as a hermeneutic science: a science dealing with the interpretation of individual texts or other specific meaningful entities, which, like texts, possess a more or less persistent and inspectable form.

The description and interpretation of practices involve a degree of selection and abstraction from their concrete, actual occurrence in Geertz's interpretative anthropology. Although he attributes importance to the individual applications of culture by specific people, he is in actual practice predominantly interested in the collective aspects of cultural meaning. He therefore focuses mainly on those practices that seem relatively representative of the general conduct of all the participants of a culture. And he analyzes these practices only to the extent that these reveal important aspects of a culture as a whole, rather than the specific views of individual participants.

Geertz does not in my opinion present any concrete research strategy explicitly. Nonetheless a research strategy that specifies the interrelated core concept and epistemological and methodological principles, as outlined above, can be inferred from his corpus. My reconstruction of this research strategy begins with Geertz's assertion that man is so dependent on the information of culture that he functions best in places and situations where the conveyance of this information is optimal: public, and social events and places. In his opinion the 'natural habitat' of culture is the house yard, the market place, the town square, the scholar's desk, the football field, the studio, the lorry-driver's seat, the platform, the chessboard or the judge's bench (Geertz 1973: 45, 83, 360). Since the epistemological basis of anthropological knowledge and that of the participants is ultimately the same, it follows that those practices that are most telling for the participants are heuristically most useful to the anthropologist. So a prime focus on the practices in public and social events and places forms the basis of a research strategy. In addition, the set of practices predominantly focused on should meet two other requirements. They should be representative of the participants' practices in general, and they should have a continuous or recurrent form. The requirement to be representative is, in my opinion, self-evident. The requirement to have a recurrent or continuous form seems to me consistent with a classical (in Dilthey's sense) demand of hermeneutics. The continuous or recurrent form of texts or other meaningful entries makes, at least in principle, both their empirical and repeated investigation possible. Furthermore, it - that is, the recurrent or continuous form - will bridge the tension between a focus on the ongoing flow of human practices - which will not persist - and a classical view of anthropology as a hermeneutic science. Specific instances of practices with a recurrent or persistent form do not persist, but through their recurrent or continuous form their meanings can nonetheless be analyzed repeatedly. This specific set of practices I will call 'collective interactions'.

'Collective interactions' refer to specific occasions where a number of people involved in the same recurrent or continuous

practice publicly interact with each other in a shared and limited space, though not necessarily with conceived shared interests or as one, collective actor. Though 'collective interactions' form by no means the sole source of anthropological knowledge in Geertz's corpus, he nonetheless bases many telling assertions on this type of practice. The practices of economic search and bargaining and the conceptual framework in terms of which these are conducted have proved to be of notable heuristic value for the understanding of Moroccan culture (Geertz 1979). In his Javanese case material, Geertz presents at least two 'collective interactions' that clarified for him changes both in social structure and in the way people culturally perceived them. One case pertains to a very problematical neighbourhood funeral (Geertz 1957: 53), the other to public meetings which were part of a procedure of public protest against irregularities in a local election, and the subsequent campaigns of the subsequent new elections.[4] Vivid descriptions of court ceremonies in the literature on Balinese history probably inspired Geertz's view that court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics in the pre-colonial Balinese state. One such description pertains to a spectacular cremation ritual written in 1880 by a Danish sea-clerk called Helms (Geertz 1980: 98-102; 1983: 37-9).

Geertz's corpus mainfests a particularly important subset of 'collective interactions', viz. 'self-interpretations'. These refer to recurrent events with a more or less persisting form that teaches the participants of a culture how they ultimately perceive their own social life. Through the careful analysis of these 'self-interpretations', the anthropologist can acquire understanding of these lessons as well. The form and content of these 'self-interpretations' vary from one culture to another. In Bali, for instance, the cockfight is in Geertz's view an important 'self-interpretation'. It shows to the Balinese what they think their social life ultimately is: two roosters hacking each other to bits (Geertz 1973: 412-53). A less explicit example (that is, Geertz does not explicitly present it as a self-interpretation) is that of the battle between Rangda and Barong. This is a dramatic Balinese performance which pictures the battle between two mythological figures: Rangda, the evil, fearful witch, on the one hand; and Barong, the foolish dragon, on the other. The play generates an enormous tension in the audience, but just before it reaches the expected climax (expected at least by a Western scholar) the play ends and the tensions ceases. The play and the tension it generates very effectively convey an important cultural message: the line dividing reason from unreason, love from destruction, and the divine from the demonic is only razor-thin (Geertz 1973: 180-1). It further illustrates the 'absence of climax' which Geertz regards to be characteristic of Balinese social life as a whole

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[4] Geertz 1965: 153-208. The problematic neighbourhood funeral presents a borderline case. Its heuristic value seems to depend partly on its discontinuity with the standard pattern of a Javanese funeral (see Falk Moore 1987: 729).

(ibid.: 403). Another, less explicit example is the *wajang* play. This is performed with puppets, which project large shadows onto a white screen. With these projected shadows, events from ancient Javanese epics are dramatised, but at the same time frequent references are made to present religious, socio-economic, and political developments. According to Geertz, the analysis of the *wajang* play (which is the most deeply rooted and most highly developed Javanese art form) gives perhaps the clearest and the most direct insight into the relation between Javanese values and Javanese metaphysics (ibid.: 132-40).

'Collective interactions' certainly meet the demand of having a recurrent or continuous form, so that their meaning can be analyzed repeatedly, even though specific instances of these interactions do not persist. Yet, as such, they still form a rather broad category. This raises the question of how to select the specific 'collective interactions' that are particularly fruitful for anthropological analysis. For this selection, Geertz does not offer general principles, apart from, of course, his focus on 'self-interpretations'. But which 'collective interpretation' is of particular heuristic importance, and which serves as 'self-interpretation', varies from one culture to the other. What cock-fighting is in Bali may be what bullfighting is in Spain, soccer in Brazil, and bargaining in the bazaar in Morocco. The selection of a particular 'collective interaction' is therefore tacitly made. Yet the heuristic value of a 'collective interaction' selected for analysis may be made plausible with an important methodological principle: the hermeneutic circle.

Geertz's application of this principle comes down first of all to a broad and loose characterization of the kind of life a group of people live as shaped by their culture. Geertz characterizes Moroccan culture as strenuous, fluid, visionary, violent, devout, unsentimental, individualistic, and assertive. He characterizes Javanese culture amongst other things as industrious, settled, sensitive, introvert, philosophical, quietistic, mystical, and polite. In his opinion, Balinese culture is, amongst other things, aesthetical, artistic, ornate, refined, dramaturgical, formalistic, and status-conscious. Though these characterizations are over-simplified, general and tentative, they are nonetheless heuristically useful. They provide a rough context in terms of which specific 'collective interactions' are analyzed. The anthropologist can see to what extent the a priori articulated characteristics are confirmed, deepened and enriched in the 'collective interactions' being analyzed, and to what extent these are contradicted and corrected. A very good illustration is Geertz's analysis of the Balinese cockfight. Geertz relates the cockfight, in which corporate groups identifying with the fighting cocks symbolically put their pride at stake, to the leading characteristics of Balinese culture: status-mindedness, indirectness, shyness and *politesse*. On the one hand, the cockfight underlines some of these characteristics; it particularly confirms that status differentiation is a deadly serious matter in Bali, even to the extent that the most suitable metaphor to express this truth seems to be a scene as violent as two roosters hacking each other to bits. But

the cockfight also corrects the a priori characterization of Bali-
nese culture, by conveying characteristics of it that are counter
to the a priori articulated ones. It shows that envy, hatred and
aggression turn out to be as essential to Balinese life as *polit-
esse,* shyness and indirectness. So one might say that Geertz's
interpretative anthropology does not a priori account for the
choice of 'collective interactions' selected for anthropological
knowledge. But through the application of the hermeneutic circle
the heuristic usefulness of a elected 'collective interaction' for
analyzing a culture as a whole can be assessed a posteriori.

   Analogies form the most prominent and extensively discussed
aspect of argumentation in Geertz's interpretative anthropologyy.
The most notable analogies that Geertz has applied are text, drama,
and game. These three analogies are quite useful for the analysis
of 'collective interactions' because like 'collective interactions',
they have a persisting (text) or recurrent (drama, game) form. So
these analogies are quite in line with a hermeneutic theory of
practice. Geertz extensively applies the game analogy in his ana-
lysis of the flow of economic practices in a Moroccan bazaar,
wherein he describes this flow as an ongoing context in discover-
ing, protecting, hiding and applying relevant information. An ad-
vantage in strategic information, which is necessary to maximize
economic profit, is the prize of the game (Geertz 1979). The most
extensive application of the theatre analogy is to be found in his
analysis of the classic Balinese state, which he regards as a
theatre state, in which the kings and princes were the impresarios,
the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast,
stage crew, and audience (Geertz 1980: 13). This theatre state,
and particularly the public royal ceremonies which formed the
heart of this state, dramatically manifested and actuated a parti-
cular Balinese world-view. The most prominent application of the
text analogy is Geertz's analysis of the Balinese cockfight.
Watching a cockfight is like 'reading' a 'text'. Every time the
Balinese watch a cockfight, they 'read' about a man's individual
sensitivity: how it feels when a man, represented by a cock, is
attacked, insulted, tormented, challenged, and driven to the ex-
tremes of fury, and through all that, is either brought to total
victory or to total defeat. They also 'read' about the general
characteristics of their collective life (like the deadly serious
importance of status differentiation, etc.). Through 'reading' the
cockfight individual sensitivities and the Balinese view of their
collective life both become manifest to them and become reinforced
further.[5]

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[5] Geertz uses the text analogy in two different ways. On the one
hand, he uses it in a general sense, to express anthropology's af-
filiation with literary criticism. An example of this general ap-
plication is Geertz 1980: 135. He declares here that the elements
of culture are, among other things, 'texts' to be read, despite
the fact that this statement is part of an analysis where the
theatre analogy is primarily applied. On the other hand, he uses
the text analogy in a more specific and restricted sense, as a rule

So Geertz's corpus does, then, present a coherent hermeneutic theory of practice. The 'hard core' is formed by the public, intersubjective character of culture, which not only forms the basis of cultural knowledge for the participants but also the epistemological basis of anthropological knowledge, and by Geertz's view of anthropology as an interpretative science. This 'hard core' is specified by a focus on 'collective interactions' in combination with the hermeneutic circle, and by the use of the game, text, and drama analogies. It must be noted, however, that the research strategy and analogies I have just expounded only specify Geertz's view of how culture manifests itself in practices. But concrete research directives that specify how practices sustain and change culture are lacking in Geertz's interpretative anthropology.

I agree, then, with Ortner, that in Geertz's interpretative anthropology, the impact of system (and particularly culture) on practices is predominantly emphasized rather than the impact of practices on system (Ortner 1984: 152). The most prominent counter-example in Geertz's corpus is his book *Agricultural Involution* (1963). There, Geertz analyzes how the cumulative effects of the choices of Indonesian peasants have brought about a form of static change - involution - in a social system, first of all in its economic aspects but secondly in its social-structural and cultural aspects as well. Geertz further explains these choices - which brought about involution - in terms of the combined pressures of Dutch colonial policies, a population explosion, and the ecological requirements and constraints of sugar cultivation and wet-rice agriculture. Yet *Agricultural Involution* is, in my opinion, not representative of Geertz's corpus as a whole.[6]

Despite this shortcoming, Geertz's theory of practice is still relevant for cultural anthropology.[7] Though the impact of practice on system may have been too much neglected in the past, the focus on how culture shapes practice by no means forms a past stage. In

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of argumentation that might be useful for the analysis of some cultural processes, but not necessarily for all. His analysis of the Balinese cockfight provides an example of this more restricted use of the text analogy.

[6] I have discussed elsewhere (Bakker 1988) the degree of continuity and discontinuity between *Agricultural Involution* and Geertz's other publications.

[7] Geertz's theory of practice also generally neglects the question why certain practices sustain or change culture and other aspects of socio-cultural systems. This neglect is deliberate. According to Geert'z explicit programmatic statements, causal and teleological explanations are of minor importance (Geertz 1973: 3-30).

my opinion, Geertz's theory of practice - as can be explicated from his corpus - offers a valuable tool for the work that still needs to be done in this context.

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J.W. BAKKER

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ASSIMILATION OF ALTERNATE GENERATIONS

From Aditi, Dakṣa was born, and from Dakṣa, Aditi

Rig Veda 10.72.4

From the thorn comes the rose, and from the rose comes the thorn

(Stewart 1988: 157)

Robert Parkin's valuable article on 'Reincarnation and Alternate Generation Equivalence in Middle India' (1988) prompts me to return to a topic which I have discussed previously in the pages of this journal, and to amplify and clarify certain points.

Following Trautmann and Tyler, Parkin calls attention to the alternate generation equations found in kinship terminologies of the Central and Northern branches of Dravidian, but not in the better-known Southern branch. Are they a survival from proto-Dravidian, or a subsequent development? Parkin argues for a surv-ival. He starts with facts. In tribal Middle India alternate gen-erations are assimilated not only by lexical equations, but also in other ways. Marriage is prohibited with relatives in adjacent gen-erations, but may be allowed with ±2 as well as within ego's gener-ation. Roughly speaking, the conventional attitude of reserve to-wards ±1 level relatives contrasts with prescribed joking towards even-level relatives. Finally, it is often a grandparent, not a

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parent, who transmits to a person soul substance and name, one can almost say identity. These different modes of assimilation cohere, forming a single complex, which also turns up among 'symmetrical prescriptive' tribals in other continents (South America, Australia).

Parkin then turns to theories. He refers to Needham on alternation (1983), Allen on tetradic theory (1986, henceforth 'TT'), and Mauss on the person (1938). Tetradic theory in its strong form proposes that the type of kinship terminology ancestral to all other types consistently equated alternate genealogical levels; and Mauss proposed that behind our present notion of the person (as a phenomenon of *droit et morale*) lay the ancient tribal notion of the *personnage*, which was typically transmitted to ego from a grand-parent.[1] Using these ideas, Parkin argues persuasively that it is the Southern Dravidian speakers who have innovated, while sporadic traces of the older tribal complex survive in Tamil naming customs.

But what, ultimately, is one to make of this complex? Parkin presents it as the manifestation of a single theme, viz. the basic concept of alternation; and he suggests that the wide distribution of the complex precludes explanation in terms of historic or pre-historic cultural contact: 'These ideas must, therefore, be regarded as fundamental properties of the human mind of the sort often alluded to by Lévi-Strauss and, latterly, Needham' (1988: 11). It is on these points that I should like to offer some comments, starting with three questions.

First, taking for granted the coherence of the complex, how should one attempt to explain its distribution? The reference to the 'human mind' seems to imply independent invention in the different places. But if humanity shares a common origin, and if tetradic structures are the simplest possible way of organizing a society on the basis of kinship, the most economical explanation is patchy retention from very early times indeed (before our species dispersed from Africa?). If this is right, the first humans to enter Australia or the New World carried the complex with them.

Secondly, does not the formulation put too exclusive an emphasis on ideas? To do so is to take a double risk: that of under-rating the difficulty of institutionalising ideas, and that of circular explanations in terms of unconscious ideas for whose existence the only evidence is the practice in question. Kinship is about continuity, social and biological, and it cannot be limited to ideas. It is also the mode of production of new members of

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[1] Of the different modes of assimilation, tetradic theory recognizes not only equations but also the possibility of marriage with ±2 level relatives (cf. TT 6.4, where 'MM' should be corrected to 'FM'). Prescribed attitudes or sentiments were referred to in TT 7.6, the connection with Mauss's theory in Allen 1985: 41-2. James suggests (1987: 51) that Mauss's formal argument is mainly of interest to students of the history of anthropology; but the world-historical questions he was asking still seem to me live issues, and they relate directly to middle-range and surely soluble problems such as the interpretation of Dravidian kinship.

society, and in that sense it is as material and behavioural as making a plough.

Thirdly, should the notion of alternation enjoy a privileged place in the conceptualizations of tetradic society? In a sense it does already. The initial bisection of society into socio-centric levels (TT 3.3) *is* the introduction of alternation in its simplest form, and in all tetradic models a sequence of lineals, ascendant or descendant, alternates between levels. Regarding the focal tetradic model (a Kariera-type four-section system with one - or two - kinship terms per section), one can be more precise: here, though not in all tetradic models (TT 3.4.2), a sequence of same-sex lineals alternates between *sections*. But one can go further. For Parkin (1988: 15), the focal model is characterized by two 'fundamental features' - alternation and the parallel-cross distinction. The second label, however well-established in the literature, is best avoided since the only way to allot odd-level sections to one or other category is arbitrarily to privilege one sex (TT 6.1). Moreover, if one is working at this level of abstraction, it is more economical to regard alternation as underlying both features. The sequence - affines, affines of affines, affines of affines of affines ... - alternates between the two sections making up a level, and is the horizontal analogue of alternation between generations.

However, even if we recognize two dimensions of alternation in tetradic models, we are not obliged to conceive of alternation as *the* fundamental principle at work in them. An alternative approach is to recognize that in different contexts different features come to the fore. In contrasting tetradic society with primate ones, the emphasis might be on its demographic self-sufficiency, the existence of rules as such (Fortes 1984), the automatic prohibition of intercourse with primary relatives. In contesting the doctrine that exogamous moieties constituted the evolutionary starting-point, one might emphasize quadripartition, isomorphism of sociocentric and egocentric, absence of asymmetry between the sexes. In relation to Lévi-Strauss's atom of kinship, 'the simplest kinship structure that one could conceive and that could exist' (1958: 56), one might emphasize that, in spite of its quaternity (for the atom consists of four elements and recognizes four relationships), it lacks the internal homogeneity of a tetradic genealogical diagram: in the latter, each element (all eight of them) enters identically into all three of the basic relations - filiation, siblingship, affinity. And so on. Rather than seeking features that are fundamental in some absolute sense, one may prefer to embrace the multiplicity of possible perspectives. It should therefore be useful to label and list some of the various ways of conceptualizing tetradic society, each of which has its own merits.

1) *Exchange approach.* Sociocentric levels exchange children, and within a level, sections exchange spouses-to-be. If the exchange relationships are pictured in two dimensions and respectively as vertical and horizontal, and if ego and a particular parent are allotted to particular sections, the diagram will seem to imply that ego is more closely related to one parent than the

other. This disadvantage disappears in 2.

2) *Compass-point approach*. Sections are pictured symmetrical-
ly disposed around a circle, intermarrying pairs being diagonally
opposite each other. Paradoxically perhaps, sections composing one
of the two 'levels' are now aligned vertically (unless both 'levels'
are disposed X-wise). This approach formed the basis of my 'Dance'
(1982); one only needs to insert a symbol of the centre, a maypole
or the like, to produce the form of a mandala. Conceptualizations
1 and 2 are juxtaposed as diagrams in TT Figure 1, and I start with
them partly by way of acknowledgement to Mauss (who was at least as
interested in dance as in exchange).[2]

3) *Genealogical approach* (TT Fig. 2). The eight-symbol genea-
logical diagram can of course be drawn in several ways. Logically,
the most satisfying model is doubtless three-dimensional. If one
draws Figure 1 on a detached strip of paper and joins the left- and
right-hand ends of the strip, one can then connect descending lines
of filiation with ascending ones via the inside of the strip (or
flattened torus). This means that the lines never depart from the
verticality conventional for showing filiation. Another advantage
is the vertical symmetry: inverting the tube leaves the structure
unchanged (if triangles are replaced by squares or lozenges, the
inversion and original are indistinguishable).

Another transform of the structure leads back to two dimens-
ions. Imagine the top of the tube shrinking until we are left with
a cone. If the cone is progressively flattened, the result is a
diagram in which upper and lower 'levels' are represented respect-
ively by inner and outer rings of symbols; but the cycling back of
filiation lines from periphery to centre can no longer be neatly
depicted. (This form of the structure could readily be realized
in settlement pattern or in choreography.)

Barnard and Good (1984: 7-8) deplore the use of genealogical
diagrams in which a triangle (say) represents all the males of a
group. But in this particular context I see no danger of misunder-
standing.[3] In any case, most of us need visual aids to work out the

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[2] Exchange has the additional advantage of partly transcending the
mental/material divide. Two anecdotal remarks on Mauss and ex-
change: (i) the view of marriage as exchange can be traced back be-
fore Mauss's *Essai sur le don* to Durkheim and Fauconnet (1905: 390) -
in the Torres Straits, marriage involved 'a sort of exchange of the
women of one clan for those of another'; (ii) when Mauss lists the
exchanges constituting a system of total prestations, children some-
times immediately follow women (1950: 151, 227). The reference here
may be to the horizontal exchange of foster children (ibid.: 155-6;
1969: 44), but elsewhere it is explicitly to exchanges between dif-
ferent generations of age sets (ibid.: 29, 109n; 1947: 103), or even
to inter-generation reciprocity (1969: 301).

[3] One of the reasons they give (ibid.: 98) is that prescriptive ZD
marriage cannot be diagrammed genealogically in conjunction with
matrilineal descent. But there is nothing to stop one drawing a
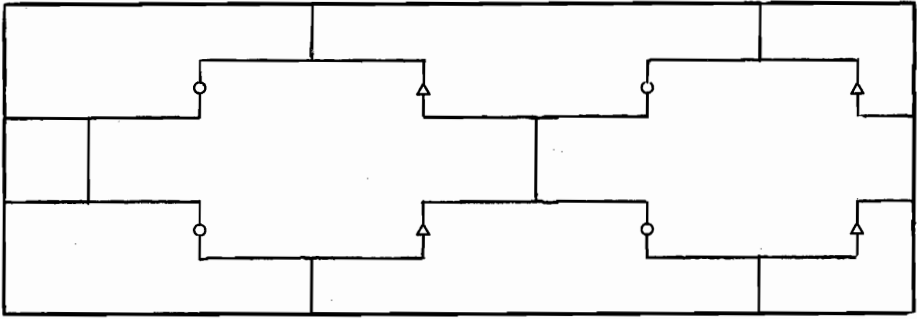column of circles joined by matrifiliation lines, each female being

Figure 1: Version of Tetradic Genealogical Diagram (lateral extremities to be visualized as joined)

allotment of relatives to sections, and alternative formats such as matrices necessarily correspond with the genealogical element by element and relation by relation.

4. *Double-helix approach* (TT 6.5.1). If genealogical levels are conceptualized simply as stacked one above another, the solidarity and continuity linking alternate levels may present a puzzle. How can the ±2 level 'run on into' ego's level and -2, while remaining totally distinct from the 'intervening' ±1? The double helix resolves this conceptual difficulty, if it is one, by giving equal weight to continuity and alternation.

We need first a sharper conceptualization of the passage of time. Genealogical diagrams reduce individuals to punctate elements in a network of relations. Time enters the picture only in so far as filiation links individuals born earlier - the parental generation - with individuals born later. We need a diagram which shows people as *life-spans*. Let us therefore envisage society as consisting of life-spans of varying length, starting at different points of time and running parallel to each other. One can use the image of a kernmantel rope seen from the side as it runs down the page, individual fibres corresponding to individual members of society. Relations of marriage, filiation and siblingship link one life-span, or part of it, with another. If one cuts through the

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linked horizontally with a brother who in turn is connected by an oblique marriage line to his ZD. The apparent difficulty arises from the connotations of 'descent' (which usually implies that those descending unilineally from a common ancestor may not marry), and not from the limitations of genealogical diagrams. One can in fact draw, either in matri or patri format, eight-symbol tetradic-style genealogical diagrams in which every male marries ZD (or even, *mutatis mutandis*, FZ); but whether or not the differing treatment of the two sexes effectively renders these structures octopartite and hence disqualifies them as tetradic on the present definition (TT 5.6), it certainly introduces a type of complexity absent from other tetradic models.
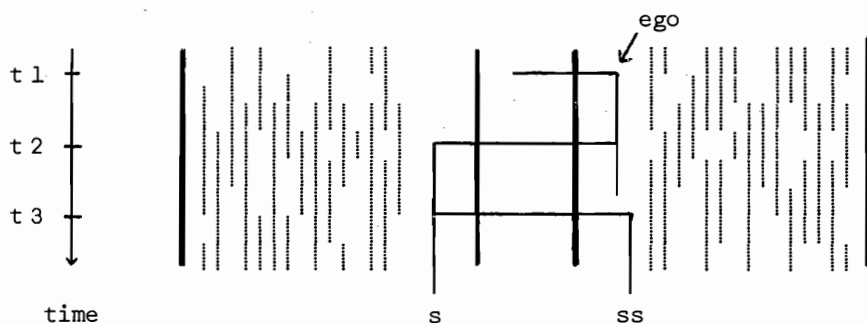
Figure 2: Sociocentric Levels (shown vertically they are made up
of life-spans; links of filiation are shown horizontally)

rope and looks at it from above, the fibres, seen end on, reduce to
dots, and the relations between them appear as lines.

Continuing with the view from the side, our next step, corre-
sponding to TT 3.3, is to bisect the rope (society) longitudinally,
so that fibres (individuals) in one strand (sociocentric level)
have both their parents and children in the other (Figure 2); all
filiation relationships cross the central gap. The alternation of
generations is thus represented by a rectilineal meander. Starting
at the top of a fibre in the even strand, at ego's birth (t1), the
path at first descends vertically; then, a couple of decades later,
at ego's son's birth (t2), it traverses horizontally to the top of
an odd-strand fibre. Descending again, it crosses back to the
even strand at t3, when the birth of ego's son's son initiates a
repetition of the process.

To envisage the double-helix model, we now take three steps:
mentally slide the odd-level strand behind the even one;[4] envisage
the gap between them as a pole of axis; and wind the two strands
around it, symmetrically and in parallel. Let us in addition spec-
ify that the strands wind clockwise when viewed from above, and
that the time taken for a strand to complete the encirclement of
the axis corresponds to the average duration of a generation. Time
in years is still read down the page: one can imagine it as marked
off along the central axis. (The image of the caduceus may come
to mind.)

Viewing the double-helix from the side, we now see even and
odd strands, one below another, descending from right to left as
they cross our line of vision. Let us say that each strand is

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[4] Having slid the odd-level strand behind the even one, one can bi-
sect both of them into substrands. If one now observes the rope
from above, its four substrands correspond to the four sections as
envisaged in approach 1. However, the alternation of levels does
not immediately relate to intra-level organization, and the double
helix model can ignore the bisection of levels.

visible for precisely half of its course, i.e. for precisely one
generation. This enables us to trace the rectilineal meander of
Figure 2 in its new three-dimensional guise. Ego is born at tl,
just where the even strand enters the field on one of its appear-
ances. The fibre spirals downwards to our left. This is an
average ego, who reproduces at the average age; so at the very
moment when he is about to leave our field of vision (at t2) he
produces his one surviving son. The initiation of a filial rela-
tionship can be treated as a punctate event, so the line of filia-
tion passes horizontally; and since the structure is symmetrical,
it passes through the centre of the axis to emerge in the odd
strand at the very moment when the latter enters our field of
vision. The line of filiation spirals past us again in the person
of ego's son until at t3 it repeats the horizontal passage through
the axis. This time, of course, it passes from the odd to the
even strand, which is just emerging again from invisibility.

Seen from above, a double helix (like a single one) will ap-
pear simply as a circle, and the filiation lines will appear as
horizontal diagonals, passing from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock. One
could draw the circle with its upper half broken, indicating its
invisibility when seen from the side. The broken line would also
indicate that the portion of life cycle following the birth of the
son who transmits a line of filiation is in a sense irrelevant.
We certainly do not need to postulate that the average ego lives
for the duration of two average generations.

The model can be elaborated in various ways. (i) One might
well regard the life-span as beginning not with physical birth but
with the taking on of social identity. In the light of Mauss's
paper, this could be at the moment of naming. If the grandfather
were alive he could forthwith retire. If he had died earlier,
the name and *personnage* would presumably meanwhile have remained
in limbo. (ii) One could elaborate on the contrast between cyclic-
al generational time, measured in angular motion (180° = 1 genera-
tion), and linear time, measured lengthwise in units corresponding
to years. To deal with egos who reproduce more quickly than
average, one might allow fibres within a strand to complete their
semicircle without descending the average distance along the axis.
Alternatively, if all fibres remained parallel, the speedy repro-
ducer could send his filiation line through the axis before the
point corresponding to 9 o'clock. (iii) One might try linking the
double-helix model to cosmology (cf. TT 7.6.1). If a tetradic
society expressed itself in dance, could it fail to connect the
two sociocentric levels with the two heavenly bodies? Analogies
suggest themselves, not only between the passage of the two strands
across our visual field in the model and the passage of the sun and
moon across the skies, but also between the broken semicircle in
the end-on view and the presumed movement of the heavenly bodies
back to their starting-point during the part of the diurnal cycle
when they cannot be seen.

The main point, however, is that whereas alternation can be
read off from the double-helix model, the converse is not true.
The notion of alternation is too formal, abstract and 'empty' to
afford much insight into the functioning of tetradic society.

5. *Cumulative equations approach* (Allen 1989). This approach operates, not by dividing up a bounded society conceived as a whole, but by simplifying the genealogical grid, the set of distinct types of close relatives that an ego logically possesses. One simplifies siblingship by equating or superimposing ssG, affinity by introducing prescription, and filiation by equating alternate levels. All three modes of simplification are essential to tetradic structures, and if one of them is ascribed to natural proclivities of the human mind, should not the others be treated likewise?

6. *Other*. There are surely further useful modes of conceptualizing tetradic society. For instance, starting with the nuclear family, one can try to maximize the number of different sociocentric units to which primary relatives are allotted (cf. TT 13.1.1); or one could explore prescribed attitudes, which may be older than verbal language and may provide a classificatory idiom as revealing as terminologies.[5]

Whatever the approach chosen, one cannot claim to be doing much more than rephrasing and systematizing ideas already adumbrated by others (cf. TT 7.5). Parkin (1988: 16 n.14) rightly cites Dumont's 1966 paper (reprinted with postcript 1983), which refers to 'a universal tendency to group together alternating generations' and to the irreducibility of this feature in the Australian data;[6] but one

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[5] There is no reason to apply to tetradic society Lévi-Strauss's proposal (1958: 46) that the attitudinal system is often secondary to the terminology, or that its function is to resolve terminological contradictions or insufficiencies. Moreover, his tetrad of attitudes (mutuality and reciprocity, right and obligation [ibid.: 60]), is probably less applicable to the focal tetradic model than Radcliffe-Brown's (familiarity, joking, respect, avoidance - generated by the cross-cutting of respect/equality and solidarity/alliance). However, tetradic theory in the wider sense can surely use the notion of debt. One sociocentric level gives life to the other, and the counter-prestation is of the same character; but as sociocentric levels progressively lose reality, life increasingly flows in one direction only, *from* ascendants *to* descendants. The latter are debtors. What could they return, other than worship (TT 10.2.4)? Ancestor worship as normally understood would make little sense in a society which *thoroughly* assimilated alternate generations.

[6] However, because of the patrilocality, Dumont labels the four sections of the Kariera A1 + A2, B1 + B2, as if they were in essence bisected moieties: the spell of unilineality is not easily broken. Dumont's postscript expresses unease, recognizing - rightly - that the spatial dimension could well be separated

can go further back. In Mauss's writings one seldom finds the ab-
stract notion of 'alternation' as such - in line with his 'concrete
tendency' (Dumont 1986: 183) he often uses the more vivid notion of
'rhythm', with its psychobiological overtones - but his ideas on
kinship come close to anticipating tetradic theory. Thus he saw
'the simplest hypothesis' as dividing a society into two moieties,
patri- or matri-, 'the distinction between generations producing a
second division, that between the sexes a third' (1947: 127); and
he interpreted data from Burkina Faso (1969: 21) as confirming what
he already suspected - the existence in Africa of 'something re-
sembling Australian matrimonial classes, or what is more or less
the same thing, a quadripartite tribal organization (two moieties,
each divided in two, no doubt by generation)'.[7] For Mauss's friend
Granet, four-section systems were the simplest known form of social
organization, and there was no reason to suppose that they were
preceded by any other form (1939: 166-70, a splendid passage). But
let us end with Hocart (also mentioned by Parkin), who again and
again linked joking relations, bilateral cross-cousin marriage and
the transmission of names and identities from grandfather to ego.
The naming of a child after his grandfather, Hocart once suggested,
was a logical consequence of the cross-cousin system in its earli-
est form (1928: 203); and he thought that, tribal kinship systems
being nine-tenths religion, the key to all of them would be found
in reincarnation (1923: 13). In coming to grips with the assimila-
tion of alternate generations one may well find less to build on

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analytically from the rules of recruitment and marriage. This
would remove the grounds for dualistic interpretation of what is
in essence a four-element structure. By the same token, the
structure of Dravidian terminologies, and particularly of their
±1 levels, is better understood starting from tetradic premises
than in terms of a kin-affine dualism.

[7] He regarded this 'very important' phenomenon as related to social
control throughout black West Africa, and as meriting thorough
study. Forty years after Radcliffe-Brown's summary remarks (cited
by Parkin), one would indeed welcome a compilation of information
on the modes of assimilation of alternate generations in Africa.
Regarding the Bushmen, Barnard (forthcoming) speaks of the 'struc-
tural and social equivalence of alternate generations', combined
with a universal joking/avoidance distinction; but the termino-
logies are difficult to classify in terms of types of equation.
Naturally much more work is needed elsewhere too on the coherence
and distribution of the kinship-person complex we have been dis-
cussing, and/or its elements. Might one find macro-regional dif-
ferences comparable to those proposed by Testart (1987), who con-
trasts the concepts of man-animal relationships found in Australia
with those found in the *ensemble américano-sibérien*?

in Lévi-Strauss's references to the human mind than in the insights of the preceding generation of scholars.[8]

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N.J. ALLEN

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[8] The earlier scholars I refer to have in fact influenced me. Bits and pieces of tetradic theory are certainly to be found elsewhere, notably in the Russian literature (see Plotkin and Howe 1985: 282-96, a reference I owe to Tamara Dragadze).

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PATRONAGE AND BUREAUCRACY IN COMPLEX SOCIETIES:

SOCIAL RULES AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN AN ITALIAN UNIVERSITY

Introduction

Patron-clientelism has been the subject of considerable interest in
the social sciences since its initial recognition in the 1960s. So
much so, in fact, that it has been elevated from a topic of margin-
al significance to one of major theoretical debate (Wolf 1966; Blok
1969; Kaufman 1974; Gellner and Waterbury (eds.) 1977; Schmidt *et
al.* (eds.) 1977). Interest in 'patronage' as a specific type of
social formation was pioneered largely by social anthropologists,
many of them working in Europe and the Mediterranean (Campbell
1964; Pitt-Rivers 1961; Kenny 1960). As a result, much information
has been generated about the structure and mechanics of patronage
in those typically small-scale agrarian and developing societies
which anthropologists have studied, but relatively little about the
operation of patronage elsewhere. While the ethnographic detail
from these studies has helped bring some clarity to the analysis of
patron-clientelism, the plethora of interpretations coupled with
the lack of any consensus concerning a definition of what actually
constitutes a 'patron-client' relation, has left the issue to date
disrupted and confused (Gellner 1977).

One perennial problem is the question of why patronage emerged
as part of the moral and cultural climate in some societies, but
not in others. The common explanation usually equates its occurr-
ence with an arrested process of development and the failure on the
part of the nation-state to penetrate local communities. The
theory is that a weak state coupled with powerful local magnates

provides conditions that are ideal for the emergence of influential power brokers and middlemen, who have replaced the old landed gentry in their traditional role as local patrons (Boissevain 1977: 82; Silverman 1965: 188). Hence, many traditional studies focused on patronage as a form of 'brokerage', postulating the idea that patron-clientelism acts as a mediating institution linking peripheral rural communities to urban centres and the resources of the nation-state.

According to one set of theories that has emerged out of this approach, patronage represents an early phase in the development of nation-states, but should wither away with the growth of government and the steady process of community-state integration.

From the literature, however, three things are clear: first, the hierarchical, particularistic, and diffuse social arrangements which anthropologists call 'patron-client relations' exist to some extent in all societies, whatever their degree of complexity or industrialization. Secondly, though this may be the case, they are infinitely more pervasive in some societies than in others - particularly in Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Mediterranean (Roniger 1983: 63). Thirdly, there is little evidence in any of these societies of any direct correlation between development or expansion of the state sector and the decline of patron-clientelism. Indeed, patron-clientelism appears to have grown and   sometimes is so diffuse that it has become, to quote Roniger, 'part of the central model of structuring some main aspects of the societal order such as the flow of resources and the process of interpersonal and institutional exchange and interaction in society' (ibid.: 63-4). In other words, patronage in these societies is a major principle of social organization - both conceptually and institutionally. So apparent was this of the Mediterranean that Davis in his book *People of the Mediterranean* was forced to conclude that 'patronage is the bedrock of political life in most of those Mediterranean communities which anthropologists have studied' (1977: 147).

Ethnographic evidence corroborating this came from a host of anthropological essays and monographs written between 1960 and 1980 (Kenny 1960; Pitt-Rivers 1961; Campbell 1964; Cutileiro 1964; Bailey (ed.) 1971a; Schneider and Schneider 1976; Silverman 1975; Gilmore 1977; White 1980). The problem in the 1980s, however, is not lack of information about the many new varieties of patronage that have evolved in towns and small-scale communities across the Mediterranean, but the relative absence of ethnographic information about new forms of patronage in other social contexts - particularly in urban, complex and industrial societies. If patronage is to be understood in terms of its role as a community/nation-state mediator, how does one explain its occurrence *within* the institutions of the modern nation-state. Using a case-study from Italy, this paper demonstrates that patronage not only exists but thrives within the apparatus of the modern nation-state, particularly in its bureaucratic institutions.

The reason for the lack of ethnographic study into this realm of the modern state is not difficult to fathom, given that bureaucratic organizations are not   a likely choice of fieldwork

location for anthropologists. While patron-clientelism may not be 'illegal' in some societies, it is not really legal or legitimate either. Even when it is officials themselves who are the key actors in patronage systems (which is often the case), patron-clientelism as a system or as a model of behaviour is rarely officially recognized, sanctioned or condoned. As Gellner has argued (1977: 3-5), though patronage is often most prevalent as an 'ethos', unlike, say, feudalism, it does not have its own pride or morality. Typically, therefore, it stands outside the officially proclaimed morality of any society. However, there is often a large disparity between official and unofficial morality.

The development of patron-clientelism inside modern bureaucratic organizations is of anthropological significance not only because little is known about it, but more importantly because it presents an important theoretical challenge. Theoretically, bureaucracy and patronage are opposed and antagonistic modes of organization: one is associated with legal and rational norms, adherence to formal rules, objective, universalistic values, and impersonal, impartial conduct; the other is associated with behaviour that is personal, partisan, subjective and particularistic (Weber 1948: 299). Whereas patronage appears closer to feudal-type relations, bureaucracy, in theory, is closer to modern capitalist relations. As 'ideal types', therefore, they are incompatible - though at the empirical level this is not necessarily the case.

Given that bureaucracy has expanded, not diminished, in the past decade and that patronage is still in all probability the 'bedrock of political life' in the Mediterranean, how have these forms of organization been reconciled within the institutions of the modern nation-state? What hybrid forms of clientelism have developed inside the organizations of complex, advanced industrial societies, and how has patronage survived the advance of bureaucracy?

These are the broad questions addressed in this article. To answer them the article examines patronage as it operates within the context of one particular institution of the modern nation-state: an Italian state university.[1] Focusing on one specific example of how patrons operate in the university, the article describes and then attempts to analyse the pattern of social relations that have evolved there. The hypothesis is that all organizations (particularly bureaucracies) tend to be structured according to certain sets of cultural rules and values, but that it is the covert and implicit (i.e. informal) rather than the formal and explicit rules that often constitute the major code that structures university relations. These rules, however, are not always easy to interpret, particularly to outside observers (who are more likely, as a result, to fall foul of them). Indeed, even 'insiders', as

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[1] For an ethnographic comparison, see Boissevain's account (1974: 147-63) of patronage in a Sicilian university. His transactionalist perspective provides an interesting contrast to the theoretical approach adopted in this paper.

the case-study will show, are not always as conversant with the un-
written code as they should be. University patron-clientelism be-
longs to one such set of rules. The aim of this article is to de-
cipher these rules so that otherwise inexplicable and irrational
behaviour can be seen in its social and conceptual context as in
fact highly explicable, logical and rational. What follows, there-
fore, is an ethnographic description of patronage in operation in-
side one particular university in central Italy. For the sake of
anonymity, the town shall be called 'Vicenzo' and all names men-
tioned are pseudonyms. Fieldwork in this town was conducted in two
periods from 1981 to 1983 and from 1985 to 1986. The situation which
the university was described by numerous informants, students as
well as lecturers and secretarial staff, but the case of one group
of foreign language teachers (*lettori*) perhaps illustrates most
cogently the way university patronage works.

The Case-Study

At present, there are an estimated 1,600 foreign language-lectors
(*lettori*) working in Italian universities, over half of them teach-
ing English. Several years ago, their position was radically
altered when legislation was passed by the Italian government that
in effect prohibited these *lettori* from renewing their contracts
after six years of service. This meant that as of the following
year, most of these 1,600 employees would be sacked from their
posts. As many were married to Italians and had long before made
Italy their permanent country of residence, this prospect caused
considerable alarm. From their viewpoint, there seemed to be no
real reason for the law other than as an expedient designed to pro-
tect the universities (and beyond them the state) from having to
accept legal responsibility towards its employees: legally, lectors
had become reclassified from salaried state employees to 'self-
employed free-professionals' - a status similar to that of plumbers
and private electrical contractors. They claimed they were univers-
ity dependants just as lecturers and university ancillary staff,
but the new classification meant that they no longer had entitlement
to university pensions or social security benefits.

   In reaction to this, a group of *lettori* from one faculty went
to lobby their *preside* (dean). The *preside*, after listening to
their case, regretted the matter but said it was a government de-
cision and that nothing could be done about it. He then defended
the government by remarking that *lettori* were only 'auxiliaries' to
the courses anyway and could not, therefore, expect the same treat-
ment as proper university staff. The *lettori* disputed this classi-
fication of their role on the grounds that it was *they* who in fact
took most of the lectures and seminars, designed the courses and
set the exams. Taking this to be a challenge, the *preside* asked
whether this were really true. The *lettori* said that it was, sur-
prised that he should ask, since it was common knowledge in the
university that they were used in this way. His next question was

a trap, for he asked pointedly whether they were in that case sug-
gesting that their head of department was employing them in breach
of contract. This was the case and, as it later transpired, he
knew it to be so, but he dared them to state it publicly in the
meeting. They did, and the meeting ended with polite smiles and
handshakes and vague promises about 'seeing what could be done'.
What was done, however, was something rather different from what
they had expected.

A few hours later, the delegation was summoned before the head
of department, who upbraided them for their stupidity. In her view
their actions amounted to treachery, to a stab in the back, and she
warned them that if it was 'trades-unionism' they wanted to play
they should not expect her to play fairly. If it came to legal
action she would simply lie, but she warned them that in any dispute
her word was worth more than theirs, since *she* had the support of
the university behind her, not they. However, she challenged them
in derisory tones to go ahead and try.

As if to underline their inferiority still further, she told
them they were naive to go to the dean 'behind her back' (as she
perceived it) - first, because he was her 'friend' and had tele-
phoned her immediately afterwards to tell her what had happened
(and, she implied, to warn her that if she could not keep her de-
partment under control there would be trouble), and secondly, be-
cause there was nothing in what they said that he did not already
know. His cordiality and surprise at hearing their news was all
feigned, and his advice on the phone was to sack any *lettori* that
caused problems - and that she could easily do, as they were in no
way indispensible to her. She reminded them that their jobs at the
university were discretionary on her whim and protection and that
to remain employed they merely had to please her and refrain from
rocking the boat. They were not indispensible to the course either,
since she could replace them with 'idiots off the street' if need
be. Finally, she dismissed any threat of industrial action on the
grounds that she was immune to it because she could not care less
about the course or the students: if need be, she would simply sus-
pend classes for a term or a year.

A few months later, most of the *lettori* had either lost their
jobs or resigned and, as promised, all English classes in the
faculty were suspended for that year.

Bureaucracy and the Demise of Patronage

This incident is an example of a social phenomenon not uncommon in
Italy. The questions are, how does one explain it, and is there a
pattern? Had the *lettori* infringed some invisible code of practice,
and if so, how could they have avoided all this? The rest of this
article addresses itself to this problem. The event is significant
not because of the issue that generated the conflict nor because of
the questions it raises about corruption or morality, but rather
because it reveals important points about the university system of

patronage and the pattern of behaviour that it generates. It also
provides clues to the theoretical problem of why patronage exists
at all in a modern bureaucracy whose formal organizing principles
are supposed to be the very opposite.

According to Marx and Engels, as well as Weber, feudal-like
relations and paternalistic clientelism were destined to shrink in
all modernizing societies with the advance of modern capitalism
and its rational bureaucratic institutions (Marx and Engels 1968:
44ff.; Weber 1964: 329-41; Weber 1968: 223ff.). For Weber, legal-
rational bureaucracy lies at the root of the modern industrial
state and is indispensible to it. The growth of bureaucratization,
'based upon an impersonal bond to the generally defined and func-
tional "duty of office"', he predicted, was inevitable in all
industrial societies (Weber 1948: 299ff.; cf. Warwick 1974).

Similar arguments about the inevitable decline of patron-
clientage in the face of 'modernization' continue to be raised by
anthropologists despite limited evidence to support this view
(Boissevain 1975; Theobald 1983). Indeed, far from withering away
with the advance of the modern state, there is copious evidence to
suggest that patron-clientelism has not only survived but has ad-
apted itself very successfully to the new social conditions brought
about by bureaucracy. Traditional patrons such as local landlords,
priests and doctors, no longer able to monopolize the channels of
communication between community and nation-state, have seen their
role taken over by new social actors such as political party bosses,
local government officials and state employees themselves. Para-
doxically, patronage seems to have developed its most elaborate
forms inside precisely these and other modern bureaucracies (Wein-
grod 1968; Blok 1969; Allum 1973; Lemarchand and Legge 1972; Aber-
crombie and Hill 1976; Zuckerman 1977; Ionescu 1977; Graziano 1977;
Kenna 1983). The interesting question is not so much how patronage
manages to flourish inside bureaucracies when in theory they are
antagonistic modes of organization, but what sort of sociological
and psychological framework facilitates and structures these sets
of seemingly contradictory relationships? What are the cultural
rules that govern behaviour inside these bureaucratic organizations?

The Italian university, like many bureaucratic organizations,
is a highly complex social environment with its own specific sets
of rules, regulations, traditions and meanings. It is a social
system: by no means a closed system, but one sufficiently insulated
from the rest of society that it has been allowed to develop its
own peculiar *modus vivendi*. To understand how the system works and
what factors shape university behaviour, it is first necessary to
understand something of the character of the university and the
context in which these rules operate.

The Feudal Character of University Relations

Italians often boast that unlike Britain or Germany, where univers-
ity places are limited, in Italy anyone can go to university. The

idea of the élite university, they claim, has been replaced by the revolutionary idea of a 'mass university' which in theory was one of the great achievements of the 1968 movement. On paper this is all true, the result being that Italy has some 800,000 university students and a relatively higher graduate population (2.8%) than in Britain.[2] In practice, however, little of any substance seems to have changed as a result of the great student influx. Lessons and courses are still conducted as before, only now they are held in swollen lecture theatres with inadequate seating facilities (one of the criticisms that prompted the wave of student protests in 1985). Student-staff relations have grown more anonymous, lecturers more lofty and remote, and the inadequacies and chaos created by the situation provide a perfect smokescreen behind which the ancient structure of power, manipulation and élite-formation has again consolidated itself.

Sociologists sometimes call the Italian university system an 'industry for mass scholarization', but the analogy is misleading. The view from the inside, as expressed by students and lecturers, is that the university produces little except mass mediocrity and the conditions for its own survival. (The 'best universities', they say, are those run either privately or by the Catholic Church.) Far from creating mass higher education, its functions were commonly perceived as reducing youth unemployment in the provinces and maintaining comfortable positions of status and power for established lecturers and professors (*docente*).

These individuals, they say, are the modern equivalents of the traditional landlords. Significantly, they are even referred to colloquially as *i baroni* ('the barons'). The analogy is an appropriate one, for just as feudal barons dominated a highly stratified social order based around status and property rights and the lord's personal jurisdiction over his tenants (Bloch 1961), so some modern university 'barons' occupy similar structural positions within their faculties. They too preside over a social hierarchy based on status, rank, power, and personal domination over subordinates, and just as feudal lords gave protection to clients in return for taxes, favours and personal loyalty, university professors are expected to 'protect' their supporters. Personal loyalty and obedience, in turn, is expected from the clients - as the case-study illustrates.

University *docente*, therefore, often treat 'their' departments as personal property or 'fiefdoms'. The system actually encourages high-ranking individuals to become power-brokers and patrons of weaker clients through the extraordinary degree of subjective, arbitrary, and unchecked authority over departmental employees that it grants them. The system therefore creates the role for modern patrons to fill. The separation between the individual and the office or rank he holds within the organization - a separation fundamental in legal-rational bureaucracy - not only fails to occur in the university, it is also not usually even *recognized* as a

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[2] The Istituto Centrale di Statistica (ISTAT 1985) puts the exact figure at 773,411 for the year 1984-5.

necessary rule. The distinction is typically blurred, either be-
cause the formal rules governing conduct are ambiguous, or because
they are simply ignored. University jobs therefore become part of
the private spoils of power, and the notion of an 'impersonal bond
to the generally defined and functional "duty of office"' an
official myth.

Social identity within the university tends to be largely a
matter of which departmental faction one belongs to (or is seen to
belong to). Few people manage to remain immune or detached from
the clientelist networks or factions: the individual alone, without
a patron or interest group to protect him, finds it difficult to
survive in the competitive university environment. When someone
obtains a job as researcher or reader the question that is invari-
ably asked, therefore, is 'who got it for him?' or 'what horse was
he riding?'. The assumption is always that it is 'recommendations'
(*raccomandazioni* or *una zeppa*), and behind-the-scenes string-
pulling rather than merit that determines who gets the job.[3] Uni-
versity staff are classified and identified according to their
patron, and few posts are obtained independently of broker inter-
vention.

At one job interview, for example, a foreign lector was sur-
prised to find herself the only candidate for the post advertised.
All the other applicants (and there had been many) had simply been
excluded from the shortlist. The appointment had already been set-
tled through behind-the-scenes negotiations. Interestingly, how-
ever, the bogus interview still had to be conducted. Furthermore,
it was carried out with the utmost ceremony and formality - even
though those present all knew that the 'selection' process was a
charade and that the outcome was already fixed.

Why such concern is given to the 'appearance' of profession-
alism is explored below. The point to stress here is that for the
'beneficiaries' of such patronage this favouritism is seldom in
their long-term interests, for the price paid for the job is etern-
al indebtedness, and loss of independence and professional self-
esteem. The relationship compromises any individual who accepts
the role of client, for he is then not only personally bound to his
patron but also increasingly caught up in the web of power itself -
which he cannot challenge for fear of sanctions and of denouncing
himself.

Junior lecturers become embroiled still further as they pro-
gress up the career ladder, as patronage is also exercised through
control over promotion and publications. Interestingly, it is
usually the *docente*, not their subordinates, who try to portray the
relationship as one of personal friendship and equality rather than
power, domination and inequality. Typically, therefore, it is the
docente who try to put the relationship on a more informal, moral
footing, who decide to exchange the more personal *tu* for the more
formal *lei* in address, and who couch the relationship in the

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[3] The colloquial phrase often used in this context is *Lui a preso
una zeppa*, which generally means 'influential friends found him the
job'; *una zeppa*, literally translated, means 'a wedge'.

language and idioms of 'friendship' (*amicizia*), 'favours' and
'mutual loyalty'. To find patrons adopting this strategy might
seem rather surprising - almost a case of role reversal in fact,
for it is normally the weaker party that courts the attention and
'friendship' of the stronger (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1961: 35ff.; Campbell
1964: 223ff.). The answer may have something to do with what
Bailey (1971b) called the politics of reputation management and
with keeping up with the times. Since the 1970s, it has become
fashionable to do away with some of the traditional symbols of
hierarchy and inequality in Italy - and university lecturers are as
concerned about the public image they project as many other pro-
fessionals.

Some lecturers do find clientelism offensive to their notions
of merit and professional integrity, but they are a minority and
seldom reach positions of influence. Clientelism seems to be so
intrinsic to the functioning of the university system that, un-
officially, it is more or less institutionally recognised and sanc-
tioned, and anyone wishing to get up the career ladder soon learns
(or not, as in the case of foreign *lettori*) to play the system
by its own rules. Many are forced to adopt two very different pub-
lic faces: one within the university, one for the world outside.
For example, one head of department who played the role of a shrewd,
authoritarian patron *within* the university still managed to main-
tain a reputation *outside* the university for being a '68 militant
and supporter of the far-left 'Party of Proletarian Unity' (Pd'UP),
which opposes patronage and authoritarianism. To classify this be-
haviour simply as 'hypocrisy' would be wrong, for it is too common
a feature (perhaps even a survival strategy) in Italian profession-
al life to be dismissed so lightly. The label 'hypocrite' is in-
adequate for understanding the logic and rationality that underlies
such behaviour. That logic has to be understood in terms of the
broader conceptual framework of which it is a part.

A Conspiracy of Silence?

Attitudes to work at the university are generally very negative,
especially with regard to teaching (which is understandable, since
little prestige is attached to it). In the competition for status
and prestige, what counts most are bureaucratic power, publications
and influential friends, not teaching skill or administrative
efficiency. Indeed, the popular concept and practice of 'teaching'
is peculiarly authoritarian and can be summed up as the 'knower'
telling the 'non-knower' the facts of his discipline. The model is
that of the traditional master instructing an apprentice. A 'good'
lecturer, therefore, is an instructor, rather than an educator or
facilitator, who behaves like a philosophical luminary imparting
knowledge to assembled followers.[4]

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[4] Significantly, there is no 'teacher-training' to speak of in

Students are frustrated and disillusioned with the university's clientelist system, but most are resigned to it, accept it as the norm, and adapt their behaviour accordingly. Most see their degree mainly as a vehicle for social mobility and a higher-status job and have little interest in their studies beyond passing exams with minimal effort - even if it means cheating (which everyone does, they claim). This attitude is rational, given that clientelism may often pay greater dividends than serious study or merit. The system discourages students from being too independent, either intellectually or 'politically', for if teaching means the 'knower telling', then 'learning' means the 'non-knower getting to know what the knower has told'. The logic of this view is that if a student thinks something 'different', it may be interpreted as him not having learnt properly, and he could therefore be penalised in examinations if it pleases the *docente* to do so.

Typically, therefore, students get through degrees by cheating or other ploys, such as 'personal recommendation'. Even parents accept this and will often contact lecturers before exams to put in a good word, a bribe or a plea for their son or daughter. On one occasion, a *raccomandato* was passed with a distinction in an oral English examination. The student could barely string a coherent sentence together, yet his pass was justified by the *docente*, who awarded it on the grounds that his linguistic abilities were latent and his grasp of the language 'intuitive'.

The arbitrariness of the examination system makes clientelism virtually inevitable. Exams in most disciplines are oral rather than written, each lasting anything from three to thirty minutes, after which the examination panel immediately confers a mark (out of thirty). Generally speaking, the greater the number to be examined on the same day the more arbitrary the grading, since the process becomes strained to its limits. Furthermore, there are no explicit, objective or consistent criteria for judging a pass or a fail. With no written record of the examination and no independent external examiner's assessment, professors can reward or punish as they please. Assessment is therefore frequently impulsive, despotic and capricious, and students are noticeably timid and deferential in front of their lecturers for fear of incurring their wrath.

The content of modern university patronage may be different now from what it was in the past, but the structure along which it is patterned is much the same as the traditional patronage of rural Italy: an asymmetrical, hierarchical, dyadic relationship of domination and subordination shrouded in paternalism and sanctioned by idioms of family, friendship and loyalty (Silverman 1985: 89-98). Just as Italian peasant societies were dominated by a local élite which maintained its position through its monopoly over land, the means of production, the means of coercion and the means of 'orientation', so in the university, the *docente* élite are patrons

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Italy. Furthermore, it is only in the last few years that most universities have begun Ph.D. programmes. Most lecturers are recruited by personal co-option.

because they control the means of intellectual production (public-
ations), coercion (examination results, grants, promotion) and
orientation (or what is considered 'valid knowledge').[5]

Three Further Rules of University Clientelism

The rationale governing much of the behaviour of university person-
nel can be summarized in three cardinal principles or 'cultural
idioms': *figura, omertà* and *legalità*.

1. Figura

In the competitive university arena, as in much of the Mediter-
ranean, one of the most precious and jealously defended resources
is personal reputation. In the university, as in Italian society
at large, it is one's *figura* ('image') that constitutes the key
component of reputation. As lecturers privately admit, what is
important about their jobs *vis-à-vis* reputation is not what they
do, but the image they present to the world beyond their depart-
ment. It is of little interest to others whether someone actually
works hard or cares about the job: far more important is that the
appearance of these qualities is attended to, and that the impres-
sion of professionalism is cultivated for public consumption. As
Italians say, what counts is that one 'cuts a good figure' (*fare
una bella figura*). In everyday life, *figura* is a continual source
of personal concern, to some extent similar to 'honour'. Like
'honour', it is a quality that has to be vigilantly watched and
defended (cf. Davis 1977; Campbell 1964; Peristiany (ed.) 1965;
Schneider and Schneider 1976).
     But the paradox of this is that, privately, nobody is de-
ceived by these contrived, formal public faces, yet publicly, with-
in the university, the rule is that everyone must act as if they
were. The dichotomy between 'public' and 'private' reality is
sometimes stretched to almost schizophrenic proportions, i.e. pri-
vately everyone knows that Professor 'X' is incompetent and a
fraud and that he may be breaking the law, but 'publicly' no one
will say so, for that would transgress another rule - the unwritten
code of silence. This is because everyone, to some extent, is im-
plicated. The system may be cumbersome and 'corrupt' but it works,
and many people have a vested interest in maintaining it. This
emphasis on 'appearance' creates the cultural conditions for the
second governing rule, *omertà*.

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[5] The notion of 'means of orientation' (i.e. religion, knowledge,
ideology) is taken from Blok 1974: 34-8.

2. Omertà - *Conspiracy of Silence*

Omertà is the code of secrecy traditionally associated with the Mafia, but the concept applies equally to Italian university academics. Indeed, many junior lecturers and students say that the *docente* are a kind of Mafia, that is, an organized system of power-brokers who, in their own way, construct clienteles and carry out entrepreneurial activities to safeguard their interests. The rule-breaking collusion and patronage goes on at all levels and in most universities, as is testified by the frequent newspaper reports whenever a scandal is exposed (e.g. Anon. 1983; Ferrara 1983; Scalfari 1983).

The fact that professors shirk lessons, that junior researchers (or lectors) illegally run their courses for them, that examination results are forged and that jobs are obtained by private deals are all spoken of as though they are regular events. University staff hold it to be self-evident that the payment of their salaries is often delayed for months - sometimes years - not because of bureaucratic inefficiency but because someone along the chain of payment is speculating on their wages and creaming off the accumulated interest. At the bottom end of the hierarchy, students hold it to be self-evident that other students will try and cheat to pass exams. The common strategies employed to this end range from bribery and coercion of examiners to employing someone to take the exam in their name or contracting another to supply them with a thesis to plagiarize. More common still, students will often hire someone to write their thesis for them (the going rate in 1984-5 was one to three million lire). None of these students ever suggested that to cheat in this way was in any sense 'morally' wrong.

The occurrence of these practices is no secret to the university authorities either: privately, many lecturers freely admit to knowing all this, but none will say so publicly. Ask them to do so and they will behave like the witnesses at a Mafia trial who 'saw nothing' because they were 'looking the other way when the shots were fired'.

Rule-bending, clientelism and silence are the university's *modus vivendi*. To break this would mean rupturing the tissue of a system that has been based on these practices for decades, if not centuries. Few junior lecturers would contemplate risking this, for even if they had the will to do so, it is unlikely that anything would come of it, apart from their own downfall. The attitude, therefore, is better to remain silent than to upset the system - however imperfect it may be.

Vital to the survival of the system is that the pretence of *bella figura* and the code of *omertà* are rigorously maintained. Any breach of these would threaten the whole system of clientelism, and since collusion and malpractice extend right up the chain of patronage within and beyond the university, indicting one university could have serious ramifications for others and for their political patrons beyond. To prevent this happening the *docente* - who normally behave in a highly individualistic way - have developed an acute sense of group identity in the face of a perceived mutual threat.

Here the fission-fusion principle operates: faced with a collective
enemy, they close ranks (hence the head of department's confidence
about always being able to rely on the university's support) -
which also helps to explain the conspiracy of silence.

3. Legalità

The third principle governing university behaviour is *legalità* - an
obsessive preoccupation with legality and form. Knowing that the
system is held together by the precarious bonds of mutually sanc-
tioned silence and co-involvement in practices which they would
rather not admit to, and knowing that the centripetal forces of
self-interest and fear may be inadequate to suppress the tensions
generated by the system itself, many *docente* are highly wary of the
law.
     Interestingly, it is not fear that the truth might be *dis-
covered* by the authorities or by political enemies - for university
malpractices have been written about in the popular press recently
(e.g. Mariotti 1986) - but fear instead that someone from the in-
side might break the conspiracy of silence and make public denuncia-
tions before the authorities. That would be far more serious, for
were it to happen the authorities would be compelled (however re-
luctantly) to act, or to be seen to act, for their *figura* would be
under the spotlight and they would then be threatened with a loss
of face if they did not do something.
     University clientelism is therefore a kind of open secret. As
long as nobody openly denounces it, those who know and are in theory
responsible can officially feign ignorance. Legally and political-
ly, they are 'covered'. But if denunciations are made public, the
machinery is kick-started into motion; the problem has slipped into
the open where it becomes out of control, and the authorities must
then carry things through to their logical conclusion. Each chain
in the link, and each of these bureaucratic organizations, is it-
self compelled to proceed further, for they too are bound by a
matrix of social rules which govern the public and professional
conduct of their individual members.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that patronage in Italy, far from
being rendered obsolete with modernization, has flourished under
the conditions generated by modern state bureaucracies. It also
shows *how* patronage has been able to survive in these conditions
and the specific form it has taken, a pattern modelled on the
traditional forms of clientelism that existed for centuries in the
small-scale rural communities of central Italy. Yet although
similar in structure, the rules and logic governing this type of
patronage are slightly (but not fundamentally) different. The con-
sequences of these rules were seen vividly in the conflict situation

generated by the *lettori* who were ignorant of them. What the subsequent analysis showed was that these rules constitute a highly structured and interrelated set of ideas, norms and principles, each one supporting the other, and all supporting a complex hierarchy of clientelism and power. It is not the university's formal bureaucratic rules so much as these informal ones that give form and meaning to social relations and behaviour within the university.

In other words, there is a conceptual structure that organizes and legitimates the pattern of patronage found in the university. It is the systemic nature of patron-client relations rather than the manipulations of scheming entrepreneurs that is being stressed here as the key to understanding university relations. It is important to stress the systemic and structural aspect of patronage for this is all too often overlooked or dismissed. Michael Korovkin's recent study (1988) of patron-clientelism in Italy, for example, concludes by suggesting that the patron-client tie is a free and voluntary relationship entered into for mutual benefit. The argument is that patrons and clients are a 'sort of loosely organized team ... both involved in a rather well-concerted effort to exploit the nation-state together', and that patrons are a kind of totem which their clients are proud to be associated with, as it allows them to manipulate the nation-state (ibid.: 123).

In most instances of patronage in Italy, the only sort of choice clients have is between alternative patrons. This is not a real choice because they cannot choose to opt out of clientelist relations at all, and contrary to Korovkin's view, clients do not have much leverage over their patrons. The relationship is only of advantage to the client if he is rewarded by the patron for his loyalty and continued subordination, but this is hardly 'teamwork', for as White remarks: 'A patron distributes rewards, not to the most needy, but to those who can do most for him' (White 1980: 162). Far from being 'proud' of their association with powerful patrons, clients are more often humiliated and frustrated by it. Even the patrons themselves are caught up in a system they neither invented nor can easily alter or control; they are merely its more privileged custodians who play out, with varying degrees of success and imagination, the roles the system allocates to them.

In identifying the conceptual structure behind the university system of patronage and analyzing its cultural features, one begins to see the logic and rationality beneath the otherwise inexplicable behaviour of university lecturers and their students. The unspoken set of rules and conventions surrounding the idioms of 'appearance', 'secrecy' and 'legality' - coupled with an ethos that is the very opposite of the Weberian legal-rational ideal-type - are the keys to understanding the university system of patronage.

One study of an Italian university may not be sufficient grounds upon which to make large generalizations, but it does at least illustrate something of the mechanics of modern patron-client relations and how they operate. It would be wrong to think that all universities in Italy follow an identical pattern, but it would also be equally unrealistic to assume that the university is unique in this respect. Patron-clientelism is endemic in Italian society: it exists in trade unions, private industry, the church, in most

if not all the political parties, and in all government ministries. It is the major factor in Italian government and politics (Sassoon 1986: 8-9). Whether this can be blamed, as White (1980), Sassoon (1986) and Allum (1973) argue, on the Christian Democrats - Italy's political rulers since 1944 - is debatable, though it is significant that the university is generally spoken of as a Christian Democrat patrimony, and most university appointments involve party political mediation.

People in Britain would call much of Italian university behaviour 'corruption' - which perhaps reveals more about the British value system than that of Italian university personnel. 'Corruption' is, after all, a culturally relative term. More significant, however, is that few of those involved in rule-breaking and clientelist malpractices actually see this kind of behaviour as 'corrupt' or wrong. Since the expectation is that everyone else is cheating or playing the same game (or would be stupid not to), they have no moral scruples against doing so themselves. 'Sincerity' in Italy is not always given the positive evaluation that it receives, for example, in Britain and the United States. People who are frank and emotionally honest in their professional dealings (in the sense of following the correct rules, speaking out against their infringement, expressing indignation at the behaviour of a patron) are more likely to be considered as at best indiscrete and naive, at worse gullible and bad mannered. Rule breaking may be 'contrary to the law', but in Italy this does not necessarily mean a great deal, for as the popular saying goes, 'the law is for idiots' (*la legge è per i fessi*), or 'for every law there is a way round it' (*fatta la legge, trovata l'inganno*). In this respect, university personnel are merely echoing the diffuse cultural attitudes of contempt and distrust for the law and the state common throughout Italy.

Clearly there is a large gulf here between 'formal' and 'informal' behaviour, between 'public' and 'private' presentations of the 'self'. Likewise, there is a corresponding gulf between professed universalistic, legal-rational rules and the more disguised, personalistic and vernacular rules that are seldom explicitly defined. In each case, there are two systems pulling the individual in seemingly contradictory directions. Perhaps it is this dichotomy that is the real organizing principle of university life. Undoubtedly it helps us understand the logic of university behaviour and its apparent double standards.

In saying that there is a logic and a set of rules governing key aspects of social behaviour at the university, no attempt has been made to explain their origin: that would require a historical analysis beyond the scope of this paper. How to classify this kind of professor-subordinate relationship is another problem this paper has not addressed: is it a bureaucratic or a patron-client relationship, or simply a class relationship? Certainly we can detect elements of all three at work. But the peculiar character of social behaviour inside the university seems to stem from a highly specific blend of impersonal bureaucracy and disguised patronage. The effect of this is, as Lemarchand and Legge observed (1972), that in its actual operation the system swings back into the clientelistic mould of its predecessor. The result is a hybrid situation in which

clientelism resuscitates itself in the traditional interstices of modernizing polities.

But this is not unique to Italian universities, or to Italy, however endemic the practice of clientelism may be. To some extent, all bureaucratic organizations in the Mediterranean seem to evolve practices and 'ways of doing things' peculiar to themselves that are not always strictly consistent with the formal rules laid down by statute. Similarly, most tend to adopt different codes of conduct for behaviour inside and outside the organization. In other words, most are 'two-faced'. The more power they have the more this tendency is likely to be reinforced, in which case the final rule is not so much 'keep within the law' as 'make sure you are not caught breaking it'.

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CONTENTS

ALAN DUNDES (ed.), *The Flood Myth*, Berkeley etc.: University of
California Press 1988. vi, 437pp., References, Index. $48.00 /
$15.95.

Flood myths, which are treated at length in the first volume of
Frazer's *Folklore in the Old Testament*, possess an enormous litera-
ture, to which this anthology provides an excellent introduction.
The editor, the prominent Californian anthropologist/folklorist,
contributes a brief introduction to the whole book, helpful context-
ualizing notes before each of the twenty-six readings, one essay of
his own, and a commented bibliography. Few cross-references are
provided, but the volume makes sense as an ordered whole.
    We start, inevitably, with extracts from Genesis. An Old
Testament scholar neatly teases out the two versions which have
been combined in the text we now read - P, that of the Priestly
writer, and J, the Yahwist source. Christian tradition naturally
tended to assume that flood stories reported from other parts of
the world were derivative from the true, Noachian version, so when
George Smith reported to the Society for Biblical Archaeology in
1872 that he had deciphered a very ancient Assyrian version (in
the Gilgamesh epic), he caused something of a sensation. Smith
himself, on first reading the relevant tablet, ran around the room
in his excitement and began to undress! Subsequent work assembled
a number of other ancient Mesopotamian versions, the earliest going
back to before 1800 BC; and it is generally agreed that the biblic-
al version is essentially the same story as is told in the non-
Jewish traditions.
    How should one attempt to understand this body of tradition?
One notably implausible essayist tries to interpret the myth in
terms of Canaanite fertility rituals: Noah is 'the genius of vege-
tation'. Only marginally less wildly, Woolley claims to identify
the flood in his excavations at Ur, and proposes that the story was
among the oral traditions which Abraham carried with him when he
left that city. But the topic cannot really be tackled without
taking account of versions from further afield, and the anthology
moves on to Ovid's Philemon and Baucis, who lived in southern
Turkey (the mainstream Greek myth of Deucalion is treated only in
passing). Hologeistic comparativism comes into its own with Frazer,
who devoted his 1916 Huxley Memorial Lecture to the subject; but he
was only following in the footsteps of German scholars such as
Andree, Usener and Winternitz, who are less well known in the
English-speaking world.
    How can this almost global distribution be explained? Many,
Frazer included, settle for a polygenetic naturalistic theory of
local inundations recorded in 'folk memory', but there are other
types of approach. Thus the jurist Kelsen sees in the narrative an

expression of the principle of retribution, 'one of humanity's old-
est ideas'. The psychoanalyst Róheim sees myths in general as
originating in dreams, and flood myths in particular as the retell-
ing of waking dreams resulting from pressure in the bladder. Dundes
himself associates the widespread appeal of flood myths with a dif-
ferent fluid-filled bodily cavity: the deluge is the cosmogonic
projection of the waters released by the bursting of the amniotic
sac, a projection due to male envy of female creativity.

After these pleasing theoretical adventures we return to
regional studies. The reviewer was particularly interested to en-
counter, from a hitherto unpublished M.A. thesis on Mesoamerican
flood myths, the motif of the Mysterious Housekeeper who is taken
as wife by the lone survivor from the flood. The motif is not only
alien to Christian tradition, which has so often infiltrated oral
tradition in the Americas, but is also said to be unknown in Euro-
pean folklore. The author, Horcasitas, cautiously identifies cog-
nates elsewhere in North and South America, and I have elsewhere
recorded very similar myths in East Nepal and briefly noted their
salience in the Himalayan region ('Jaw-Khliw cycle'). Here is
another shred of evidence for those who suspect that cultural sim-
ilarities between east and west shores of the Pacific (e.g. as re-
gards shamanism) are due to a common heritage more ancient than
students of language families have usually claimed to identify.

Other regional pieces cover South America (in Lévi-Straussian/
semiotic jargon), the Cameroons (the relative rarity of indigenous
flood myths in Africa has often been remarked upon), Philippines
(an Eliadean approach), North Thailand, Central Indian tribals, the
Tamils (by Shulman; highly complex material treated with textual
erudition), and apocryphal Jewish tradition. Kolig reports on
Northwest Australian aboriginals, for whom a small whitish monolith
in a certain clay pan represents the remnants of Noah's ark; he
argues against aetiological theories which see myths as originating
in a response to physical features of the landscape. Francis Lee
Utley provides a thoroughly professional sample of folklore studies
in the Aarne-Thompson tradition. His essay, based on study of no
less than 275 versions, presents the (mainly oral) variant of the
Bible story in which the Devil attempts to destroy the ark and at-
tains entry to it through Noah's wife - a variant which recalls the
behaviour of Mrs Noah in Britten's *Noye's Fludde*.

Four concluding essays describe attempts over the last four
centuries to reconcile the flood with contemporary notions of geo-
logy. The final piece, by Stephen Jay Gould, dates from 1982, and
tells of the court case at Little Rock, Arkansas, where fundament-
alist 'Creationists' attempted to control the teaching of science in
schools.

If anything is missing, it is any sustained questioning of the
central category itself. Why should one distinguish deluges from
cosmic catastrophes due to earthquake, fire, snow and the like?
How do flood myths relate to creation myths involving primal waters
but not involving the destruction of most of a pre-existing human-
ity? And what about those myths, so common in the Sino-Tibetan
area, where the emphasis lies on the process of drainage of waters
which may be primal but are explicitly localised rather than cosmic?

Flood myths are doubtless the most studied of all widely distri-
buted myths, but there are plenty of questions still to be asked.

N.J. ALLEN

MARCEL DETIENNE, *The Creation of Mythology* (transl. Margaret Cook),
Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1986 [1981].
xii, 134pp., Notes, Indexes. £21.25 / £9.25.

The 'mythology' of this book's title refers both to myths them-
selves and to the scientific/academic endeavour to describe and
analyze them, corresponding to the Ancient Greek terms *muthos* and
muthologia respectively. Detienne is particularly interested in
the second term, first coined by Plato, for its constituent roots
indicate how mythology (in both senses) gets created; a rational
discourse (*logos*) describes a false or fanciful discourse (*muthos*).
For Plato, myths were ridiculous ideas often promulgated in faulty
arguments. Worst of all, myths were mere repetition, stories which
people mouthed unreflectingly. He pointed contemptuously to
mothers and nurses who corrupted the minds of young children with
such fables. The ideal republic needed to discern and exclude
myths in order to stem the pernicious tide of tradition, even if
this meant placing the great poets under ban. Yet, how free of
myth was Plato's *Republic*, with its musings on the nature and fate
of the soul? And how discontinuous with the notion of tradition
were his *Laws*, which attempted ultimately to codify custom so that
it could be consensual and thus coercive?
    Every age has its own scientific discourse, its own *logos*,
which it can apply to the study of myths. The eighteenth-century
Frenchman Fontenelle considered myths as stories which primarily
gave pleasure to the imagination while failing to persuade the in-
tellect. For late nineteenth-century academicians such as Max
Müller, Paul Decharme and Adalbert Kuhn, who held chairs in Com-
parative Mythology (or something similar), myths were marked by
their scandalous quality. Indeed a number of Greek myths do tell
of incest, cannibalism, murder and castration. In order for the
Greeks to remain the admired bearers of shining reason, such tales
had to be placed in perspective, which meant inventing a category
separated from reason and sometimes even religion. For Tylor,
myths represented fairly rational accounts of savage and barbarian
fantasies which were not that different from the reveries of our
own childhoods. Only mature adults in civilized societies (Eng-
land and a few other places) had emerged from the mythologizing
state into a reasonability enabling them both to sympathize with,
and to study, myths. Detienne astutely notes that Tylor was a
Quaker who had elevated himself even above sectarian squabbles
within the Christian Church.

Twentieth-century theories of myth are still thicker on the
ground, and Detienne briefly reviews the contributions of several
thinkers, notably Lévy-Bruhl, Cassirer and Lévi-Strauss. The point
is that each attempt to determine what myths are, each mythology,
amounts to nothing short of a full-blown philosophy. In the ap-
praisal of A.J. Greimas, 'the interpretation of myths gives rise to
a new ideological language, that is to say, a meta-language with
its models and concepts' (cited here on p. 115). Such an observa-
tion leads back to Ancient Greece, where philosophy first became
aware of its own existence through the contemplation of myths.
This, at least, was Cornford's opinion of the Milesian philosophers
as contrasted with Hesiod.

Detienne also reviews some of the other concomitants of the
rise of philosophy. In G. Thomson's estimation, the coinage of
money paved the way toward abstraction, while for J.-P. Vernant it
was politics which laid the foundations of systematic rationalism.
In the archaic period *muthos* was initially indistinct from *logos*;
both simply meant 'speech'. One of the first indications of the
emergent inferiority of *muthos* comes from a political incident on
the island of Samos reported by Herodotus. A group of islanders,
common people, rose up and seized control of the island from the
ruling tyrant who, along with the local nobility, labelled them
muthietai, 'a bunch of pseuds', in comparison to the *polietai*, the
'true' occupants of the polis.

Ultimately Detienne contends that mythology, in the sense of
a science of myths, originated in Greece and that every subsequent
attempt to derive a science of mythology bears comparison with the
ancient experience, for in some fashion it retraces the same steps.
As he puts it, 'to speak of mythology is always to speak Greek'
(p. 123). This contention, that anthropological theorizations are
mirrored by Greek (ethnographic) phenomena, strikingly resembles
the view taken by Michael Herzfeld in his recent *Anthropology
Through the Looking-Glass* (Cambridge 1987). Although Herzfeld is
concerned with modern rather than ancient Greece, both see Hellas
as a model for developments in the field of anthropology generally.

Unfortunately, however, the message of *The Creation of Mytho-
logy* is obscured by the author's prose style, which is replete with
entre nous witticisms and obscure *sous-entendus*. A share of the
blame must undoubtedly rest with the translator, who has not rend-
ered the text into satisfactory English, preferring instead to pre-
serve the author's long sentences intact. A prime example of this
would be the unintelligible five-line concatenation on page 123,
the opening clause of which is cited above. As if this were not
enough, the volume is studded with misprints, misspellings and
anomalous citations of book titles and authors' names. Finally,
in the notes all page numbers of cross-references to other passages
in the text are left blank, indicating that the book was carelessly
rushed into print. These obstacles to clear comprehension make it
likely that only earnest devotees of Detienne or committed students
of the history of mythology will make headway with this book.
Others will prefer to consult his earlier *Dionysos Slain* or else
await future publications which will, one hopes, receive better
treatment from an English-language press.

CHARLES STEWART

FRANÇOIS HARTOG, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* (transl. Janet Lloyd) [The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics 5; gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt], Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1988. xxv, 381pp., Index. $42.00.

The first part of Hartog's book is concerned with the building up of evidence to show how Herodotus used the method of systematic differentiation to represent a concept - in this case 'The Scythians'. Using evidence from the relevant passages, Hartog suggests that they were represented as fundamentally different because of their nomadism. By drawing on an impressive wealth of classical sources, he demonstrates his point meticulously, showing that in accounts both preceding and succeeding Herodotus, the Scythians were described as anarchic, uncultured, or savage, all of which could be traced back to their nomadism and apolitical (NB literally 'cityless') life in implied contrast to the Greeks' 'cultured' city life. Herodotus, however, gave the representation a positive rather than the usual negative interpretation by use of a novel twist, imputing to the Scythians a rational justification in adopting this way of life, which was a strategy to avoid falling into the hands of an enemy.

The discussion that follows throughout the second section is devoted to examining the techniques used by Herodotus to persuade his readers to believe in 'the other' being constructed in his text. Hartog seeks to analyze the 'operative rules in the fabrication of the other', examples of this representation having been cited throughout the first part. Hartog briefly touches upon the question of the reference point in the first section, and in the second section he elaborates on this point. Undoubtedly, the implications of the shared knowledge of a confident and imperial power as was fifth-century Athens is particularly interesting to those familar with arguments raised by Edward Said, Rana Kabbani, Clifford, Marcus, *et al*.

By giving copious examples of the rhetorical or literary devices of inversion, analogy and comparison, and the representations of the miraculous, Hartog shows how Herodotus' audience would have received the text. He then goes on to discuss how credibility is invested in the narrator by examining the part played by the narrator's authority. The veracity of all his statements is founded on 'autopsy', (literally 'own eye') i.e. himself as witness to an event, a place, a practice, etc. The narrator relies on oral information, the discussion of which Hartog ties in with a consideration of Goody's theories of literacy. Hartog examines other strategies used by Herodotus as narrator to persuade his reader of the credibility of his text: first, the presentation of several different versions of an oral account, at times offering his own evaluations of each, at times offering none, but most often giving his reader the impression of using his own criteria for judgement; secondly, the different levels of identity through which the narrator operates, such as: I Herodotus living in Athens, we Greeks altogether, we the Black Sea Greeks, etc.

Hartog concludes his study by examining the effect of Herodotus on those who succeeded him. Despite plagiarisms by some later travel writers and historians, he was repudiated as a liar by most who came after, often on the grounds that his accounts were just too fantastical to be acceptable: in other words, his representation of the other was too 'different'. He was only rehabilitated in 1566, by Henri Estienne, at a time when the spate of travellers' accounts of the East was just beginning. Having been shown the way by Marco Polo, they were suddenly encouraged by the recently prevailing conditions of European imperialism and the search for information, new trade and missionary links. These circumstances were similar to those in which Herodotus composed his *Histories*. Estienne was able to show, by analogy with the reaction and attitude of his contemporaries to accounts of contemporary others, that Herodotus was not lying, and that 'if we consider the differences between our own and those of neighbouring peoples, we shall find them hardly any the less strange in their own places'.

Hartog's final conclusion is that the template underlying the whole text is a representation of power, which is to be understood in the appropriate context of fifth-century Greece. He provides scant information on this period of history, however, presumably in the expectation that anyone reading this book will have sufficient familiarity with it to appreciate the implications of his images.

Although the book is dense and demanding, it is readable and enjoyable. Because it is novel in its treatment of the problem of Herodotus' reliability, through considerations other than merely those of his sources, Hartog's study provides intellectual stimulation for the classicist. It is also of value to anthropologists interested in the representations of power.

SHAHIN BEKHRADNIA

CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS, *Anthropology and Myth: Lectures 1951-1982* (transl. Roy Willis), Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1987. viii, 222pp., Index. £25.00.

The French academic world is curiously devoted to publishing not merely full articles, books and reviews, but reports of a sort that would never see the light of day here: they range from the interim *positions de thèses* of doctoral students in a journal like *ASEMI* to Mauss's *interventions et débats* that Victor Karady, as editor, included in the master's collected *Oeuvres*, and from the collective research reports of CNRS *équipes* to the annual reports of professorial lecturing at the Collège de France and elsewhere. The present book falls into the last category. It is a careful translation of Lévi-Strauss's *Paroles données* (Paris: Plon 1984), though the English title is misleading: these are not actual lectures

(Lévi-Strauss doesn't work that way), and perhaps forty per cent of them are devoted to kinship and the values associated with it, and not to myth at all.

Unlike the translator, I am inclined to doubt that the publication of such reports serves a useful purpose in general, even if the occasional exception may be granted for such an influential and controversial figure. But even this case is no real substitute for the author's own more extended treatments of these topics, nor for the flood of others' exegeses of his work that has been let loose. At around nine pages to the pound it all adds up to an expensive indulgence, and those responsible for it must think that the typical anthropologist suffers from some sort of collecting mania, rather like an ageing Tommy whose sole remaining purpose in life is to get hold of every last record Vera Lynn ever made. Well, there are no new tunes here.

But perhaps if this sampler makes the publishers some money they might care to start employing a proof-reader: not for the first time in reading one of their books, counting the misprints proved to be quite a distraction.

ROBERT PARKIN

GARRY MARVIN, *Bullfight*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1988. xi, 191pp., Figures, Plates, Notes, Appendix, Bibliography, Index. £17.50.

Five years ago, at the beginning of a big bullfight during the annual Pamplonan fiesta, an American dramatically stood up, pulled off his clothes, and revealed the Superman costume he was wearing underneath. With his arms stuck straight out in front of him, he was picked up by his neighbours and passed horizontally around the bullring. The band played. Thousands cheered. Wine was thrown. Champagne spurted in all directions (mainly upwards). Even the president of the day's event clapped. As the flying visitor was manoeuvred back to his seat, the audience let out a final great cry. Excited spectators laughed, smiled, and drank some more. Now they were ready for a good afternoon's entertainment.

Marvin argues that this love of spectacle in an ambience of fiesta is only half (if even that) of the pleasure to be had at a bullfight. *Aficionados* want to see a good *torero* in action. They haven't come to see melodramatic showmanship nor death-defying stunts by foolhardy matadors. No, they have come to see highly skilled practitioners risk their lives in a emotionally compelling performance of agility, grace and much style. If the matador's passes with his cape move the audience, then their forceful *Olés!* of appreciation stimulate him to further memorable exhibition. Rare, inspired performers can get the people on their feet crying with tears of joy. It may be bloody stuff, but you don't sit unmoved.

To Marvin, the bullfight is a sentimental education, a collective text of significant cultural themes presented to the audience in a complex, stylized and emotionally charged form and setting. The main theme is masculinity. So if the bullfight can be viewed as an interpretative event, it becomes an Andalusian male reading of Andalusian male experience, a story they tell themselves. The matador is not a god, but one of them, made large.

Marvin uses little jargon. His accessible, sober account starts by describing the form and stages of a bullfight. He then provides a historical outline and briefly lists related bull events before discussing in detail important characteristics of the fighting bull, the matador, and the values he incarnates. His main omission is not analyzing the different symbolic roles a bullfighter sequentially plays in the course of a corrida. For that, we must wait for Pitt-Rivers' long-promised book on bullfighting. This is not to damn Marvin's account, which is a clear, readable introduction to the topic, plainly intended for a wide audience. All the more pity, then, that the text is littered with so many misprints, and that the bibliography is unordered. Whatever happened to editors?

JEREMY MacCLANCY

HELEN CALLAWAY, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan/St Antony's 1987. xiv, 244pp., Maps, Tables, Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. No price given.

Gender, Culture and Empire turns the 'anthropological lens' on to a piece of recent history, in this case women in the colonial service in Nigeria, and produces, as a result, a fascinating and carefully documented analysis of women's roles in a semantic space reserved for men. Making extensive use of the resources of the Oxford Development Records Project, published and unpublished letters, memoirs, novels, interviews, and her own experience of many years' residence in Nigeria, Helen Callaway draws together evidence of a largely ignored and undervalued aspect of colonial history.

The book is divided into four sections: the first examines the notion of imperial culture and the place of women within its system of values. The second and third sections present a picture of the roles played by women as professional workers and as wives of colonial servants, and the fourth, of particular interest to anthropologists, evaluates popular representations of colonial women, suggesting alternative readings of accepted stereotypes.

The basic premise of the book is simple, that women's history has been systematically ignored and misrepresented. The important question to address, having amply demonstrated the complexity of

women's lives and the enormous value and variety of their contribu-
tion to the colonial enterprise, is, 'why should these European
women in the colonies remain all but invisible or else be represent-
ed in pejorative stereotypes?' (p. 227). Women, it seems, pose a
contradiction in a colonial setting. The frontier of empire encap-
sulates notions of a mythical realm of male action, an area in
which women, by their very existence, present a threat to masculine
sensibilities: 'This symbolic struggle for the salvation of the
soul was a male exercise of power and self-discipline; indeed,
women were perceived, mainly at the unconscious level, as a threat
to men's redemptive enterprise' (p. 231). The entry of women into
the colonial scene coincided with and facilitated a shift from the
ideal of paternalistic rule, the production of order out of cultur-
al chaos, to the values of service, cooperation and domestication.

A key to the negative stereotyping of women is the power of
dominant groups to control cognitive, semantic aspects of discourse.
Symbolic appropriation, to use Malcolm Chapman's term, provides a
mean of repressing the colonial contradiction. There was prolonged
opposition to the presence of women in the colonial service, as
wives or as independent professional workers. When they did ar-
rive, increasingly during and after the Second World War, they
found expectations of their appearance and behaviour constricting
and inappropriate: ' The dominant culture thus defined women in
logical opposition to men's self-definitions: the "ultra-masculine"
required the "ultra-feminine"' (p. 232).

A re-examination of negative female stereotypes in the light
of the semantic structures operating in the colonies enables us to
interpret the ethnography of colonial society. Women, for example,
were accused of excessive interest in entertaining and in a petty
social one-upmanship. To blame women, in a situation in which
their status is entirely dependent upon that of their husbands, and
in which, once married, they were usually required to give up pro-
fessional work, is to ignore the structural situation in which they
found themselves: 'The game of "entertaining" was set in motion ac-
cording to rules already becoming outmoded in the homeland; any
individual wife joining for the first time would find the board al-
ready in a state of play' (p. 235).

The chief focus of the book is not, however, women as seen
through male eyes but a presentation of women's experience as they
saw and recounted it. The positive contributions made by many in-
dividuals are celebrated and evidence the courage, dedication,
vision and sacrifice of colonial women which shines through their
memoirs and interviews. As Helen Callaway concludes: 'The well-
known saying, that "the women lost us the Empire" might then be
seen in a more positive way than its conventional use: that the
women contributed to the loss of the Empire by helping to gain the
Commonwealth. The "masculine" ethos of the imperial era - charac-
terized by hierarchy, authority, control and paternalism - had to
be replaced by what might be seen as more sympathetic understand-
ing, egalitarian rather than authoritarian relations, diplomacy
and flexibility. In relation to the European women who took part,
the study of colonial Nigeria thus reveals "another meaning", a
meaning and a history that have been hidden' (p. 244).

Gender, Culture and Empire, winner of the 1987 Amaury Talbot Prize for African Anthropology, will be of value to all those interested in the ways in which ideology affects popular representations, as well as those with an interest in questions of gender, in Africa and in colonial relations.

FIONA BOWIE

MELFORD E. SPIRO, *Culture and Human Nature: Theoretical Papers of Melford E. Spiro* (eds. Benjamin Kilbourne and L.L. Langness), Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1987. xv, 309pp., Index. £31.95 / £11.95.

In the USA, far more than in Britain, there is a professional interest in fundamental questions about the connection between culture and human nature. Psychological anthropology is a recognized branch of the subject. Melford Spiro is one of the most distinguished of those writing in this area. A collection of his theoretical papers is therefore something of an event.

The essays range from 1961 to 1984. They include his well-known paper 'Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation' (1964) and his contribution on the so-called 'Virgin Birth' debate, 'Virgin Birth, Parthogenesis, and Physiological Paternity' (1968). There are also two extracts 'Preculture and Gender', taken from his book *Gender and Culture* (1979), and 'Is the Oedipus Complex Universal?', from *Oedipus in the Trobriands* (1982). The first essay, 'Culture and Human Nature' (1978), is something of an intellectual autobiography. Several of the essays are overtly polemical, particularly his attacks on relativism, 'Some Reflections on Cultural Determinism and Relativism' (1984), and on Lévi-Strauss's intellectualist interpretations of myth, 'Whatever Happened to the Id?' (1979).

Spiro always writes in a clear and decisive way, laying out the steps of his argument as precisely as possible. The polemical pieces - whatever one many conclude on the point in question - are very readable. Since he usually attempts to go back to first principles and define his terms, the other essays can be heavy going in places, but it always pays to persevere. Furthermore, Spiro's thought is all of a piece and does not disappear into clouds of vagueness when examined closely. Even though one may find the initial steps in a given argument hard to accept, it is worth doing so provisionally simply in order to get the view from the summit.

It is impossible to discuss everything Spiro advances, so I select two points: his views on gender, and those on the genesis and perpetuation of religious symbols. Spiro began his anthropological career as a cultural determinist, believing that all

behaviour is determined wholly by culture. One of the several experiences which induced him to move away from this extreme assumption was his research on an Israeli kibbutz. There he discovered that even though the founders of the kibbutz movement did everything they could to de-emphasize sex differences and even though children were brought up in mixed dormitories with shared toilet facilities, in all kibbutzim there was, over the years, a move away from mixed dormitories and facilities to single-sex ones. In every case this occurred because of pressure over many years from pubertal girls who wanted privacy. Spiro concludes that girls have a 'precultural need', greater though not qualitatively different from that of boys, to 'parent'.

Spiro is no sociobiologist. The universal 'precultural' needs he is interested in are often not biological or genetic but what he calls *familial*. All humans experience a long period of dependency on their caretakers, the parents, who both gratify and, necessarily on occasion, frustrate their offspring. These universal facts about human family systems, based on 'certain irreducible biological characteristics of human existence', account for the universality of the Oedipus complex. *Differences* in child-rearing practices account for the variation in conceptions of the divine: 'Thus, if the child's dependency needs, for example, are gratified by a nurturant mother, it is not unlikely that as an adult he will worship a mother-like superhuman being(s) from whom he anticipates the gratifications of his wish for continuing childlike dependency' (p. 267).

In explaining religion too, Spiro is explicitly a follower of Freud (while recognizing as ethnocentric the way Freud stated his theory), and not of Durkheim. However, it is hard to accept Spiro's habit of explaining a feature of a religious system in terms of the child-rearing practices prevalent in the society in question, but never considering evidence from other societies with the same religious system. If the Burmese are not disposed to believe in a saviour God because of the way they are treated as children, does this mean other Theravada Buddhist societies must treat their children in the same manner? Did Burmese child-rearing practices change in the eleventh century when Theravada Buddhism replaced Mahayana Buddhism and its saviour figures? One cannot help feeling that, with his self-confessed lack of interest in institutional analysis or history for their own sakes, Spiro simply does not ask himself these questions.

In the final essay of the collection Spiro makes a very interesting and suggestive comparison between Judaism and Theravada Buddhism. He points out how, for all their differences, the two religions both share a very masculine emphasis and conspicuously lack female divine symbols. Comparing Israel and Burma with India and Italy, he comes to the conclusion that female divine symbols are present where mothers are highly 'nurturant' and where wives have low status, and are absent where these two conditions do not hold. What then would he make of Tibet, where wives certainly have a higher status than in India, but where the religion most emphatically possesses powerful female symbols (Tara in her various forms)? Spiro plausibly accuses some anthropologists of attempting to

'gratify' their 'anthropological egos' by exaggerating the role of culture, in which they are the experts (p. 40). One gets the feeling that he himself ignores the role of history and politics in the formation of religious symbols, thereby leaving the field freer for the kind of Freudian explanations at which he undoubtedly excels.

In spite of these methodological doubts, Spiro's forceful vision and his commitment to advancing clear and comprehensible theories, unfashionable though that may be in some quarters, make the book both readable and rewarding. It deserves a prominent place on the reading lists of all Human Sciences degrees.

DAVID N. GELLNER

LIONEL CAPLAN (ed.), *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan 1987. x, 210pp., Notes, References, Indexes. £29.50.

In the light of the so-called 'Rushdie Affair' the term 'fundamentalism' has acquired a disturbing new set of associations. Of course, even prior to the publication of *The Satanic Verses* the popular press and its sympathizers had been happy to link the term with those 'mad mullahs' in Iran and in the Islamic world generally. The only other major connotation of the word drew one to the 'Bible Belt' of the southern United States. In either case, fundamentalism was something that other people had, something that was far away geographically, culturally and temporally (even now, much of the popular discourse on Islamic fundamentalism includes reference to the 'mediaeval' attitudes revealed).

Since the book burning and death threats, fundamentalism has been revealed to be something that can manifest itself in what is probably the most secular state environment in the world. It is also something that can effect us all personally as anthropologists, as presumably many of us have written something that is offensive to the beliefs of those we have worked with. It is obviously time to start rethinking 'fundamentalism'.

Although published well before the Rushdie Affair, Lionel Caplan's edited volume, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, contains signposts to guide us through a field that has been shamefully ignored by anthropologists (few of the contributors, with the exception of those writing on Christian fundamentalism, are able to cite work by other anthropologists on the particular fundamentalism they are dealing with; almost all acknowledge a debt to James Barr's comprehensive monograph *Fundamentalism*). The value of the book lies in bringing together discussions on all the major world religions – Islam (Zubaida, Tapper and Tapper, Amselle), Judaism (Webber), Sikhism (Dietrich), Hinduism (Taylor) and Christianity (Caplan, Bruce, Walker). The apparent weakness is that the term

'fundamentalism' is used so widely that it becomes a chimera, the monster of the popular press which evades capture.

Taken by themselves, some of the contributions stimulate one to rethink 'fundamentalism' constructively. Exemplary in this respect is Richard and Nancy Tapper's article on modern Turkey, in which a form of discourse analysis shows the ideological structures of Turkish Islam and Turkish nationalism to be closely parallel. Some of the other contributions, however, revealed the possible weakness that the term might have in certain contexts. In particular I was disappointed with Angela Dietrich's contribution on the Sikhs, which seems to tell of a cycle of reform movements and to have little to do with fundamentalism as discussed by the other authors.

Caplan's introduction goes a long way towards trying to draw the disparate threads of the contributions together, although statements such as 'what emerges clearly from the narratives in this volume is that fundamentalists interact dynamically with their contemporary social and cultural surroundings' (p. 7) is ultimately not very revealing. Nevertheless, the book contains valuable insights: Caplan denying the (arrogant) premise that somehow Islamic fundamentalist expression is a response to Western imperialism (p. 5); Taylor making a crucial distinction between fundamentalism and 'tradition', pointing out that there may be a relationship of hierarchy between a charismatic leader, who draws on tradition, and his fundamentalist followers; Amselle warning against seeing fundamentalism as a modern phenomenon (and anti-modernist reaction - another point stressed often in the Rushdie Affair) (p. 79), although this is rejected by Zubaida, who would see all fundamentalism as 'modern' (p. 25).

Valuable though I found the individual contributions, I found the volume's overall achievements unsatisfactory. Anyone conducting a field study of a self-consciously religious group (which is what most of these contributions represent) is bound to find a greater or lesser degree of piety, for want of a better term, among the adherents. Moreover, it is in the very nature of organized religion that believers have the opportunity to be discontented with the way things are. Similarly, the world is always changing (and most soteriological traditions would have it that it is changing for the worse), so that there will always be political malcontents. Thus finding the conjunction of such trends ('fundamentalism') hardly seems remarkable. What needs explanation is why some of these conjunctions should be deemed fundamentalist and therefore 'new', while others are merely reform movements. A greater historical perspective, either within the papers or as a set of parallel papers, would have helped contextualize the synchronic and event-bound slices these contributions represent.

MARCUS BANKS

JUDITH THOMPSON and PAUL HEELAS, *The Way of the Heart: The Rajneesh Movement* [New Religious Movements Series; ser. ed. Peter B. Clarke], Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press 1986. 131pp., Notes, Index. £5.99.

One cannot but have sympathy for anyone attempting to document a 'new religious movement'. Either the movement peaks and no one wants to know, at least until a decent historical depth has been established (who remembers the Children of God, for example?), or else it will still be in the process of establishing and transforming itself, in which case any account will be inherently provisional. A further layer of difficulty is added when one realizes that, by and large, such movements attract the hostility of sections of the non-academic public. Reasoned debate becomes lost in a welter of accusations and counter-accusations. Unfortunately, however, Thompson and Heelas, in their book on the Rajneesh movement, *The Way of the Heart*, are so determined to avoid accusing Rajneesh of anything (including his possible involvement in an attempt to poison the population of a small Oregon township) that the reader is left feeling that this is a book without focus. Essentially, the teachings/doctrines/beliefs of Rajneesh and his followers are so contradictory and so reminiscent of the worst kind of Californian psycho-babble that they cannot sustain a volume in a series on new religious movements.

Although the authors fly their anthropological colours on the first page of their introduction (p. 9), they are constrained by the series format and present a bland 'multi-cultural' view of the movement. They are also unable to distance themselves fully enough from it, though to be fair their investigations were conducted, and the book published, at a crossroads for the movement; the Oregon commune had collapsed with the defection of Ma Anand Sheela, and the future seemed unknown. Heelas and Thompson put a brave face on this, deciding with the sannyasins that it was probably all for the best (a Panglossian philosophy, mirrored by the authors, runs through all Rajneesh's *ex post facto* explanations for his behaviour) and assuring us that 'The faith of most appears intact. Bhagwan emerged unscathed. Growth still appears to be the order of the day' (pp. 129-30). Now, two to three years after publication, these assurances seem unfounded, for the movement is dodo-dead. Doubtless there are still unquenchably optimistic sannyasins in Britain and abroad, but a phoenix-like rebirth of the movement seems deeply unlikely. (This prediction is based not on the strength or otherwise of the teachings of Rajneesh, the perspective adopted almost exclusively by Thompson and Heelas, but on a consideration of the 'way of the heart' as a social movement.)

As a result of their brief to outline a 'new religion', Thompson and Heelas are unable to devote sufficient attention to the historical and sociological aspects of the movement; for example, from this and other accounts it would seem that the movement 'outgrew' the man Rajneesh very early on, probably in Pune when the arriviste Bombay businessmen (of the type that support 'god men' all over India, an element ignored by the authors) who formed his

earliest devotees were ousted by the Human Potential Movement
therapists from the West, who simply pasted the Rajneesh label on
to a barely changed Californian outlook. By transforming itself
into the 'New Age' movement, the Human Potential Movement has at-
tained (a degree of) respectability: even Nancy Reagan consulted
astrologers. In the hard-nosed world of the 'eighties Rajneesh was
an anachronism, and although the Oregon commune in its final phases
was offering courses in 'Buddhafield business', it could hardly
compete with the Harvard Business School.

Thompson and Heelas are willing to countenance criticism of
the Rajneesh movement (Chapter 7, 'The Case of Bhagwan Shree Raj-
neesh' is almost entirely devoted to 'the case for the prosecution'
[p. 119]), but they address themselves only to journalistic crit-
icism, a simple black-and-white issue of was he, or was he not, a
fraud? Cultural criticism is largely absent from their account;
it is not the job of anthropologists to advance conspiracy theories
(for example, Rajneesh was kept drugged and isolated by the 'fascist'
Ma Anand Sheela, who then ran the movement with her henchmen) and
then counter them, but to examine the cultural logic that underlies
such theories. Similarly, the long and interesting passages of
sannyasins' testimony that pepper the book are allowed to stand for
themselves in all their vapid, Rajneesh-speak obscurity. But these
are not the testimonies of uneducated Indian peasants, but of al-
most entirely white middle-class baby-boomers, over a quarter of
whom at the Oregon commune had a background in psychology (p. 73,
n. 5).

There is no doubt that the Rajneesh movement was a social
movement of unusual (but not unique) vigour and complexity and that
it provides rich data for anthropologists and sociologists of
religion. While the present book has its virtues (for example,
exploring the idea that Rajneesh's frequent about-turns were all
part of his attempt to liberate his followers), it is clear that
there is ample opportunity for further research.

MARCUS BANKS

JOHN DAVIS, *Libyan Politics: Tribe and Revolution, An Account of
the Zuwaya and their Government*, London: I.B. Tauris 1987. xii,
260pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index, Figures, Tables, Maps.
£29.50 / £9.50.

The title of this book touches on a subject which has long needed
further anthropological and sociological elaboration: the relation
between state and society. Essential to such scrutiny is an extend-
ed and complex concept of the state which requires the examination
of spheres of social life far beyond the institutions of government.
It therefore needs to take into account the numerous ways by which
a central power, in strengthening its position, draws on the moral

values, historical traditions and public moods of a certain people.
It is this accommodation that renders the use of long-held opposi-
tions such as sovereignty/subversion and state/tribe less analytic-
al than rhetorical. They can indeed be seen less as opposites than
as contradictory aspects of the uneven development of the modern
state.

    John Davis's book, however, is less about the inner connection
between the conflicting social forces than the incompatibility of
opposite categories. Since the latter are described as the separ-
ate attributes of different social institutions, they are related
to each other only because they happen to act together in a 'soc-
iety'.

    The book starts positively by attempting to read considerable
significance for the relationship between the ruler and the ruled
into the impressive figures in terms of which the oil industry is
often defined. Extensive access to the goods provided by the sale
of oil not only rapidly redefines needs and capitalizes the rela-
tion of production, it also mediates effectively in a fundamental
aspect of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled: taxa-
tion. It is this relationship which constitutes, in this book,
the basis for defining Libya as a 'hydrocarbon society', which the
author defines as one in which government earns more than ninety
per cent of its revenues from petroleum and natural gas. The idea
of a 'hydrocarbon society' is explicitly inspired by Wittfogel's
notion of the 'hydraulic society' (pp. 261-3). The main difference
may be that the latter's tyrannical need for irrigation gives way
to the former's irresponsibility to its subjects.

    The 'hydrocarbon rulers' earn their revenue mainly by selling
petroleum produced by foreign labour and technology and derived
from foreigners' consumption of energy. Thus by living off foreign-
ers these rulers are portrayed as being capable of doing away with
accountability to their subjects which, the author contends, is
held so dearly by European or American rulers. Substantially re-
lieved from the formidable task of tax collection, Libya's rulers
then indulge in a radical campaign to abolish the very state that
secures their privileged position. They officially propagate 'the
independence of local communities' and 'the abolition of central
government'.

    However, such indulgence lacks revolutionary credentials.
Qaddafi and his colleagues have not sufficiently suffered from pri-
vation, in jail or under torture and hardship, to become dedicated
revolutionaries. Instead they are led to draw on indigenous Libyan
ideological resources. Unlike other revolutions which are diffused
from a common source, the Libyan one has remained characteristic-
ally 'esoteric'. Its pose owes a great deal to a chronic 'state-
lessness' or, amounting to the same thing, 'tribalism' in Libyan
history. For a long time the loyalty of Libyans has been defined
in terms of cousinage, leaving little room for a central authority
which could have an effective existence. The desert provided a
shelter for those who wanted to escape government persecution. It
was the lineage rather than the state which mattered most to these
groups. Even the elections which constitute a major part of the
events described in the book are portrayed as fought between the

patrilineally segmented groups who opposed each other in anticipa-
tion of an immanent offence.

The characteristically Islamic beliefs of these tribesmen
enabled the Libyan hydrocarbon ruler to consolidate his revolution-
ary pose. The author maintains that sources of interpretation in
Islamic faith are numerous and diverse enough to allow Qaddafi's
innovating reading of Islam to be heard without facing a serious
challenge.

Added to this was the colonial history of Libya which resulted
in a failure to train and educate a sizeable personnel for any ap-
paratus of government in the future. These were the factors which
contributed to a peculiar combination of the State and revolution
in Libya.

The book reflects the fact that apriorism is a major source of
misunderstanding in Middle Eastern studies. For instance, the
author's definition of 'hydrocarbon society' rightly stresses that
the freedom of the ruler results from the absence of any necessity
to collect taxes. But his model ends in failure when he equates
subjects with taxpayers, popular though this assumption may be in
the Western democracies. Oil revenue may relieve a ruler's sub-
jects from the tax burden, but it certainly does not relieve him of
their demands. The inadequacy of such reductionist assumptions is
shown by the fact that different political objectives are pursued
by different 'hydrocarbon rulers'. After all, if oil revenue pro-
vided by Qaddafi with the degree of freedom the author believes he
enjoyed, why should he have taken the trouble to pretend to be his
people's champion by promoting their cause of statelessness?
'Tribalism', a decentralized Islam, and a poorly developed admin-
istrative apparatus have not been any less available to other
'hydrocarbon rulers', some of whom have presided long over conserv-
ative regimes.

Such incompatibility between generalization and observation
can also be detected in other parts of the author's arguments. He
appears to have taken the allegedly segmentary lineage feature of
Libyan society too much for granted to question it. The historical
situations he cites do not seem to support this claim, as the auth-
or himself concedes (p. 193). As far as contemporary Libyans are
concerned, the author describes them not only as 'being realist and
pragmatic' in resolving their 'practical problems' without refer-
ring to their sense of independence as it was incorporated into
Qaddafi's rhetoric (p. 137), but as people who actually used state
apparatuses such as courts and police to settle their disputes with
their kinfolk (p. 223).

The author is quite right, in my view, in regarding the divers-
ity of Islamic faith as too large to warrant coining the term
'Islamic fundamentalism'. However, he does not seem to be ready to
accept that such diversity itself makes the use of the very term
'Islam', which he uses so lavishly, particularly in the complex and
changing circumstances the author examines, very limited indeed.
This diversity of Islam, which the author admits, does not affect
the abstract nature of the religion as it is conceived here. In-
deed the high level of abstraction which characterizes the use of
such notions as state, tribe, Islam and revolution in this book,

which can neither reflect a concrete situation nor constitute a
basis for comparative analysis, makes it disappointing.

<div align="right">MANUCHEHR SANADJIAN</div>

CAROLYN FLUEHR-LOBBAN, *Islamic Law and Society in the Sudan*,
London: Frank Cass 1987. xvi, 282pp., Appendixes, Bibliography,
Index, Plates, Tables, Figures. £27.50.

This book is a valuable document for its collection of facts on
Islamic law in the Sudan, although its anthropological analysis is
unsatisfactory, not to say non-existent. It provides an account of
the provisions of Islamic law as they appear from the Judicial
Circulars of the Grand Qadi of the Sudan, issued between 1905 and
1979, concerning family law (marriage, divorce, maintenance, child
custody) and property law (inheritance and *waqf*). From these, one
realizes that there has been an evolution in the offical Islamic
law of the Sudan; the changes in the rules during the twentieth
century have certainly been numerous and significant.

The author lists the rules, but also seeks to justify them.
For instance, she tells us that the provision that men are legally
bound to give women economic support justifies the latter's half-
portion inheritance, and that since marriage occurs at an early
age, protection of minors necessitates that adults arrange the
marriage of their female charges. Indeed, the whole book is writ-
ten in a markedly defensive tone, and rather unconvincingly. This
nevertheless points to an interest of the book, stemming ironically
from one of its deficiencies. By accepting uncritically the data
she gathers, the author presents the view of Islamic law as held by
the Islamic establishment.

Fluehr-Lobban conducted fieldwork in Khartoum in 1979-80 (but
was already acquainted with the Sudan), and her informants were mainly
the last Grand Qadi of the Sudan and one of the four female judges
who were part of the *sharia* court system in 1979. Her principal
contentions were probably borrowed from her informants. On the one
hand, Fluehr-Lobban wants to show that the stereotypes of rigidity
and harshness held in the West about Islamic law are false, and
that the Sudan has been a champion of progressive reforms, especial-
ly towards women. On the other hand, she argues that Islamic law
has evolved 'internally' to Islam, rather than as a result of West-
ern influence. These would be reasonable propositions if she did
not take take them too far, as her own material demonstrates. No
Western woman would envy the position of her Sudanese counterpart.
For instance, we are told that it is shameful for a virgin to op-
pose, but also to consent verbally to, marriage (one thus wonders
when a woman can take advantage of the 'right' to annul marriage if
she did not consent, a right that Fluehr-Lobban sees as contributing

to the growing independence of women), and that women judges in the *sharia* courts do not sit in public, for it would be a violation of their modesty and dignity. Such examples of apparently shame-filled attitudes of women are scattered throughout the book. Unfortunately, Fluehr-Lobban only mentions them without further analysis. Moreover, the book contains no evidence of the practices and beliefs of women. It does not enable us to understand their position in society or to know what they themselves think of it.

Regarding her contention that Islamic law has evolved independently, the author herself supplies information contradicting this. Pressures from British officials appear very clearly when the author touches upon the origin of a 1935 circular of the Grand Qadi concerning the extension of the period of child custody of the mother. Pressures external to Islam can also be seen behind reforms of the early 1970s which extended the grounds on which women could seek divorce and suppressed the possibility that the police could enforce the order for a 'disobedient' wife to return to her husband. These reforms were made during the left-wing first phase of President Numeiry's regime, and upset the Islamic establishment very much. It would have been more useful for the author to recognize clearly that non-Islamic factors have influenced the development of Islamic law, even if it can be seen as an adaptation in accordance with Islamic principles. That the author insists on the specifically Islamic character of the development of the law, and feels the need to explain the reforms as moulded by 'pure' Islamic sources, is nonetheless interesting and provides fertile material for analysis of Islamic discourse.

The author seems to believe that all developments in Islamic law follow from one another, as exemplified in the way she presents the 1983 introduction of the *hadd* punishments in the last section of the book (having earlier stated that discussions never moved beyond the stage of initial proposal). She entitles it 'Recent Developments', which implies a continuity with the reforms contained in the circulars of 1905 to 1979 concerning personal status. This continuity, however, is doubtful. By her own account, Islam does not seem to have been predominant in the legal life of the country prior to the 1983 reforms: judges in the *sharia* courts had lower status and were paid less than their civil counterparts, and except for the Koran upon which the oath is taken, nothing in the court made it appear as a sacred or religious place. Also, the office of the Grand Qadi disappeared in 1979 following the amalgamation of the *sharia* and civil courts. These elements are hardly precursors of the 'recent developments' of 1983.

Her presentation of the developments themselves is unacceptable: nothing is said about the actual implementation of the 1983 laws (over a hundred amputations and thousands of floggings, plus diverse harassments), the circumstances of their introduction (related to the attempt of President Numeiry to stay in power), or their disputable Islamic character. Fluehr-Lobban does not even mention the fact that their implementation ceased and became, well before the publication of the book, the subject of much debate. It would probably have been preferable not to allude to the 1983 laws at all, rather than deal with them in an unsatisfactory way. The

problem is that Fluehr-Lobban seems to have attempted to touch upon
everything that could be said about Islamic law in the Sudan (in-
cluding its history and comparison with the law of other Muslim
states). This leads her to gross simplifications (referring, for
instance, to 'Sudanese society' and 'Islam' as if these terms cov-
ered only one reality - even the Southern Sudan and the Sufi orders
are hardly mentioned).

This is all the more unfortunate as it is clear from the mat-
erial that she presents that there are more specific issues worth
investigation, such as the position of women, the concept of shame
in legal practices, or the place of *sharia* courts in society. The
shortcomings of the book are certainly numerous (it is uncritical,
repetitive, sometimes contradictory and at times incorrect).
Nevertheless, it will be evident that the data gathered may well
stimulate anthropological interest in fascinating issues to be
discovered through a study of law.

BÉNÉDICTE DEMBOUR

L. BENSON and INGVAR SVANBERG (eds.), *The Kazaks of China: Essays
on an Ethnic Minority* [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia
Multiethnica Upsaliensis 5; ser. ed. Harald Runblom], Uppsala:
Almquist and Wiksell International 1988. xii, 239pp., Tables,
Figures, Maps, Glossary, Selected Bibliography. SEK147.

This collection of essays by an international group of scholars
concerns the relationship of the Kazaks, a Muslim and Turkic people
predominantly inhabiting what is now the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous
Region in the west of China, to the central Han Chinese government.
In the period under discussion, broadly from 1900 to the present
day, this relationship has ranged from civil war and the sporadic
secession of the western provinces through an uneasy truce between
Soviet-sponsored warlords and the Imperial governments to the more
peaceful policy of cooperation and non-assimilation eventually
favoured by the Chinese Communist Party. Between 1957 and the
Cultural Revolution (during which Benson and Svanberg remind us
that life for the national minorities was 'extremely difficult'
[p. 183]) attempts were made to counter the threat of local nation-
alisms, but from 1966 onwards a more *laissez-faire* policy has pre-
vailed. The nomadic way of life of the Kazaks and the provincial
economy of Xinjiang - both now largely transformed by a century of
colonial occupation by the Han Chinese and latterly by the tourist
industry - have been granted a degree of autonomy both in policy
and practice.

In the first essay, Benson and Svanberg provide a useful pol-
itical and historical overview, making extensive use of Soviet and
Chinese sources which detail Chinese national minority policy (in

which Chinese anthropology has played a significant role) and its
application in Xinjiang. Svanberg homes in on the Kazaks of
Xinjiang in the next essay, which gives, in 33 pages, a sketchy
account of the social organization and economic aspects of Kazak
nomadism. Perhaps most interesting is Benson's essay on 'Osman
Batur: The Kazaks' Golden Legend'. Often seen as a champion of
Islam and an implacable opponent of communism, Osman Batur defied
Soviets, Chinese and the warlords of Xinjiang, but was eventually
killed as a bandit by the Chinese communists in 1951. Benson at-
tempts to separate the man from the myth. Even though Osman's
motivations are clearly going to remain a mystery, Benson's essay
includes a useful discussion of the *batur*, political leadership and
brigandage in Kazak society, relating the former to the concept of
the *haiduk* in Hobsbawm's comparative analysis of the 'social
bandit'. Kirchner includes a transcription and translation of a
text in which a Kazak refugee living in Istanbul relates his flight
from Xinjiang to Turkey. Of undoubted documentary value, it is
also the only point in the volume in which the Kazaks say anything
for or about themselves. Given that the speaker has spent thirty
years in Istanbul, one wonders, however, about the linguistic
status of the commentary as a 'freely spoken text [which] can be
regarded as typical of the Kazak language spoken in China' (p. 189).
Thomas Hoppe concludes the volume with an account of Kazak pastor-
alism in the Bogda range.

This volume will be of interest to Turkologists, Sinologists
and those interested in the relation of state to ethnic minority,
but it leaves the anthropologist with little to chew upon. The two
stated aims of the essays are to provide 'an overview of the past
and present situation of the Kazaks in China' and to present 'more
specialized, in-depth material illuminating various aspects of
Kazak society' (p. x), and as a result they oscillate uneasily be-
tween a historical, documentary approach and that of a traditional
anthropological monograph. The difficulties of carrying out extend-
ed research in the field means that the authors rely heavily on
statistical data culled from a bewildering variety of sources. The
circumstances under which any data could be collected in Xinjiang
in the 1930s, for example, leave their reliability open to question.
Not being overtly related to the wealth of anthropological discus-
sion on the subject of nomadism in Asia, the essays lack a clearly
stated theoretical target. The ethnographic focus is itself
slightly blurred as a result of the necessity of discussing the
Kazaks of the Soviet Union and Mongolia (effectively separated
since the mid-nineteenth century) and *émigré* groups in Turkey and
Taiwan. In relation to this a discussion of 'Turki' ethnicity and
Muslim identity, thrown into sharp relief by the establishment of
the East Turkestan Republic in 1933 and 1944, is touched upon (p.
173) but not elaborated.

Transliteration poses a huge problem when Kazak itself is re-
presented in Arabic, Cyrillic and Latin scripts. Use of the Pinyin
system for Chinese and the Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta system
for Kazak assures consistency but at the necessary cost of rendering
comparison of ethnographic material on Soviet Kazakhstan, translit-
erated from the Cyrillic script in an entirely different way,

somewhat confusing. The volume would benefit from an index and a
list of abbreviations, but the bibliography will be of use to any-
body contemplating research in the area.

Beyond the Himalayas, 'High Tartary' has exercised a formid-
able attraction upon the imagination of travellers and writers from
the earliest days of British colonial expansion. For Western
anthropologists, however, serious ethnographic work has been effec-
tively impossible in Central Asia throughout this century. It can
only be hoped that the combined effect of glasnost and the Chinese
'Open Door' policy, together with the growing body of translation
and discussion of Chinese and Soviet ethnography in British
anthropological circles, will before long bear fruit.

MARTIN STOKES

JESSICA KUPER (ed.), *Methods, Ethics and Models* [Social Science
Lexicons], London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1987. xxiv,
136pp. £5.50.

This selection from the *Social Science Encyclopedia* covers research
methods, analytical procedures and philosophical issues. Jarvie's
dense and idiosyncratic introductory essay on 'Philosophy of the
Social Sciences' will not encourage the new student. Many of the
entries are concerned with - to this reviewer - complex, statistical
analyses: they are probably accurate and useful. The entries of
most interest to anthropologists - 'ethnographic fieldwork' and
'functional analysis' - are fair, interesting, and well-written.
The former may encourage the new student towards anthropology.

JEREMY COOTE

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

ALVARSSON, Jan-Åke, *The Mataco of the Gran Chaco: An Ethnographic Account of Change and Continuity in Mataco Socio-Economic Organization* [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology 11], Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksell International 1988. xvi, 251pp., Appendices, Bibliography, Index, Plates, Maps, Tables, Figures. No price given.

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OBITUARY NOTICE

BRYAN ALLAN LEFEVRE CRANSTONE

26 February 1918 – 4 September 1989

We regret to announce the death of Mr Bryan Cranstone. Mr Cranstone was Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum here in Oxford from 1976 to 1985. This was an eventful decade for the Museum as in 1984 it celebrated the centenary of its founding and in 1986 the opening of of its new Balfour Building. During this period and after his retirement Bryan Cranstone played an active role in the affairs of the Anthropological Society of Oxford.

He was also a supporter of JASO. He co-edited our third Occasional Paper, *The General's Gift*, a celebration of the Museum's hundredth anniversary, and more recently co-authored an article on a subject that had intrigued him for many years ('Why are Pigs not Milked?' in Vol. XVIII, no. 2).
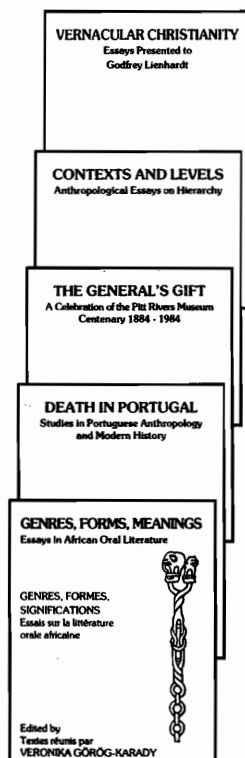
Obituaries appeared in *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Independent* on 8 September, and in the *Guardian* on 11 and 14 September. We hope to publish an appreciation of Mr Cranstone's life and work in a future issue.

We take this opportunity to join in offering our condolences to his family and friends.

> The Editors
> 1 October 1989

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SIGNIFICATIONS
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Edited by
Textes réunis par
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KING MAHĀSAMMATA:
THE FIRST KING IN THE BUDDHIST STORY OF CREATION,
AND HIS PERSISTING RELEVANCE

The Thesis

The *Aggañña Suttanta*[1], literally meaning the *Sutta* 'pertaining to
beginnings', was appropriately labelled by Rhys Davids 'a book of
Genesis'. As Rhys Davids himself pointed out, any reader of the
sutta would note that 'a continual note of good humoured irony runs
through the whole story, with its fanciful etymologies of the names
of the four *vaṇṇā*; and the aroma of it would be lost on the hearer
who took it *au grand sérieux*'.[2]
    In my book *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of
Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*
(1976), I analyzed the structure and implications of the creation
myth contained in this *sutta*, and this reading was informed by the
general themes of the book, namely the contrastive, asymmetrical
and collaborative relations between the *saṅgha* (order of monks) and
the polity, between the vocations of the *bhikku* and the king, be-
tween the conception of the Buddha as world renouncer and the
cakkavatti as world ruler, and so on.

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[1] The twenty-seventh *sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya* III, pp. 80-98.

[2] Rhys Davids (1899: 107). Rhys Davids remarks that some of the
contents of this *sutta* are reiterated in a different context in the
Brahmajāla Sutta and the *Pātika Sutta*, contained in the *Dīgha
Nikāya* I and II respectively.

I maintained, as many other readers before me had done, that behind the mockery directed at Brahmanical beliefs, there is a positive countervailing Buddhist account of the origins and evolution of the world, kingship and social differentiation, concluding with an exaltation of the vocation of the *bhikku*, who seeks freedom from 'rebecoming' and from the fetters of the world process. On several occasions the Buddha seems to have played with and transformed the meaning of Brahmanical concepts for expository purposes. Today it is a commonplace idea that a text can convey multiple levels of meaning and be ridden with creative ambiguities. So it may cause surprise if someone should take an absolutist stand, and insist on a single, unambiguous formulation of authorial intent, the structure of the message, and the nature of its reception by an audience that may not only be socially diverse but also situated at different points in time.

The *Aggañña Suttanta* painted the evolution of the world and human beings as a process of progressive combination of spirituality of mind, which was the original starting-point, with gross materiality to produce in turn successive differentiations in nature and increasing moral degeneration among humans. At this point human beings gathered together and, arguing the need for the selection of 'a certain king, who should be wrathful when indignation is right, who should censure that which should be censured and should banish him who deserves to be banished', selected from among themselves 'the handsomest, the best favoured, the most attractive, the most capable', and invited him to be king in return for a tax payment of rice.

The King's name 'Mahāsammata' is usually translated as 'acclaimed by the many', 'the great elect'. There seem to be two ideas woven into this conception. On the one hand, an elective and contractual theory of kingship is implied by the fact that he was chosen by the people and voluntarily remunerated by them; on the other hand he is chosen because he is the most handsome in physical form and the most perfect in conduct, he upholds the *dhamma*, and he is 'Lord of the Fields'. He is thus in this second sense 'elect', while in the first sense he is 'elective'.

There is no doubt that the Buddhist creation story must be read as a challenge to the Brahmanical version, which postulated a divine origin to the four status orders of society, the *varṇa* (Brahman, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra), attributed a relativized and differently valued ethical code for each *varṇa*, and subordinated kingship and *artha* (instrumental and political action) to the superior Brahman as the codifier and interpreter of *dharma* (morality). By comparison the Buddhist scheme sees the world as a voluntaristic result of the cumulative *karma* of human acts, makes social strata appear under the aegis of elective kingship, elevates the ideal king to be the supreme embodiment of worldly morality and virtuous conduct, and sees all this as the basis upon which the higher morality and *nibbānic* quest of the *bhikkhu* arises and which it transcends.

Bouquets and Brickbats

Michael Carrithers wrote a generous and sparkling review of my *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* in an earlier issue of this journal (Carrithers 1977). Correctly drawing attention to the problem I had set myself in this book as a 'macroscopic view of religion's connection with society as a whole, especially in society's aspect as a polity' (Tambiah 1976: 3), Carrithers expatiated on the problem 'dictated not only by Tambiah's anthropological curiosity, but also by the peculiar nature of Western understanding of Buddhism'. According to Carrithers, a number of earlier investigators who by the early years of this century had explicated basic canonical texts of Theravāda Buddhism

> shared, to a greater or lesser extent, two presuppositions: first, that the meaning of Buddhist doctrine was to be sought in its origins, and its oldest canonical texts; often hidden in this presupposition, however, was a second, less fruitful, bias against all subsequent developments in Buddhism as corruptions of its original purity.[3] In consequence little was known in the West about Buddhist history, and especially about those very ancient developments which had adapted Buddhism to be the state religion in Thailand, Burma and Ceylon. It is only in recent years that scholars have begun to unravel this history. In this perspective, Tambiah had to ask himself the question: If Buddhism was the religion of a handful of salvation seekers, as embodied in the canonical texts, then how could it possibly become a state religion? (Carrithers 1977: 98)

I may also add, using Max Weber's phrasing, how could it become a 'world' religion?

Having admirably phrased my perspective, Carrithers was moved to say complimentary things about my exposition: it 'stands out because it is dense with reflections and suggestive parallels at every turn', it 'preserves the rich ambivalence that informs Buddhist theorists themselves', and it 'is imbued with an empathy for, and a delight in the religious and cosmological thought of the Thais'. However, towards the end of his review, Carrithers offers some criticisms of my reading and interpretation of the main themes contained in the *Aggañña Sutta*, the myth of origins. The crux of his criticism is as follows. He asserts:

> [Tambiah] is clear that this myth is ironical in relation to Brahmanical theory, yet he holds that it is a serious presentation of a rival cosmology. I argue, however, that it is not

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[3] It is precisely this critique, also voiced by others, that led me to coin the label for this perspective 'the Pali Text mentality', which has been misunderstood in certain circles as denigration of the Pali Text Society itself or of all scholars of Pali Buddhism [S.J.T.].

only ironical, but a sustained and brilliant satire; that it
is a satire not only of Brahmanical society, including king-
ship; and that it expresses, in a radical form, the views of
the original Sangha of world-renouncers who are concerned with
moral purity and spiritual cultivation (ibid.: 102).

Note that while maintaining that it is wholly a satire,
Carrithers nevertheless smuggles in his own version of the central
message implied by the myth, which is that 'the chief Buddhist
principle of human life [is] morality based on wisdom', and that
this 'insistence on moral purity is both chronologically and logic-
ally prior'. The latter assertion of 'chronological and logical
priority', nowhere directly or literally asserted in the myth, is
Carrither's own framing device deriving from what he considers to
be the essence or the heart of the Buddhist religion. There is no
reason for me to want to dispute the correctness of his judgement
of what Buddhism's original inspiration was. But I do want to make
three observations on his perspective.
    The first is that in my reading of the *sutta* I drew attention
to the last sequence of what I called 'the second movement' of the
myth. It declares the *bhikku* (and the *arahant*), who breaks the
bonds of society, destroys the 'fetter of re-becoming' and is
liberated through knowledge, as *chief* among human beings. I saw as
a basic structure in the myth the contrasting of two foremost
beings, the *bhikku* and the king, the former being the mediator be-
tween a world of fetters and deliverance from it, *superior* to the
king as mediator between social order and disorder, and the foun-
tainhead of society. The asymmetrical evaluation that I under-
lined, which places the *bhikku* above the king, in no way contra-
dicts, indeed is in accord with, Carrithers' point that the *sutta*
underscores 'the chief Buddhist principle of human life, morality
based on wisdom'.
    The second observation, frankly speculative, is that just as I
had a *problématique* and a perspective which played a role in my
arrangement of the contents of the myth, Carrithers too at the time
he wrote the *JASO* review was preoccupied with describing and evalu-
ating the significance for Sri Lankan Buddhism of the forest monk
communities he had studied.[4] Carrithers' own study of the canon-
ical texts had convinced him that 'moral purity' exemplified by the
world-renouncers, and by extension 'monastic purity' as exemplified
by communities of forest monks, was the radiant centre of Buddhist
life. In the last few paragraphs of his review, he is troubled by
the modern developments in contemporary Sri Lanka which have made
the forest monks there retreat into relative obscurity. He cites a
distinguished monk-scholar, Walpola Rahula, as remarking sceptical-
ly that 'the forest monks might have some effect on society'. He
takes solace in another monk's admonition to a layman that meditat-
ing monks are like a street lamp which 'goes nowhere, does nothing',
yet sheds light on the world. But he clearly lacks an overall

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[4] *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka: An Anthropological and Historical
Study* (Carrithers 1983) was the fruit of these labours.

scheme for representing the multiple strands of Buddhism, and to show what the organizing foci are today. The considerations that have inspired Carrithers to see the 'true' forest monks as the morally pure perennial reforming centre of Buddhist life also seem to have pushed the other components of the Buddhist scene - the 'domesticated' village and town monks, Buddhism's co-optation of local spirit deity cults, the political involvements of the *sangha* and its sectarian tendencies, and a host of other internal and external developments - into a secondary and derivatory position. The distribution of these components, their weight and significance in an open-ended and prospective development of Buddhism as a total phenomenon, can be seen in terms of civilizational perspectives other than Carrithers' confining retrospective view.

Be that as it may - and granted that in these days of deconstruction and the hermeneutics of suspicion, literary and cultural 'texts' are capable of different readings - Carrithers has made a declaration and a judgement about a portion of the *Aggañña Sutta* that is capable of being put to a decisive historical test. This is my third observation.

In his review, Carrithers emphasizes the satire against Brahmanical ideas, including that of divine kingship, to such an extent that the counter story of King Mahāsammata's election and his moral evaluation are dismissed as part of the rash of puns. Subsequently he wrote a brief commentary entitled 'Buddhists without History' on my trilogy on Thailand, in which he bombards 'three applications' of my alleged scholarly 'programme', one of which is again my reading of the *Aggañña Sutta*.[5]

Accusing me of 'a systematic and anachronistic misreading of the text', he reduces my own discussion of the *complementary and hierarchical* interlocking between king and monk, between the 'two wheels' of Buddhism, to a 'key opposition', and bluntly dismisses it in syllables not usually heard at high table (at least in Cambridge): 'The *Aggañña Sutta* is not a charter for anything ... Tambiah's interpretation is either irrelevant to, or quite the opposite of, what the text itself says'. While I do not pretend to be a Pali scholar, there are grounds for questioning Carrithers' claims to complete accuracy of translation and comprehension of the text in question.[6]

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[5] Carrithers 1987. I have elsewhere replied to his accusations regarding the other two 'applications' (Tambiah 1987).

[6] For example, I leave it to the pundits of Oxford's Oriental Institute to resolve this inconsistency: Carrithers says I am wrong to identify Mahāsammata 'with warriors (*khattiyas*)', while Gombrich (1988: 85) recently stated that 'he is the first king and first *kṣatriya* [= *khattiya*]'. As I shall show later, the great Buddhaghosa seems to have seen Mahāsammata's relation to the *khattiyas* in the same way as I have done.

The Challenge Accepted

I shall now survey how the contents of the *Aggañña Sutta*, especially the cosmological accounts of the beginnings of the world and the characterization of Mahāsammata as the first king, have been used in the post-canonical Buddhist literature over the centuries. I hope to demonstrate how these portions of the original *sutta* have manifested a persisting cosmological significance and have acted as 'precedent', 'point of reference', and 'normative' account - that is, as a 'charter'. Moreover, their importance is further evidenced by their being subject to elaboration and to creative transformation. This evidence puts in question how something alleged to be wholly a satire and a joke could have been taken so differently and so seriously over many centuries by genuine Buddhists, great *bhikku* cosmologists and doctrinal experts, undisputed heirs of the Buddhist legacy raised in authentic indigenous Buddhist contexts.

Before documenting the strands of persisting significance, let me bury one significance that 'seemed' to be embedded in the original text but which definitely was either not taken up or not seen as part of the original message by later Buddhists. In the original text, as I have remarked earlier, Mahāsammata's election and 'acclamation by the many' seemed to indicate that his 'elective' status implied a 'democratic' and 'contractual theory' of kingship. It is interesting that twentieth-century writers on the development of political ideas in India rarely fail to refer to the Buddhist 'contractual theory' as expressed in the *Aggañña Suttanta*. For example, Ghoshal (1959: 62) refers to the *sutta*'s formulation in this mode as 'an open challenge to the Vedic dogma of Divine creation of the social order', and opines that 'the most original contribution of the early Buddhist canonists to the store of our ancient social and political ideas consists in their formulation of a remarkable theory of the origin of man and his social and political institutions'. Basham generously remarks: 'The story of the Mahāsammata gives, in the form of a myth worthy of Plato, one of the world's earliest versions of the widespread contractual theory of the state, which in Europe is specially connected with the names of Locke and Rousseau'.[7] Again Dumont, in his noteworthy essay on 'The Conception of Kingship in Ancient India' (1962), discusses the implications of what he identifies as the Buddhist contractual theory from the perspective of *his* view of the world renouncer as being outside caste society and therefore the only true individual in the Hindu social universe.[8]

Another example of a 'presentist' reading by a modern is to be found in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (Malalasekera 1961), edited by

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[7] This quote is from a popular encyclopaedic work, Basham 1961: 82.

[8] Dumont's discussion of early Buddhist thought does not cover the accounts of the *cakkavatti* wherein the Buddhist ideas of kingship are carried to their ultimate and universal, ethical and material limits.

the noted Sri Lankan scholar of Pali and Buddhist civilization.
There the entry on the *Aggañña Sutta* contains among other things
these lines: 'The evolution of kingship from Mahāsammata, and the
establishment of monarchy is then shown, rejecting the theory of
divine origin of kings and replacing it with a theory of kingly
duty arising from the fact of *democratic beginnings*. The Buddha
then explains the gradual division of labour and how the brahmans
came to practice their professions' (Jayawardhana 1961; my emphasis).

As far as I know there are no Buddhist traditions, literary or
otherwise, of kings being 'democratically' elected, of 'social con-
tract' in the sense propounded by Rousseau, of justifiable 'rebel-
lion' or 'just war' against a king who has broken a social contract.
As I have expatiated elsewhere, what we have had are millenarian
movements stimulated by the prophecy of the next Buddha Metteyya's
future coming during the reign of *cakkavatti* Sankha propounded
first in the canonical *Cakkavatti Sīhanāda Sutta*, and subsequently
elaborated and developed in post-canonical times. This prophecy,
by virtue of its utopian promise, has provided an ideological com-
ponent for millenarian insurrections against established political
authority when this has been unrighteous and oppressive. This
prophecy is to be construed not as a Buddhist theory of rebellion
but as a vision of great men (*mahāpurisa*) of personal charisma
arising to replace failed leaders and to rejuvenate degenerating
worlds.[9]

Later Buddhist literature refers back to and/or elaborates
upon and transforms certain themes present in the original *Aggañña
Sutta*. Let me state two of them, and later illustrate them with
ample literary evidence.

1) Although the *sutta*'s aspect as a foil to early Brahmanical
theory seems to bring into prominence the so-called 'contractual'
basis of kingship, in the further development of the Buddhist
stream of ideas in India and Southeast Asia it is not so much
Mahāsammata's 'elective' ('contractual') position as his being 'the
great elect', the man who 'charms others by the Norm (*dhamma*)' he
observes and whose virtues clearly mark him out as the chief among
men, that become the critical point of elaboration and understand-
ing. This aspect of him links up with other canonical formulations
of the ideal Buddhist king as being a righteous king, a *dharmarāja*,
an upholder of 'morality', and as a *cakkavatti* (universal ruler).

In the post-canonical works and chronicles of all branches of
Buddhism there is a dense linkage of three conceptions: Mahāsammata
as first king, *cakkavatti* as universal ruler, and *bodhisattva* as a
future Buddha. And there are numerous examples of actual historic-
al kings claiming to be or being acclaimed (by monk chroniclers) as
being these personages or having links to them on the basis of
their alleged meritorious acts and righteous rule. In fact, as I
shall document later, the central roles attributed to King
Mahāsammata in historical Buddhist societies such as Burma,

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[9] These issues have been developed in Tambiah 1984, where, in Chap-
ter XX, I discuss millennial Buddhism in Thailand and Burma, and in
a forthcoming essay (Tambiah forthcoming).

Thailand and Sri Lanka are ones of being the first legislator and
institutor of legal and social codes and the moral regulator of
society and its social divisions.

2) Post-canonical texts, treatises and chronicles of diverse
Buddhist schools taking King Mahāsammata as the first model king
creatively adopted him as the apical ancestor for developing a
genealogical chronicle of kings (*rājavaṃsa*) which concludes by
incorporating the Gotama Buddha and the Sakyans of Kapilavastu as
belonging to the line of Mahāsammata himself. Indeed, this is one
of the most frequent and important uses to which the story of the
creation of first kingship in world evolution is put.

The following considerations are pertinent for understanding
this development. Buddhist hagiography has always represented the
Buddha as being born into a royal Sakyan ruling family. It is well
known that from the canonical texts onwards, royal epithets were
used to describe the Buddha (e.g. 'conqueror') and the manner in
which his *dhamma* ('the king of the righteous king') conquered the
world. Several canonical *suttas* not only compare the Buddha and
the *cakkavatti* as two *mahāpurisa* (great men) but also assert that
the Buddha has been a *cakkavatti* (and a *bodhisattva*) in his past
lives, that when he was born both careers were open to him, and
that he chose the path to Buddhahood as the superior path. Now
what happens in post-canonical elaborations is the linking up of a
number of great kings in Buddhist mythological history into a
single series beginning with Mahāsammata and ending with the Buddha;
not only that, but they underscore the fact that these famous kings
were themselves *cakkavatti* and *bodhisattva*s, as was the Buddha in
his former lives.

The final move in the genealogical project is to claim that
the whole line of meritorious kings was nothing but a recurring
reincarnation of the Buddha himself - the Buddha was, as
bodhisattva, Mahāsammata; he was also famous *cakkavatti* kings like
Mahāsudassana and Mandhātā etc. This unification in terms of the
reincarnating Gotama as a *bodhisattva* was given further connective
coherence by two other affirmations: that the Buddha had a long
time ago, several lives ago, made the mental resolve to achieve
enlightenment in the future ('the aspirant to enlightenment'); and
that former Buddhas, for example, Buddha Dīpaṃkara, had prophesied
and proclaimed the coming of a future Buddha in the person of
Gotama Sākyamuni.

Some Famous Texts Incorporating the Aggañña Sutta

Let me now turn to the business of actual documentation to illus-
trate the themes already mentioned and to provide materials for
the development of others. I have chosen certain famous and strat-
egic texts written in different places and at different times to
describe the literary path traversed by the canonical account of

the first beginnings of the world and of the first righteous kingship.[10]

The *Mahāvastu* (*The Great Subject*) should be given pride of place as my earliest reference that elaborates on some of the themes present in the *Aggañña Sutta* (see Jones 1949). It is an early non-canonical text: according to Jones, its compilation was begun in the second century BC and not completed until the third or fourth century AD. Written in 'Buddhist Sanskrit', the *Mahāvastu* calls itself the *Vinaya* of the Lokottaravādins, a branch of the earliest Buddhist schismatics called Mahāsāṅghikas. But it is really a full collection of the historical facts and legends relating to the Buddha current at the time of compilation, and weaves in Buddhalogical, cosmological and doctrinal contents in a composite work.[11] Evidence of the fact that at least some of the contents of this text reflect traditions common to other branches or schools of Buddhism is that, aside from citing Jātaka tales, it includes, according to Jones, considerable quotations from traditional Buddhist literature, including passages that parallel those in Pali texts.[12]

I wish to draw attention to one section of the *Mahāvastu* which is concerned with the genesis of the world and intertwines with it

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[10] It should be noted that I am not providing a complete history of the use of the canonical story of origins in subsequent Buddhist literature, but only an illustration by means of some important works. Two additional references that Professor John Strong has brought to my attention are: (1) Alex Wayman's essay 'Buddhist Genesis and the Tantric Tradition', where he discusses the use of the Buddhist genesis story in one of the works of Tson-kha-pa (1357-1419) 'as a rationale for the types of meditations found in the Anuttara-yoga-tantra' (Wayman 1973: 24-5); and (2) Waldschmidt (1970), who informs us of a Sanskrit fragment found in the oasis of Sorcuq, Central Asia, around 1907-8, which contains a few passages apparently taken from a Sanskrit version of the *Aggañña Sutta*.

[11] As is the case with many of these texts, Buddhalogical and cosmological materials are interwoven with the doctrinal. Volume I, for example, contains the following strands. On the Buddhalogical side, the text contains the prophecy of the former Buddha Dīpaṃkara declaring Gotama to be a future Buddha, an enumeration of the ten stages in the career of previous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Jātaka-type tales, and the encounters between Buddhas and *cakkavatti*s. On the cosmological side there are, for instance, the account of Moggallāna's visits to the hells and heavens, and the story of the origins of the world and its first king Mahāsammata. On the doctrinal side, there are citations of Buddhist doctrine, and many quotations from traditional canonical texts parallel to the Pali ones – and in this respect there is 'hardly any variation from recognised Theravādin teaching' (Jones 1949: xii).

[12] Jones mentions the Pali texts in question, such as the *Khuddakapāṭha*, *Suttanipāta*, *Dhammapada* and *Buddhavaṃsa*.

an account of the lineage of kings (*rājavaṃsa*). The story of the evolution of the world and the instituting of the first kingship reproduces events and details familiar to us from the canonical *Aggañña Sutta*:

> So originated the idea that Mahā-Sammata means 'elected by the great body of the people'. So originated the idea that *rājan* means he who is worthy of the rice-portions from the rice-fields. So originated the idea that an anointed [noble] means he who is a perfect guardian and protector. So originated the idea that he who achieves security for his country is as a parent to towns and provinces. That is how a king can say 'I am king, am anointed noble, and one who has achieved security for my people'.[13]

This account then ends with the lineage of kings succeeding Mahāsammata as the apical ancestor; the genealogy concludes by incorporating Gotama Buddha and the Śākyans as belonging to the line of Mahāsammata himself. The genealogy goes as follows: the son of king Sammata was Kalyāṇa, whose son was Rava; Rava's son was Uposadha, and Uposadha's son was Māndhātar; Māndhātar had thousands of descendants all of whom were kings, the last of whom was Ikṣvāku, styled Sujāta; Ikṣvāku in turn is the progenitor of five princes who were banished from the city of Śāketa, who then with their retainers founded the city of Kapilavastu and are the ancestors of the Śākyans, and of the Buddha himself.

My second text is Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, written around the fifth century AD. It is considered the most authoritative treatment and most complete systematization of the Sarvāstivāda school, which was 'the most powerful of the schools of northern Buddhism of the Christian era in northwest India'.[14] Moreover, like all great post-canonical compendiums it is a marvellous statement of fundamental Buddhist doctrines together with, as well as through, the medium of cosmological representations. The *Abhidharmakośa* is a work of eight main (and one subsidiary) chapters; its second chapter builds up the reality of all phenomena as being the result of the *dharmas* (elements) working together, and its third chapter logically follows to describe the cosmos as constituted of various forms of existence, subject to different kinds of birth, death and rebirth, all taking place in three realms or worlds of existence (*kāma dhātu*, *rūpa dhātu* and *arūpa dhātu*).[15] It is in this cosmological chapter that Vasubandhu introduces the

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[13] Jones 1949: 293. I reproduce Jones's spellings in this and the following paragraph.

[14] See Funahashi 1961: 58-9. For an account of the text see La Vallée Poussin 1923-31 (Chapter Three of Volume II).

[15] This is, of course, the classical representation of the Buddhist cosmology, which has its basis in the canon, and is shared by all schools.

canonical account of world genesis. By way of commentary he asks whether men at the beginning of the cosmic age had kings. His verdict is negative, and he explains man's decline from an original divine, ethereal, luminous and beautiful existence in the *rūpa dhātu* to the state of greed and dissension as the causal factor for the origin of kingship.

My next example is a celebrated Theravāda Pali work, *Visuddhimagga* [*The Path of Purity*] of Buddhaghosa, which is acclaimed by Carrithers, following Gombrich, as 'the unitary standard of doctrinal orthodoxy for all Theravāda Buddhists', and which one expects them to have read attentively. It is worth noting that Buddhaghosa relates the process of the 'dissolution' and 'evolution' of the cosmos as a component of the section which the translator renders as 'Recollection of Past Life', which again is a section of the Chapter (XIII) which the translator entitles 'Description of Direct Knowledge: Conclusion' (see Ñāṇamoli 1956). Buddhaghosa specifically refers to the *Aggañña Sutta* as his authority, and gives a version based on this original source, in the context of expounding the theme of mindfulness of death and recollection of past lives as one of the fruits of concentration in meditation.

Buddhaghosa begins with a graphic account of the destruction of the world system, first by fire (seven scorching suns follow successively the natural sun and burn up the cosmos to worse than ashes), then by rain (with several inundations and recessions of flood waters), leading to the final emergence of a new cosmos and a new world cycle. From there on Buddhaghosa relates the story of evolution very much as in the *Aggañña Sutta* - including the appearance of grosser forms of food, of the sexes, of greed and private property, of theft etc. Then he makes this important interpolation when he tells the story of the first king, *an interpolation which identifies Mahāsammata as a previous incarnation of the Buddha himself*. This is a notable addition made in post-canonical works to the characterization of Mahāsammata:

> When beings had come to an agreement in this way in this aeon, firstly this Blessed One himself, who was then the Bodhisatta (Being Due to be Enlightened) was the handsomest, the most comely, the most honourable, and was clever and capable of exercising the effort of restraint. They approached him, asked him, and elected him. Since he was recognized (*sammata*) by the majority (*mahā-jana*) he was called Mahā-Sammata. Since he was lord of the fields (*khetta*), he was called Khattiya (warrior noble) .... This is how he came to be known by these names. For the Bodhisatta himself is the first man concerned in any wonderful innovation in the world. So after the Khattiya circle had been established by making the Bodhisatta the first in this way, the Brahmans and the other castes were founded in due succession (Ñāṇamoli 1956: 460).

I have also given this quotation *in extenso* because Buddhaghosa himself, Theravāda's doctrinal authority, has *contra* Carrithers but like myself, interpreted the *Aggañña Sutta* as stating that the circle of nobles was formed under the aegis of Mahāsammata.

At an earlier point in his text, while discoursing on 'mind-
fulness of death' as a subject for meditation, Buddhaghosa says,
'Although Mahāsammata, Mandhātu, Mahāsudassana, Dalhanemi, Nimi ...
were greatly famous and had a great following, and though they had
amassed enormous wealth, yet death inevitably caught up with them,
so how shall it not at length overtake me?'[16] In this context,
then, Buddhaghosa too provides a genealogy of kings according to
the Theravāda tradition which overlaps with those provided by other
traditions. We may note that Buddhaghosa identifies the Buddha as
having been Mandhātu in one of his previous lives, and that the
third and fourth names in the above list are the names of great
*cakkavatti*s mentioned in the canonical Pali text, the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

The *Mahāvaṃsa*, the *Great Chronicle*, composed in Sri Lanka
around the sixth century AD, is itself the model, precedent and
point of reference for various texts composed in Burma and Thai-
land.[17] This chronicle, which all conscientious students of
Theravāda Buddhism and Sri Lankan history never fail to read,
establishes at the very beginning of the text, after describing the
Buddha's visit to the island, the Buddha's genealogical credentials.
Geiger's translation has as the caption for Chapter Two 'The Race
of Mahāsammata'. It begins thus: 'Sprung from the race of
Mahāsammata was the Great Sage'. It then asserts that 'in the
beginning of this age of the world there was a king named
Mahāsammata', who was followed by twenty-eight royal sons and
grandsons. The names include famous *cakkavatti* (universal kings)
like Kalyāṇa, Mandhātu, Mahāsudassana and Accimā, who lived in the
three cities of Kusāvatī, Rājagaha and Mithilā. From Accimā in
turn stemmed hundreds of thousands of kings who founded various
other capital cities. The final descendants are the Sākyan kings
of Kapilavatthu and other members of the Sākyan royal houses, those
of particular note being Suddhodana and Māyā, the Buddha's father
and mother, their son Siddhattha (the *bodhisattva* and future Buddha
'Our Conqueror'), his consort, and their son Rāhula. The Mahāvaṃsa
triumphantly proclaims: 'Of this race of Mahāsammata, thus succeed-
ing, was born, in unbroken line, the Great Sage, he who stands at
the head of all men of lordly birth.'[18]

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[16] See Ñāṇamoli 1956: 250-1. Following this passage, Buddhaghosa
lists the names of other kings of great merit who appear in the
genealogy of kings stemming from Mahāsammata that I have drawn
attention to in other texts.

[17] My source is William Geiger's (1912) translation of the
Mahāvaṃsa.

[18] Geiger 1912: 12. *Contra* Carrithers, and in support of my read-
ing of the *Aggañña Sutta*, I think that this statement, that the
Buddha is the head of all men of lordly birth, parallels the
'suggestion' or 'implication' in the *Aggañña Sutta* that Mahāsammata,
the Buddha's apical ancestor, was himself the head of all of
Khattiya status.

It is worth noting that Wilhelm Geiger, who translated the *Mahāvaṃsa* into English, included an appendix entitled 'The Dynasty of Mahāsammata', in which he compares parallel passages documenting the line of kings descended from Mahāsammata in these texts – the *Mahāvaṃsa*, the *Mahāvastu* (which I have already treated) and the *Dulva*, the Tibetan translation of the *Vinaya* of the Sarvāstivādins. The overlaps in these lists, as well as Geiger's interesting comparative remarks on the common knowledge in the three Buddhist schools to which these texts belong, reinforce our sense that the subject I am treating in this essay has had a wide reach and significance in many branches of Buddhism.

From Sri Lanka, let us make the journey to Thailand. The *Jinakālamālī*, the famous chronicle composed in Pali during the reign of King Tilok (1441-1487) of the northern Thai kingdom of Lān Nā, has as its subject-matter, first, the epochs of Buddhism from its origin in India and its 'spread to Ceylon and thence to the establishment of the Sinhalese forms of Buddhism in South-East Asia',[19] and secondly and more extensively, the exaltation and the achievements of King Tilok and his successors (the Mengrai dynasty). The first section of this chronicle deals with the antecedents of Gotama Buddha, commencing with his status as a *bodhisattva* who made a mental resolution to aspire to enlightenment, concluding with his *parinibbāna* as the Buddha. The genealogy of 'Our Aspirant to Enlightenment', says the text, commences with Mahāsammata; indeed, it asserts that 'at the very beginning' of the Bhadda-aeon, the aeon during which 'the five Enlightened Ones, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, Kassapa, our Exalted One and Metteyya are born ... on account of the fact that our Aspirant to Enlightenment had first of all been selected by the common people, he became the king called Mahāsammata (Popular Choice)' (Jayawickrama 1968: 31).

The text, having claimed that as an aspirant to enlightenment the Buddha had been Mahāsammata himself, sets out a genealogy with Mahāsammata as the apical ancestor. This genealogy is a slightly extended version of the genealogy which I have already reported as contained in the Sinhala chronicle, the *Mahāvaṃsa*. Beginning with the twenty-eight kings stemming from Mahāsammata, it traces the thousands of descendants generated by the last of them, Accimā, and concludes with the Sākyan royalty to which the Buddha and his wife and child belonged. The *Jinakālamālī* includes a formulation absent in the *Mahāvaṃsa* but already included by Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga*, that the Buddha was in a previous birth, at the beginning of our worldly aeon, Mahāsammata himself.

Like the *Mahāvaṃsa* (and many other chronicles giving the line of kings descended from Mahāsammata), the *Jinakālamālī* also lists various capital cities as founded by the proliferating branches of descendants at distinct points of segmentation. Tedious as it may seem, there is a good reason for my listing a good number of them. The twenty-eight kings immediately stemming from Mahāsammata

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[19] Jayawickrama 1968: xv. This translation of the chronicle is my source for this discussion.

founded the three cities of Kusāvatī, Rājagaha and Mithilā.[20]   The
last of these twenty-eight, Accimā, founded Kusāvatī; and the
hundredth descendant from him in turn founded Ayojjhā.   Following
a similar pattern of segmentation or branching, the proliferating
royal descendants and their dynasties are linked with multiplying
capital cities in various parts of India.   The array of famous
cities include Bārāṇasī, Kampila, Hatthipura, Mathurā, Roja, Campā,
Mithilā, Rājagaha, Takkasilā, Kusinārā, ending with Kapilavatthu,
the Sākyan centre.

My last famous text also comes from Thailand.   It portrays the
way the Buddhist story of creation is incorporated in King Lithai's
great cosmological work of the Sukhothai period, the *Traibhūmikathā*,
first composed in AD 1345 or thereabouts.   It includes portions
from Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* and many other Buddhist texts, and
it has been periodically copied and revised right through Thai
history up to the early Bangkok period.   It is quite clear that
Lithai's composing of the great work was not only an act of
religious piety but also a politically motivated deed - and both
considerations were operative when subsequent kings of Ayūtthaya
and Bangkok had the work copied during periods of first assumption
of the throne, which were often times of religious revival and
seeking of legitimation.

In a recent English translation of an Ayūtthayan version of
the *Trai Phūm*, we find a concluding chapter entitled 'Cosmic De-
struction' beginning with a horrific vision of the destruction of
the cosmos by fire, burning suns, inundations of water and raging
winds, followed by its regeneration culminating in the election of
the 'Lord Bodhisatta' as thir lord and leader.[21]   The *Trai Phūm*'s
next and concluding chapter is on 'Nibbana and the Path', which
proclaims the transcendental quest of the *bhikkhu* as the highest
treasure, without parallels.   In predictable fashion, this text too
weaves into a single variegated tapestry diverse strands - cosmo-
logical description of the heavens and hells, exemplary lives of
the Buddha and other Buddhist sages, the careers pertaining to
cakkavatti kings, and doctrinal discourses on *nibbānic* release.

Looking back at the famous post-canonical texts I have re-
viewed here, can we say something about their shared cosmological
and mytho-historical objectives that suggest or reflect the
development of Buddhism over time into a totality elaborating and
weaving together cosmological, doctrinal, Buddhalogical and mytho-
historical strands?

All of them (except the *Mahāvaṃsa*) have cosmological descrip-
tions, and at a certain point, accounts directly taken from, or
similar to, the description of the evolution of the world found in
the *Aggañña Sutta* are incorporated.   A central part of the *sutta*
of serious import for later Buddhists was its story of the unfold-
ing differentiation in the natural features of the world,

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[20]   I am following the spellings given in Jayawickrama 1968.

[21]   F.E. Reynolds and M.M. Reynolds transl. 1982.   There is also a
French translation by Coedès and Archaimbault 1973.

dialectically related to an increasing differentiation and degener-
ation among human beings, until the first righteous kingship is in-
stituted to oversee and regulate society. This kingship is a soc-
ial creation through acclamation of a person worthy of being king;
it is therefore different from the 'natural evolution' preceding
it.

Having incorporated this part, many of these texts then pre-
sent *another* linear development not found in the original *sutta*,
namely a genealogy of kings descended from the apical ancestor,
Mahāsammata, and concluding with Gotama Buddha. This is a descrip-
tion of the long lineage of the Buddha himself, a line of merit-
orious kings, many of them *cakkavatti*s and *bodhisattva*s, constitut-
ing a kind of mythic 'religio-political' history through time, and
concluding with a climactic achievement in Buddhahood. But note
that this line of kings and its segmentation in time are again
linked to the founding of dynastic capital cities and towns in
various parts of India. That is to say, a temporal series of
kings is indexed to a spatial expansion and territorial spread of
their rule. Extrapolating from this double axis of space and time,
I see this duality as mapping the expanding colonization of India
and the founding of political communities (polities).

Thus is the 'sacred geography' of India linked to the 'sacred
time' of royal genealogy, and the peopling of India and its terri-
torial mapping takes place under the aegis of moral kingship. But
it is implied all the time that this unfolding and expanding uni-
verse through time and space takes place under the umbrella of
Buddhist *dhamma* and the workings of *karma* and culminates in the
climactic achievement, the Buddha himself, who uplifts the universe
to a higher task. Certain later texts, as we have seen, represent
the Buddha himself in his former statuses as a *bodhisattva*, who, in
keeping with his mental resolve to achieve Enlightenment, was re-
peatedly reincarnated as a chain of kings, until he achieves his
aim in his penultimate life.

Finally, it is interesting that famous synthesizing treatises
like the *Visuddhimagga* present the cosmological unfolding of the
world and its cycles, and the historical becoming and rebecoming of
kings, as occurring under the subject-matter of 'mindfulness of
death' and process, and the recollection of past lives, which be-
come possible as a result of mental concentration during the prac-
tice of meditation, the central practice of the *bhikku*'s vocation
and search for wisdom and liberation. Thus indeed the salvation
path is proclaimed as both encompassing the world process and lib-
eration from it.

King Mahāsammata as Legitimator of Customary Codes

I would like to close this essay with a compelling documentation of
how, well into recent times, the canonical conception of first
kingship acted as a charter and legitimator of legal systems and
social practices of three major Buddhist societies of South and

Southeast Asia - Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand.

One critical illustration is provided by the Mon-Pagan and Thai legal codes, which, though calling themselves *dharmaśāstra*s (*dhammasattham, thammasat*), actually attributed the establishment of their legal codes to the first king Mahāsammata, under whose benevolent aegis a brahman called Manu delivers the substantive legal code. In this formulation we see that the personages opposed on the Indian stage - Manu (Brahmanical) and Mahasammata (Buddhist) - are here brought together, Manu being made an agent of the first Buddhist king. Incidentally, this also provides a precedent for Brahmans serving in Southeast Asian Buddhist courts as pundits, judges and interpreters of law.

In *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* I stated the shift from the classical Hindu to the Mon-Burmese-Thai Buddhist formulation as follows:

> In Hindu society the brahman is superior to the king, legitimates his power, and interprets law (*dharma*); in the Mon-Burmese (and Siamese) version, it is the king who, if not the maker of laws, is still the fountain of justice and a *bodhisattva* himself; and the brahman works for the Buddhist king as his subordinate functionary. Herein lies a basic difference in the ideological armatures of Indian and Southeast Asian polities (Tambiah 1976: 94).

Lingat's magisterial work, *The Classical Law of India* (1973), gives this fascinating portrayal of an ideology in the making.[22] He explains how 'the appearance at the Pagan epoch in Burma of a literature composed locally in Pali by Mon monks on the model of the *dharma-śāstra*s in Sanskrit marks ... the first stage of an evolution which went on until it was exhausted.' The Buddhist authors faced a dilemma. They wanted to codify the rules and customs of the local people for whom they wrote on lines similar to the Indian *śāstra*s, which they admired as a model. But if they could not attach the local rules to a supernatural source like the Veda, their codifications, having de-brahmanized the model, would only end up as mere handbooks of law.

> The canonical legend of the Mahāsammata, the world's first king, chosen by his people to put an end to discord, alone offered elements of a solution. It must have been tempting to attribute the precepts of the *dhammasattha*s to Mahāsammata, who turned out to be a Bodhisattva. But Mahāsammata had to remain above all the model of the just king and could only be the interpreter of the law. Thus our authors, seizing upon the legend, completed it conveniently. They gave Mahāsammata a counsellor, the hermit Manu, who plays in his court the role which the *prādvivāka* does in the *dharma-śāstra*s. They imagined that Sage was raised into the celestial regions and reached the *cakkavala*, the wall which surrounds the world and which bears,

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[22] See also Lingat 1950.

carved in letters high as a bull, the law which rules it. It
is this very text of the law which, rehearsed from memory by
the hermit Manu, is set down in the *dhammasattha*s (Lingat
1973: 267).

I have elsewhere described the course taken by the Mon-Burmese
dhammasattham traditions.[23] Many treatises were produced over time,
the earliest known attributed to AD 727, the vast majority being
compiled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and continu-
ing to be produced in the nineteenth. During this long passage of
time Pali versions were translated into the Burmese language and
modified; portions of preceding works were deleted, and new legal
usages to suit changing circumstances were interpolated with or
without deletion of previous contradictory usages. In the seven-
teenth century, chroniclers of the Alaungpaya dynasty actively be-
gan to compose new kinds of Buddhist scriptural legitimation for
the law code by citing Buddhist precedents taken, for example, from
the *Jātaka* tales. Thus two processes can be deciphered here: on
the one hand, the giving to old *dhammasattham* usages a Buddhist
validation, and on the other, the updating of current customary
practices, giving them Buddhist doctrinal support, and then incorp-
orating them into the code.[24]

The Thai (Siamese) kingdoms of the past also had traditions of
customary law that were similar to the Mon-Pagan formulations. I
have also pointed out elsewhere (Tambiah 1976: 93-5) that Thai trad-
itional law (*thammasat*), as revised and codified in the early years
of the nineteenth century as the law of the Three Seals by the first
king of the Cakkri Dynasty, Rama I, shared the same Mahāsammata-Manu
myth and many features of substantive law. It is well known that
Rama I, in re-establishing Thai supremacy centred in Bangkok after
the Burmese destruction of Ayūtthaya, consciously restored and ad-
apted Ayūtthayan precedents and usages.[25] The Thai *thammasat* was
restored with its traditional associations of being grounded in the
sacred past; at the same time, the Law of the Seals as codified
under Rama I was a conscious revision of traditional law. A central
proposition that the king was the upholder of the sacred *thammasat*
and that the *thammasat* was 'the fundamental statement of royal law
and legitimacy in traditional Thailand 'was affirmed and continued
by the early kings of the Cakkri dynasty'.[26] Conceptions of the
nature of law and the king's power to legislate did change,

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[23] See Tambiah 1973: 138-48. The source which I myself used was
Richardson 1896.

[24] On the subsequent fate of the *dhammasattham* during British rule
and afterwards, see Tambiah 1973: 141-58.

[25] Rama I was, of course, preceded by King Taksin, whose capital
was Thonburi.

[26] Engel 1975: 3. Engel confirms my treatment of the *thammasat*
tradition in Thailand.

especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but not
his role as upholder and legitimator.[27]

Returning to Burma, I cannot resist referring to an essay by
Thaung on 'the theory and practice of kingship' (1959) as portrayed
in a text which he identifies as the *Myanma Min Okchopon Sadan*.
This text, composed in the latter part of the nineteenth century
during the time of King Mindon, cites the story of King Mahāsammata,
and gives accounts of the coronation and other court ceremonies,
the king's daily routine, and so on, and traces their origins to
earlier times, for example, precedents referred back to the corona-
tion of King Anawrahta of the Pagan dynasty in AD 1044. The *Myanma
Min Okchopon Sadan* describes the *Muddha Bhiseka* as the most import-
ant of the coronation rites. The text states that at one point,
while the king and queen sit in state, eight princesses attired in
brilliant robes prostrate themselves before them, and while lustrat-
ing the king they say these words: 'O Lord King, may you be fast in
the laws practised by the Maha Thamata, the first king in the world
... ' (Thaung 1959: 177-8). The princesses are followed by the
daughters of 'Brahmans and rich men', who recite the same invoca-
tions.

It is ironically fitting that Sri Lanka should provide my last
body of evidence for Mahāsammata's continuing relevance right into
the twentieth century. When Spence Hardy put together some trans-
lations from Sinhalese texts as a representative collection of the
beliefs and traditions of nineteenth-century Sinhalese Buddhists,
he included not only the classical story of world genesis as a part
of the Sinhalese cosmological beliefs, but also other excerpts
which showed that over time, Buddhist textual and popular tradi-
tions had fused the first king Mahāsammata, the Buddha, and pre-
vious *bodhisattva*s and *cakkavatti*s into one lineal chain:[28]

> From Maha Sammata to Sudhódana, in lineal succession, there
> were 706,787 princes, of the race of the sun. Of these
> princes, Gótama Bódhisat was born as Maha Sammata, Maha
> Mandhátu, Maha Sudarsana ... [etc.] The last birth of which he
> [Gotama] was a king was that of Wessantara (Hardy 1853: 134).

Happily, support for Mahāsammata's serving as a historic pre-
cedent for the institution and application of the law codes in

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[27] See Engel 1975 for a full treatment of these continuities and
changes.

[28] Chapter Three of Hardy's book is entitled 'The Primitive Inhab-
itants of the Earth; Their Fall from Purity; and Their Division
into Four Castes'. It is peculiar that Weber (1958: 375) who con-
sidered Hardy's *Eastern Monachism* (1850) as 'basic' for describing
the norms and structure of the Buddhist *sangha*, totally ignored
Hardy's companion volume, which was intended to give us a picture
of the religion of the Sinhalese laity. Elsewhere (1853: 126),
Hardy again reports that the ancestry of the Buddha is traced ulti-
mately to Mahāsammata and that a descendant of Mahāsammata,
Mahāmandhātu, was a *cakkavatti*.

actual Theravada polities also comes from Sri Lanka. There too the traditional law treatise *Nīti-Nighaṇḍuva* (which was discovered in its written form in the nineteenth century but, of course, had antecedent expressions) finds its sacred authority in Mahāsammata.[29] Mahāsammata's election as a solution to the decay of the world is repeated, and the story is further elaborated to take account of Sri Lanka's local social contours.[30]   Mahāsammata is declared to be the ordainer, maintainer and regulator of the Sinhalese caste system.   Pieris provides us with useful documentation of the place of Mahāsammata in the validation of Sinhalese social customs. Citing Hocart (1950) and Lawrie (1898) as his authorities, Pieris writes (1956: 180):

> The mythological expression of the origin of caste which has been set forth ... associated caste with the first king and law-giver.   Such an idea persists in the minds of the Sinhalese villagers who believe that it was the mythical king Mahāsammata who decreed that the drummers were to perform in demon ceremonials.   Here again the apparently unreal legend allegorizes empirical reality, for in Kandyan times it was considered the lawful function of the king to ordain appropriate functions to various castes: he could also degrade certain villages and families of high caste to a lower status and there are certain degraded *gattara* villages in existence to this day....

Pieris also cites a judgement made in recent times that provides additional evidence of the persistence of these validating beliefs. A *rata sabhā* (judicial tribunal) that met in the isolated district of Nuvarakalāviya ended its verdict thus: 'And by the authority of the five kings, Mahāsammata ... of the gods of the four quarters and other gods, of Sinhalese kings ... we hereby enjoin that no one should mention our decision when quarrelling, or in jest, at any time whatsoever' (ibid.: 257). So for the Sinhalese villagers, Mahāsammata is no joke.

I can personally confirm, on the basis of fieldwork conducted in the 1950s, the continuation of these same attitudes among Sinhalese villagers living in the Laggala region of the Kandyan highlands: they regarded King Mahāsammata as the institutor of the caste system and referred the degraded status of certain groups within the *goyigama* caste to a decree of this first king. Nur Yalman (1967) discovered a similar role attributed to Mahāsammata among another

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[29] The exact date of the *Nīti-Nighaṇḍuva* (see Le Mesurier and Panabokke 1880) is not known. D'Oyly and Sawers, who codified the law in the early nineteenth century, were probably acquainted with an earlier work on which this version is based.

[30] This story of the Great Elect is apparently also referred to in the Sinhalese chronicle, the *Janavamsa*. I have not been able to consult it.

group of Kandyan villagers he studied. And Paul Wirz (1954), who
made a detailed study of Sinhalese exorcism rites in Southwest Sri
Lanka, documents Sinhalese myths in which Mahāsammata appears as
the archetypal supreme king, who, under the aegis of the Buddha,
wields power over the disease-causing demons.

The Return Challenge

Carrithers, among other claims, declared that 'the *Aggañña Sutta* is
not a charter for anything ... '; that it is wholly a satire, all
joking, and that therefore it cannot be read as at the same time
presenting a serious cosmology and a moral theory of first kingship
countering Brahmanical formulations.

  I have presented not inconsequential evidence to prove that
the same *sutta*, especially as regards its cosmological account of
world evolution and the manner and purpose of the institution of
the first king Mahāsammata, was interpreted much the same way as I
did in my book in the Buddhist literature of *post-canonical* times
from the first centuries AD to recent times. I have shown that the
sutta has served as a charter, a precedent, a point of reference in
several ways and has also been the subject of further elaboration.
Its satirical dimension did not blot out other levels of meaning.
One of my theses in *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* was that
the canonical account of the simultaneous origins of first kingship
and ordered society, and the canonical discourses relating to the
cakkavatti as universal king, contained germinal ideas that were
elaborated in post-canonical texts and in historical Buddhist
polities; that these texts contained the seeds of later flowerings
in an open-ended way. The new evidence I have now collected and
presented, evidence not presented or developed in my book, I now
offer as a positive contribution to the theme of Mahāsammata's con-
tinued and continuing relevance.

  If Carrithers still maintains that his own reading of the
Aggañña Sutta is correct, then I would like him to answer *why and
how* the Buddhists of post-canonical times have, for so long, and
so pervasively, both in learned texts and in popular traditions,
monstrously and humourlessly misunderstood the message of that
sutta, and, moreover, spent so much thought and energy in creative-
ly using it to explain their world and legitimate their social
practices.

  Another member of the Oxford Oriental Institute who claims to
know Sri Lanka has ventured a view similar to Carrithers': 'The
story of "The Great Elect" is well known to Theravādin tradition,
but I am not aware that it had any effect on the practice of
politics and I doubt whether the Buddha ever thought it could or
should' (Gombrich 1988: 86). I must confess I was not there when
the Buddha gave this discourse, nor was I able to ask him what he
actually meant or how he expected his future followers to take it.
As for 'awareness', it can be deepened by some reading of the ex-
tensive literature beyond the Pali canon. And, by the way,

Carrithers by his own admission has not yet offered 'a full liter-
ary analysis' of the *Aggañña Sutta*. Is it not time that he gave us
a systematic, fine-grained reading of this text, with close atten-
tion to all the levels of meaning embedded in it? And thereafter
answer the issues I have posed?

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ASPECTS OF THE AESTHETICS OF RICE-GROWING
IN A BALINESE FORM OF LIFE ON LOMBOK

> Know that all the shapes and
> images which you see with your
> bodily eyes in the world of
> things that come to be and cease
> to be are mere semblances and
> copies of the forms which have
> real existence in the thought-
> world...
>
> Hermes Trismegistos

I

Introduction

It has been established recently that Balinese aesthetics does not
distinguish between the work of the artist and the work of the
artisan. That is to say that the products, as it were, of activi-
ties which we might term artistic and those which we might classify
as artisan are not distinguished. Both (as we discriminate them)

are reckoned to be closer or more distant approximations to Ida
Sang Hyang Vidhi, the high god of the Balinese. The criteria of
assessment of an activity and of the product to which an activity
gives rise are empirically different according to the activity and
the product in question. No matter what these are, though, two
principles inform all assessments of their standing in relation to
an ideal, or to what is termed more formally a centre of reference.
These two principles are relative height and lowness, and closeness
to or distance from a centre of reference (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984a:
34-6).

Before we proceed, we should remark parenthetically that
centres of reference take many forms. They may, for example, be
temples, the compounds of Brahmana and Ksatrya,[1] or one's parents,
i.e. one's closest origin-point (*kawitan*). The epicentre of the
Balinese world on Lombok is Mount Rinjani, at the summit of which
is found, either in analogue or in kind, everything which exists in
the Balinese universe. It is at centres of reference that rela-
tions of the greatest symmetry are discernible in Balinese life.
Perfect bilateral symmetry, though, is found only in Vidhi, as Ida
Sang Hyang Sunya, the Void. An index of symmetry is the degree to
which any two dyadically related entities are what Leibniz calls
'indiscernible' (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a); that is, the greater the
symmetry of the relations which obtain between two dyadically re-
lated entities, the greater the number of the same objective state-
ments which can be made about both entities. The greater the sym-
metry which obtains also, the greater the substitutability of the
two entities one for the other. Only where perfect bilateral sym-
metry obtains are two such entities substitutable wholly one for
the other. Perfect symmetry is what is finest, highest and most
pure in the Balinese world (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984b: 15-16).

These assertions about the form of Balinese life on western
Lombok derive mainly from studies, listed under the author's name
in the list of references, which consider various aspects of Bali-
nese life. A question which arises here is, what does 'aspect' refer
to? In the next section of this essay, therefore, we try to make
some sense out of uses of this ordinary-language term which has ap-
peared sporadically in the literature in quasi-technical senses
which are not wholly in accord. Thus in Section II, we consider
various uses of the word in the anthropological literature. In the
light of this consideration, we then address Balinese rice-growing
under the heads: 'Rice'; 'Where the Rice is Grown and by Whom';
'Male and Female'; 'Circularity and Linearity'; 'High and Low';
'Odd/Even'; 'Visible and Invisible'; 'Symmetry and Asymmetry'.
Finally, some of the possible implications of our study are high-
lighted.

The present essay has two main aims, namely, to contribute to
the process of making sense of the Balinese form of life, and under-
taking which, in words which I have relied on before, is part of
the central core of social anthropology (cf. Leach 1961: 1); and to
see how far the findings of previous studies of Balinese life on

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[1] Brahmana and Ksatrya are the twice-born (*dvija*) estates. The
four Balinese estates are: Brahmana, Ksatrya, Vesia and Sudra.

Lombok, and particularly of a study of Balinese aesthetics, are borne out by an enquiry into an aspect of Balinese life which on the face of it is far removed from art and aesthetics.

II

'Aspect'

'Aspect' derives from Lat. *aspectus*, the past participle stem of *aspicere*, look at (Onions 1966: 54 *s.v.*). The *OED* gives ten main meanings of the word, two of which are obsolete. All the meanings which are current concern the action of looking at something, or else the way in which something gives on to something else.

In so far as the anthropological literature is concerned, our brief survey begins with Mauss's *Essai sur le don* (1925). Here, Mauss writes (1970: 1) that in 'primitive' and 'archaic' societies, 'social phenomena are not discrete; each phenomenon contains all the threads of which the social fabric is composed. In these *total* social phenomena ... all kinds of institutions find simultaneous expression: religious, legal, moral and economic. In addition, the pheonomena have their aesthetic aspect ... '

Later, Mauss makes clear what he intends by 'aspect': 'total' social phenomena are legal

> in that they concern individual and collective rights, organized and diffuse morality .... They are at once political and domestic, being of interest both to classes and to clans and families. They are religious; they concern true religion, animism, magic and diffuse religious mentality. They are economic, for the notions of value, utility, interest, luxury, wealth, acquisition, accumulation, consumption and liberal and sumptuous expenditure are all present, although not perhaps in their modern senses. Moreover, these institutions have an important aesthetic side (ibid.: 76-7).

'Aspect', as used here by Mauss, corresponds to the sixth meaning of the word given by the *OED*, i.e. 'the side or surface [of anything] which fronts or is turned towards any given direction'. This use of 'aspect' is contingent upon the idea that society is a whole, and that it should be studied as such. Thus, Mauss writes:

> We are dealing with something more than institutional elements, more than institutions divisible into legal, economic, religious and other parts. We are concerned with 'wholes', with systems in their entirety ... it is only by considering them as wholes that we ... [are] ... able to see their essence, their operation and their living aspect (ibid.: 77).

'Aspect', here, corresponds to the fifth or the ninth meanings of the word: 'the facing or fronting of anything' or 'one of the ways in

which things present themselves to the mind'.

The idea of studying societies in their totality was echoed strongly, of course, by Van Wouden (cf., e.g.,1968: 1-2) and others in the Netherlands in the 1930s, and it was anyway not a new idea. Boas, for example, had said as much as early as 1898 (cf. Hartland 1900: 304). But Mauss's *Essai* voiced this sound point not merely as 'a mystical shibboleth' but with 'concrete illustrations' (Lowie 1937: 216).

The different but related idea that societies should be compared as wholes (cf., e.g.,Radcliffe-Brown 1931: 22) did not commend itself, for instance, to Lord Raglan, an extremely acute critic whose observations are always worth taking seriously. His response to this idea is characteristic: 'it is impossible', he declares (1957: 141), 'to compare two societies as wholes; you cannot even compare two peas as wholes. You can compare them [only] for [i.e. by way of such notions as] size, weight, colour and taste', and he adds, rightly in my view, that furthermore 'you will get no results unless you perform these operations separately and with different techniques'.

One can, of course, argue about Raglan's latter contention; but against the first, no argument could weigh, except perhaps in the case of some societies with prescriptive alliance. The debatable point about what Raglan asserts, though, is that the notions which he mentions - size etc. - are technical terms which are imposed on the object of study. The same thing goes for the aspects or sides to which Mauss, and Lowie (1937: 216), refer. That is, their approaches treat society to an extent as though it were like a pea, so that by turning society about, so to say, the anthropologist can study it under its economic aspect, its religious aspect, and such like (cf. de Josselin de Jong 1972: 80), where these aspects correspond in some pre-determined way to the size, weight etc. of a pea.

A difficulty with this approach, of course, is that primitive or archaic societies tend not to discriminate these aspects or sides categorically, so that the use of terms like 'economic' or 'aesthetic', except in the loosest possible way (cf., e.g.,Needham 1974: 44), is liable to impose notions upon the social facts or to distort them. This procedure is bound ultimately to result in failure, as the work of, for instance, Tylor and Frazer demonstrates (cf., e.g.,Lévy-Bruhl 1910: 6).

Sahlins puts the difficulty which we have pinpointed here as follows:

> No social relation, institution, or set of institutions is of itself 'economic'. Any institution ... if it has material consequence for the provisioning of society can be placed in an economic context and considered part of the economic process. The same institution may be equally or more involved in the political process, thus profitably considered as well in a political context. This way of looking at economics or politics - or for that matter, religion, education, and any number of other cultural processes - is dictated by the nature of primitive culture. Here we find no socially distinct 'economy' or

'government', merely social groups and relations with multiple functions, which *we* distinguish as economic, political, and so forth (1974: 185-6.n.1, emphasis added).

The use of the term 'aspect', then, by the writers we have considered so far is, as Sahlins points out, a way of discriminating bodies of social facts which correspond to the social anthropologists' ways of cutting up, as it were, alien and exotic societies, ways which are most unlikely to correspond to the ways in which areas of social life are discriminated indigenously.

In writing about the notion of the 'change of aspect', 'meaning by this the capacity to discriminate in an object of thought as many connotations and uses as can be discovered or contrived' (Needham 1983: 3), Needham does not claim that 'every interpretation reveals an aspect that has a real counterpart among social facts, but only that it may do so ... ' (ibid.: 164). This circumstance is perfectly in accord with the meanings of 'aspect' as 'the point from which one looks' and 'one of the ways in which things may be looked at or contemplated, or in which they present themselves to the mind'.[2] But to adopt this attitude to the analysis of bodies of social facts in various forms of life jars slightly with what I take to be the first task of the social anthropologist, that is, to make some systematic sense of what a particular people does and of what it says (and writes) of what it does.

All this is to say that whereas these writers' views of aspects of society are rooted in the interests of their own discipline, my view is that first of all we should search out a meaning of 'aspect' which allows us to claim that what is revealed through analysis bears some real relation to the object of study. This meaning would correspond to the *OED* meaning: 'the way in which the planets, from their relative positions, look upon each other', not, it should be emphasized, 'their joint look upon the earth'. That is, we should (in the first instance at least) eschew the categories and the resulting presuppositions of kinship studies, of anthropological economics, of the social anthropology of art, and such like, and concentrate on aspects of the society in question from system internal.

Schärer's use of 'aspect' in *Ngaju Religion* has the required sense: he writes to begin with that 'culture is not composed of contingencies and compounds: it is an organic whole ... ', and that all the '"elements"' of which it is composed are fixed with reference to 'the common focal point where life and thought coincide and through which they must be interpreted and to which they constantly refer' (1963: 3). He continues: 'with such a unity in mind, one

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[2] Needham cites Wittgenstein (1953: 200): a right-angle triangle 'can be seen as a triangular hole, as a solid, as a geometrical drawing; as standing on its base, as hanging from its apex; as a mountain, as a wedge, as an arrow or pointer, as an overturned object which is meant to stand on the shorter side of the right angle, as a half parallelogram, and as various other things'.

speaks in anthropology not of the elements of culture but of its aspects' (ibid.).

Schärer goes on to ask where this focal point or centre by which the whole of, in his case Dayak, culture and religion is determined, by which their entire life and thought must be interpreted, and to which everything must be referred, lies. He answers: 'in the conception of God ... The idea of God runs through the whole culture and religion like a scarlet thread, and that in fact is the focus of life and thought' (ibid.: 7).

Schärer admits that this approach may have its drawbacks: 'The objection may be raised', he writes,

> that ... the common people and even many priests will know nothing of this system. It is admitted that this is the case. But when we wish to describe a religion or a religious idea, we are not compelled to begin and end with empirical life and thought. We must not only give a superficial view, but must seek the background of the appearances and the supporting and driving forces which inspire the empirical and which continually renew it. We have to penetrate through the surface to the centre from which everything receives its meaning (ibid.: 6-7).

I do not entirely subscribe to Schärer's views, in that he is at ease (clearly) with 'religion', for this is not a useful analytical term (cf., e.g., Needham 1981: 72-90). But the idea of the centre is resonant; and it receives support both from Eliade's view that every religion has a 'centre' (1969: 10-11), and from Dumont's idea of a society's 'core value' (e.g. 1982: 211), in that both are concerned with what, like the scarlet thread, is pervasive in societies.

In the Balinese case, there is no difficulty in identifying this centre, in all three senses: it consists of Ida Sang Hyang Vidhi, located at the centre of the island at the top of Mount Rinjani. Vidhi takes many forms; and Vidhi is pervasive in the world. All things are contained in Vidhi, so that a Balinese form of life (*dharma*) is a totality which is, so to say, sacred (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a). When I speak of 'aspects' of Balinese life, therefore, I refer to the way in which the various bodies of social facts which are discriminable in that life are aspects of Vidhi as sunlight is to the sun-god Surya or, to use another example, as different kinds of lamp are still all lamps.

To consider aspects of Balinese life, understanding 'aspects' in this way, is an exercise in Balinese aesthetics, because Vidhi (as we have noted) is highest, finest and purest, among other things. This goes for such an apparently non-aesthetic aspect as rice-growing, to which we can now proceed. A final caveat, though: most of the people who do the work which we shall address in part would not be able to give the account which follows of the work; nor should they be able to do so, for the ideas to which we shall refer are such as to be appropriate only for senior Brahmana and Ksatrya (cf., e.g., Hobart 1978: 61; Duff-Cooper 1984b: 16).

III

Rice (Pantu / Padi)[3]

Rice-growing activities constitute a major part of a set of differ-
ent subsistence activities. These activities are only one example
(examined later) of exchanges which take place among the various
categories with which the Balinese world is populated (cf., e.g.,
Howe 1984: 218, table; Duff-Cooper 1985a, 1985b).
     Rice-growing forms part of a set with the growing of veget-
ables, the cultivation of fruit and animal husbandry. All these
activities are the work (*pakaryan / pagaénan*) of the Sudra estate,
usually called 'Balinese people' (*Anak* Bali) on Lombok. The culti-
vation of fruit is considered appropriate work, though, for indiv-
iduals of any of the four estates. Whereas the cultivation of veg-
etables in dry and wet gardens is not accompanied by rites, as also
is the case with animal husbandry,[4] the cultivation of fruit trees
is accompanied by one rite, that held on *tumpék uduh* (*uduh*, fruit-
ing trees like betel, coconut, mango, but not bamboo),[5] during
which offerings are hung on trees.
     Rice-growing, by contrast, is accompanied by rites, small
(*nista*) or more elaborate (*madya*, middle, or *utama*, biggest), from
the inception of the planting of the rice plants out in the fields
(*carik / bangket*) from the nursery beds, to the storing of the harv-
est in the granary.
     It has been suggested, in the context of Rotinese bad death,
that 'a difference between normal and abnormal is symbolized by the
performance of ritual as contrasted with "lack of ritual"' (Fox
1973: 359-62). The performance and non-performance of ritual may
be characterized as a kind of reversal or inversion, i.e. an ab-
stention from normal practice (cf. Needham 1983: 100-115, 116). It
would be incorrect in the Balinese context, though, to see the
'lack of ritual' associated with vegetables, fruits and animals as

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[3] Balinese consists of various kinds of language (cf. Kersten 1970:
13-25). When words are given in this form, the first word is the
fine (*alus*) form, the second the coarse (*kasar*) form.

[4] The only exception to this of which I am aware is that the neck
of a calf is draped with white cloth at, and for a period after,
birth. The Brahmana estate is associated with the colour white
(which includes all colours) and with the cow in stories and in
cremation rites (*mukur, maligia*).

[5] When the day Kliwon of the five-day week and Saniscara of the
seven-day week coincide, then the day is a *tumpék*, one set aside
for particular objects, e.g. *tumpék* Landep for weapons, *tumpék*
Andang for domestic animals and fowl, *tumpék* Ringgit for the shadow
theatre (*wayang*) and money and jewellery etc. The activity associ-
ated with the objects of the rites held on each *tumpék* is not per-
formed on the *tumpék* in question: thus on *tumpék uduh*, no wood-
cutting or fruit-picking etc. is performed.

being a reversal of this kind, for at least two reasons. First,
this 'lack of ritual' is here normal practice; and second, because
a good case could be made (though it will not be made here) for
arguing that in as much as Balinese life is a sacred totality,
every aspect of that form of life, if any, is 'ritual' (cf., e.g.,
Situmorang 1976: 11, 13; Peacock 1982: 22). Rather, vegetables
(and other plants), fruits and animals are not accorded the status
of one of the five kinds (*bangsa*) of beings - gods (*déva*), cremated
human beings (*pitara*), 'priests' (*resi*), human beings (*manusa*) and
demons (*bhuta*) - which warrant the working of rites on their behalf.
This fact is correlative with the following: that while these five
classes of being are all possessed of the *triparamana* - thoughts
and emotions (*idep*), the ability to make sounds (*sabda*) and
strength (*bayu*) - animals possess only 'sounds' and strength, while
plants possess only strength.

In Balinese life there is no category of rites termed 'agri-
cultural' or something of the kind. Agricultural rites are of the
classes *déva yadnya* and *bhuta yadnya*, rites for the gods and for
demons. It is well known, of course, that in Southeast Asia rice
is the goddess Sri. In Balinese ideology, however, not only is the
rice but so are the ricefields, the soil in the fields, the sun,
the wind, the rain and the water which irrigates the fields equated
with gods and goddesses: Uma, the ricefields as an area; Siva, the
soil in the fields; Bayu or Indra, the wind; and Gangga, the rain
and irrigating water (cf. Duff-Cooper forthcoming).

Rice and some of the implements which are used in its cultiva-
tion are associated with the mystical in other ways. Miniature re-
plicas of the plough-yoke (*uga*̣), the plough (*tenggah*) and the har-
row (*lampit*) are included in the objects and offerings (*étéh-étéh
padudusan*) which are placed alongside a Pedanda on the meditation
platform (*balé pawédaan*) as he or she makes holy water of various
kinds. On certain occasions, when the essence (*sari*) of these ob-
jects and offerings is given (*atabin*) to each of the gods in turn
(cf., e.g., Swellengrebel 1960: 47; Covarrubias 1972: 296-7), begin-
ning with Vidhi as Surya, men use the miniature implements to pre-
tend to plough and to harrow, while others turn unhusked rice
(*beras*) into husked rice (*gabah*) as they process clockwise round
the seats of the gods (cf. Hooykaas-van Leeuwen Boomkamp 1961: 24,
25-31, 36). A full-size yoke is used in marriage rites.

Rice, in the form of a *chili* (cf. Covarrubias 1972: 172-81),
a palm-leaf cut-out representing a bisexual being, in all probabil-
ity Ardhanārīśvara, is represented in the holy-water sprinkler
(*lis*), which is a god, Bhatara Siva (cf. Hooykaas-van Leeuwen
Boomkamp 1961: 5).

Howe reports (1980: 108) that theoretically, *mantra* should be
said whenever an operation involving rice is carried out, from harv-
esting to pounding. That is, rice is at least of a status equival-
ent to a Brahmana Pedanda, the highest there is among material
human beings (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984b: 24).

Two further points should be mentioned finally in this very
brief survey to establish the character of rice and of rice-growing
in Balinese ideology. First, the goddess Sri may also be called
manik gatih, the *manik* of a grain of rice (Van Eck 1876: 168; Howe

1980: 183). *Manik* means 'precious stone', and it also refers to
the 'essence' of semen and the embryo of a chicken in the egg; it
is also the part of a grain of rice or a fruit in which the regen-
erative potential of the grain or the fruit is located (Van der
Tuuk 1912, IV: 502). It is also said to mean 'ovary', while one
prays for a walking *manik* (*manik majalan*) if one has no children
(ibid.; cf. Warna 1978: 368). The fact that *manik* refers to both
semen and the ovaries is in accord with two other social facts: an
effigy of Sri called the *nini*, which is made from the rice first
planted (commonly called the 'sacred' rice in the literature) (see
Figures I, II and III below), and which is placed high up in the
granary, is made from both male and female stalks; while Howe men-
tions that in the part of the rite *nguaba* or *ngantukang nini*, take
home the *nini*, called *nyinah* (from **sinah*, light, clear), the god
Rambut Sedana and the goddess Sri are married to each other; and
that the palm-leaf construction (*tulung*) which is buried among the
rice plants in the fields to help them to grow properly consists
of two elements in which the bellies (*bacang*) are set together in
replica of sexual intercourse (Howe 1980: 122, 130, 132). It would
be consistent for the top element to be associated with male, that
underneath with female (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985f).

Secondly, the rice is said to be pregnant (*mobot / beling*)
while it is growing; and to be delivered (*maluspusin*), the rite
during which this is done (*biu kukung*) including all the paraphern-
alia used normally in deliveries; while the rice matures through
the same series of rites used for growing children (Howe 1980: 124,
126).

It is fair to say, therefore, that we are not dealing with
simply a crop, or anything of the kind. Indeed, in the nature of
Balinese society, we are dealing here with 'total' social facts.

IV

Where the Rice is Grown, and by Whom

Vidhi is both dual and one (*sakalam niskalam tatha*). This unity in
duality is thus a principle of Balinese ideas concerned with
aesthetics, for it is a way of expressing the two ideas mentioned
already (i.e., high / low and closeness to or distance from a
centre) which pervade Balinese aesthetics. There are at least six
regards in which Vidhi as a duality and a unity is discernible in
these aspects of rice-growing.

First, work consists of two kinds, as we have noted: the per-
formance of rites, and work in the fields, often calf-deep in glut-
inous mud and water. These kinds of work, however, are distin-
guished one from another by villagers in a number of ways. These
ways are dress, language, demeanour, the consumption of food, the
embellishment of the activities, and the amount of money properly
expended on the work.

Secondly, rites are held in temples and compounds mostly,

though they may also take place on a very small scale in the rice-
fields; labouring takes place in this context only in the fields,
at least until after the crop has been harvested. Temples and com-
pounds on one hand, the ricefields on the other, stand physically
and ideationally at two opposed points in the Balinese world.
Temples are the purest, where no sex, dead bodies and people who
have had contact with them which has not been expunged, or menstru-
ating women, for instance, can enter; the fields are full of what
is unclean literally and are thus less pure, rather as the left
hand stands to the right hand (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985e). In the
fields, people sometimes have sex, fight to the death so that one
side wins, and are in constant danger from the physical attacks of
Islamic Sasak or the mystical attacks of malevolent Balinese and
from giant, hideous ogres like *raksasa*.

Thirdly, the parties to rice-growing are the gods, by which is
meant cremated ancestors of varying degrees of distance from an
origin-point (*kawitan*), and the empirical individual and the line
which own the land and work it.[6] In this situation, the line in
question must be Sudra, for it is an aspect of the duty (*dharma*) of
this estate to labour. This duty is associated with what is lower
and less fine and pure (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985c); the estate and its
duty are associated with the area of the Balinese world which is
lowest, that is, in opposition to the gardens and compounds. The
gods are associated with the purest and finest of these three
areas, and they have ultimate control over the success or otherwise
of the harvest. These two opposed categories of being are dual,
and opposed, but they constitute a unity, in this case in producing
rice from a particular area of ricefields.

Fourthly, rights in land vest in the gods, but the land is
worked, we have seen, by human beings. Furthermore, these rights
are registered in the names of empirical individuals who act, so to
say, as trustees for the gods. It is therefore a line of descent
or a local descent group which holds the rights in the land. The
line or sub-line, here as in other instances, is represented usual-
ly by the oldest, material male member of the line. The holders of
rights in land, therefore, are both a duality and a unity.

Next, in the relation termed *ngadas*, one line or sub-line
holds the rights in land, but another line, sub-line, or 'family'
(cf. Duff-Cooper 1985d) works the land. Both parties to the rela-
tion, or the party which works the land alone, give(s) offerings to
the gods; the owners of the rights (acting through an empirical
human being, of course) contribute poison to kill pests which come
from the sea sent by the gods, the worker(s) of the land fertilizer.
The crop is divided equally between both parties. The same goes,
mutatis mutandis, for *ngadas* relations, possibly also called *ngandu*,
concerning two or more pigs, a number of ducks (*bébĕk*) etc. The
holder of rights and the grower of rice (or the purchaser and the
husbander of pigs etc.) constitute a duality which is also a unity.

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[6] The situation where one man and his line or sub-line (for which a
number of Balinese words exist; cf., e.g., Hobart 1983: 7-11) own
the land and others work it is addressed later in the text.

Finally, when rice is sold, the buyer and the seller are re-lated asymmetrically to varying degrees (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a). However, they still constitute a duality and a unity.

All these relations are marked by exchange between two or more of the parties which constitute any dualistic unity. In Balinese ideology, the exchanges are equal, assuming that both parties are acting in accordance with local current conventions (*désa kala patra*): that is, in the relations mentioned, what is given and what is received by both parties are equivalents one of the other. But the relations are also asymmetrical to various degrees, in the sense that in the contexts described one party is pre-eminent. This pre-eminence is manifested in various ways in the situations which we have just described.

Rites are pre-emiment in relation to labour. One uses fine language to talk about rites or their prosecution; one dresses in one's finest (sc. newest) clothes and embellishes oneself with gold jewellery or a wrist-watch;[7] one eats communally and very formally (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985e); and one should expend as much money, goods and labour in their performance. Work in the fields employs coarse language, one's oldest clothes, no jewellery, very informal commun-al eating or eating alone, and the least expenditure possible while not jeopardizing the success of the harvest.

Temples and compounds are pre-eminent in relation to rice-fields, at least in that they are set higher and closer to the village temple (*pemaksan*), physically and ideationally, than the fields.

As is expectable, further, the gods are pre-eminent in rela-tion to human beings, for the gods decide ultimately the fate of the crop. But it should be noted that the gods are not capricious: if the harvest is not a success, human beings must have behaved im-properly in some way.

It is also the case that the owner of land or the joint owner of animals who pays for them with money or goods are pre-eminent in relation to the worker(s) or the other's land or the other joint owner who husbands the animals. The former do not work physically, like the highest statuses in Balinese life who are scholars (the Brahman estate) or who (the Ksatrya), before the arrival of the Dutch on Lombok in 1894, were the administrators of realms. It is an honour to carry the baggage of another of such a high status, for example, but a Pedanda or a king is pre-eminent, clearly, in relation to people who porter. The *ngadas* relation is an analogue of this latter situation.

In each case, one category which is pre-eminent is also finer and often higher, physically and ideationally, than the other, less eminent party. It should be emphasized, however, that the parties to *ngadas* relations, and indeed the relations which obtain between employer and employee more generally, are not represented physical-ly in Baturujung. The details of relations of *ngadas* and of *ngandu*

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[7] Howe writes (1980: 179): 'wealth in the form of gold and other precious metals is conceptually related to food', the generic terms for which are *rayunan / nasi*, 'cooked rice'.

emphasize the equality of the two or more parties to the relations.
It should be noted, moreover, that the pre-eminence of a category
is not linked in any systematic or necessary way to better material
circumstances than those enjoyed by the less eminent. Those who
are pre-eminent, indeed, and who are also wealthy do far better to
give away all that they have, and probably receive mystical abili-
ties (*kesaktian*) in return, than to try to increase their wealth;
especially if all they think about when they try to do so is the
maximization of profit, a most unbecoming (sc. coarse and ugly) way
of behaving (cf. Duff-Cooper 1983b: 371).

The pre-eminent category is also closer to a relevant centre
of reference than the less eminent party. Which centre of refer-
ence is chosen depends upon the circumstances, but the pre-eminent
party is always closer to it. In all cases, also, the relations
between the parties to these exchanges, which constitute dualistic
unities, are asymmetrical to a degree.

In these dualistic relations, the parties may of course work
in concert or in conflict (cf., e.g., Hobart 1978: 79). Conflict
is not fine, and is associated with the divisiveness of the witch
(*léak*). Similarly deprecated, by some, are the innovations of new
varieties of rice, which are said to be less tasty than *pelita*, the
variety traditionally grown for consumption as steamed rice; and of
motorized machinery, which is particularly divisive, for not all
villagers are capable practically of taking advantage of a commun-
ally owned tractor, say, and are often hesitant to try to acquire
the skills necessary for the use of such machinery at courses run
by the agents of the Indonesian government; nor can they afford to
buy them privately. Some people also say that such machinery any-
way spoils the fields, rather as the province of which western
Lombok is a part, once ruled over by the Balinese, has been spoilt
by Muslims exercising jural authority over them.

Hobart incidentally, suggests, on the basis of five incidents
which led to violence or 'a complete breach of social relations',
that there is a tendency, if nothing more, 'for the eruption of
disputes to follow the lines of economic difference ... ', i.e., to
have arisen between those who held rights in a lot of land and those
who did not (ibid.). He goes on to suggest that these conflicts
'derive in part from the disparity in the pattern of land-ownership
and public influence', i.e., the biggest holders are not necessari-
ly also the most publicly influential, 'or between the reality of
divergent economic interests on the one hand, and the ideology of
equality [of the *subak* to which owners of rights in land all fed
from one water source belong] on the other' (ibid.: 80).

We cannot, of course, assess these suggestions without being
able to consider each incident in detail. But a remark of Colling-
wood's is apposite here: 'People will speak', he writes (1970: 32-
3), 'of a savage as "confronted by the eternal problem of obtaining
food". But what really confronts him is the problem, quite trans-
itory like all things human, of spearing this fish, or digging up
this root, or finding blackberries in the wood'. The same goes
mutatis mutandis for these conflicts and their partial explanation.

V

Male and Female (Lanang / Muani *and* Istri / Luh)

Vidhi as male and female is archetypally represented in the bisex-
ual icon Ardhanārīśvara, as well as in the sun and the moon, espec-
ially when they appear together, as it were, and in the married
couple (*pakurenan*).

The rice-plant, we have noted, is possessed of a *manik*, which
is at once semen and ovary. The insemination, as it were, of the
earth (the god Siva or the goddess Uma) by water (the goddess
Gangga) or by light rays (the sun-god Surya) (cf. Howe 1980: 120)
'"in marriage"' (Van Naerssen 1918: 34) activates the *manik*. *Manik*
are represented in metaphysics (*sarva-surya*) as fiery wheels
(*cakra*) which represent totality. The *manik* of rice contains the
whole rice-bearing plant within itself.

This process gives rise to both male and female plants. In
the *nini*, the effigy of Sri, both male and female plants - seven-
teen of the former, sixteen of the latter - are used. In this, as
in other but not all contexts, male is pre-eminent.

In the fields, men plant the nursery beds, plough and harrow,
and plant the rice used for making the *nini*. Males tend the plants
to begin with, and deal with the level of water in the fields.
Women plant the fields with seedlings from the nursery beds and
make the *nini*. They also give offerings to the rice while it is
being dried in the compound after harvesting. Men and women toget-
her, who are most often related to one another through one origin-
point, or through two closely related such points, hoe, weed and
harvest the rice. Men and women also look after the rice while it
is drying.

I can as yet discern no system in the employment of males, of
females, and of both sexes in these activities, unless it be that
the involvement of one or of both sexes is an analogy of the ways
in which separately and together the sexes are involved in child-
rearing. Which activity in rice-growing corresponds to or is an
analogue of which activity in child-rearing must remain to be
investigated.

VI

Circularity and Linearity (Bindu *and* Pepet)

Circularity refers to Vidhi as Sang Bindu, the point or dot in
which everything in the Balinese universe is contained. Linearity
refers, among other things, to the series or sequence of logical
progressions from Sang Bindu. These progressions (cf., e.g.,
Mershon 1971: 32-3) are all replications and transformations of
Vidhi. Circularity and linearity are discernible in Balinese
dance / drama, music, notions of duration, and in the representa-
tional devices employed in traditional Balinese genealogies

(cf. Duff-Cooper 1984a: 23). They are combined also in the designs of the fiery wheel and the swastika which are used in sculpture, as motifs in jewellery, and in tattoos borne by men.

In the rice-growing process, both are present in at least three activities, over and above their presence, naturally enough, in the durational dimension of all rice-growing and other activities. The three referred to particularly are ploughing, hoeing (*ngiskis*) and fertilizing (*ngabot*). One may let the cows down into the fields to start ploughing (*mungkah*) at any time except when the *ingkel* is *sato*.[8] Where one begins ploughing depends upon the snake of the year (*naga tahun*), a mystical creature which sits oriented in a different way in each thirty-day month. On a day such as Redite Kliwon,[9] its tail was in the south. On this day, beginning at the point where the snake's tail is, one ploughs round the points of the compass in an anticlockwise direction thirteen times, i.e., the total numerical value of the day when one begins ploughing.[10] The motion round the points of the compass stops (in this case) at thirteen circumferences of the area of ricefields (*petak*) being ploughed; thenceforth, the motion is lineal, up and down or backwards and forwards across the field.

The most usual direction in which things take place is clockwise, *pradaksina*, the meaning of which may well be turning one's right side first to the south (*daksina*). The question arises here whether the direction of the first numbered ploughing is significant. On the face of it, the anticlockwise is a reversal of proper order. Perhaps it is akin to the sleeping of a menstruating woman on a mat by the bed and not with her husband on it. Both perhaps are considered to be ready for life to germinate within themselves. But this suggestion is a conjecture which I cannot justify here.

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[8] An *ingkel* is a period of seven consecutive days. There are six: Wong, Sato, Mina, Manuk, Taru and Buku, corresponding to people, animals, fish, birds, trees and such plants as bamboo and sugarcane, which are jointed (Ind. *persendian*). The *ingkel* operate as a kind of close-season on activities relating to the character and category of the *ingkel*.

[9] When, at least, it fell on the 4th April 1982, in the tenth Balinese month.

[10] A Balinese day has many names but the most usual way to refer to a day is by reference to the seven-day week (*sapta wara*) and to the five-day week (*panca wara*), which run concurrently. The seven-day week, from Sunday, is Redite, Coma, Anggara, Buda, Wraspati, Sukra, Saniscara, and the days have the numerical values 5, 4, 4, 7, 8, 1 or 6, 9. The days of the five-day week are Kliwon, Umanis, Paing, Pon, Wage, and their numerical values are 8, 5, 9, 7, 4. A day such as Redite Kliwon thus has a numerical value of 13 (5 + 8). When the combination produces an odd value, the day is Pepet, an even value, Menga. These are the names of the two-day week, which are contrasted as night and day.

When one hoes, usually with three or four often closely relat-
ed people, one moves lineally up the field, moving from side to
side. This movement appears to be an example of alternation (cf.
Needham 1983: 121-54, esp. Figure 8). Hoeing up the field, one
zigzags to the end opposite to where one began. One then moves
across from the point at which one arrives, hoeing, for a suitable
distance. One then zigzags back to where one first changed direc-
tions when hoeing up the field. This sequence of alternating move-
ments constitutes a closed circularity. The line of alternations,
through time, is linear.

In fertilizing the fields, a male walks up the field, usually
from south to north or from west to east, casting fertilizer with
his right hand in front of him from left to right and then from
right to left in an alternating sequence. The motion is then re-
peated back down the field, but across it, as in hoeing. The mo-
tion while fertilizing up and down a ricefield is both circular,
therefore, and linear. These motions are discernible also in the
steps of Balinese dancers (cf. McPhee 1970: 309 Figure 1, 314 Fig-
ure 2). The ability to cast fertilizer, like the ability to per-
form complicated dance steps and other movements, is learnt only
after much practice. The man who can cast fertilizer well is a
fine worker and hence, in this regard at least, worthy of approba-
tion; the dancer equally.

VII

High and Low (Duur / Tegeh *and* Andap / Éndép)

I want to draw attention in this section only to a few related
facts. For example, that the highest part of the rice-plant, when
it is full of grain and hence bending over - in the manner, as vil-
lagers say, of an older person who does not adopt the proud, but
perhaps haughty, bearing of a young man straight against the wind,
so to say - is said to be at its best when there is a black hue as
one looks across the tops of the plants; the most fertile soil is
reddish. Black is associated with Visnu, red with Brahma, and thus
with high and low respectively. Further, a head of hair should be
as black as possible - ogres and Caucasians, associated with what
is low and coarse, have red or reddish hair - and should shine like
the sun. As in other contexts, what is high is associated with
what is fine.

VIII

Odd / Even (Gasal / Genap)

When men plant the rice from which the *nini* is made in the rite
termed *nuasén*, clumps of rice seedlings are planted in the

configuration shown in Figure 1. The numbers in this figure repre-
sent both the order in which the clumps are planted and the number
of rice seedlings in each clump. The double asterisk (as in Fig-
ures 1 and 2) marks the water inlet into the area of ricefields.

$$6 \quad 1 \quad 8**$$

$$7 \quad 5 \quad 3$$

$$2 \quad 9 \quad 4$$

Figure 1. Planting of rice in nuasén

It will be noted that all the lines in the figure total 15.
In Balinese ideology, odd is to even as life is to death. A child
which gestates for an odd number of months (villagers say) is like-
ly to be strong and healthy; one which gestates for an even number,
unripe (*muda*) and fragile. Odd is also to even as male is to fe-
male. All these facts are in accord with the odd number of rice
seedlings planted in *nuasén* as above. Howe reports (1983: 145),
also, that odd numbers mark points of transition. *Nuasén* may be
viewed as such a point, as may the odd number (33) of rice stalks
used in making the *nini*, which signals the end of a series of act-
ivities connected with rice production and the inception of a new
series of such production or of the production of secondary crops.
'33' is probably made up of 3 times 11.
    Forty-two days must elapse between *nuasén* and an unceremonious
circuit of the ricefields (*mubuhïn*) by villagers to make the rice
grow well. Similarly, a rite is held at least 42 days after the
birth of a child; and 42 is the number of days, also, for which one
performs regimes or disciplines (*brata*) of different kinds. The
circuit of the ricefields was said specifically to be similar to
the attaching of a baby's umbilical cord (*pungsed*) in a small sil-
ver container on a white thread around the child's belly, which is
carried out at least 42 days after birth. Hobart reports (1978:
83.n.14) that Hooykaas 'argued that this is, in fact, the common
thirty-five day cycle ... with a seven-day week added'. Neither,
of course, explains, as I also cannot, this fascination with '42'.
But its use, and the two odd numbers making it up, do not conflict
with the facts so far mentioned. That even numbers do not figure
significantly in rice-growing activities is explicable probably on
the ground that rice has to do essentially with life, and not with
death; and with the high gods, and not with low demons.

IX

Visible and Invisible (Sakala *and* Niskala)

Visible and invisible refer to two related ways in which Vidhi may
be in the world. Both are discernible in the rice-growing process,
but not only in the gods and the human beings to which we have re-
ferred already. *Mantra*, spoken formulae in this context, are used
to protect the crops from thieves, and people guarding the crop at
night sometimes wear belts which render them invisible; while many
other aspects of the activities are, of course, visible and
material.

X

Symmetry and Asymmetry

It has already been demonstrated that both symmetrical and **asymmet-**
rical relations are discernible in various aspects of the Balinese
form of life in western Lombok (cf. Duff-Cooper 1985a). This fact
was expectable: 'Formal terms such as "symmetry" and "asymmetry"
are not peculiar to a particular linguistic and intellectual tradi-
tion, but denote properties which must be discernible (either con-
ceptually or in social practice) by any cultural system of thought',
so that 'it follows that the terms are intrinsically appropriate to
the study of exotic collective representations' (Needham 1983: 64).
Symmetrical and asymmetrical relations are discernible also in
rice-growing.
     In the configurations made up by the 'sacred' rice shown in
Figure 1, for instance, both can be discerned. Taking 'true'
centre as the centre of reference, then the configuration is clear-
ly symmetrical; but taking '8' or '3' as the centre of reference,
then the figure is asymmetrical: projections through these centres
result in both odd and even numbers.
     The design which results from the path which the planter of
these clumps' right hand takes, shown in Figure 2, further, is sym-
metrical about 'true' centre both in the horizontal and in the
vertical planes. Projections from the points standing for '8' and
'3' in Figure 1, however, also result in configurations which are
symmetrical about these two points. This total symmetry is in ac-
cordance with the design being devoid of (numerical) content. Pro-
jections through the point at '8' in both the horizontal and vert-
ical planes results in a right-angle triangle within which the con-
figuration is contained. This total configuration is reminiscent
of the ideological shape of the Balinese world, deriving from one
point, at the top of the triangularly represented Mount Rinjani,
which is in principle limitless, i.e., able to place everything,
known and unknown, in its place in the Balinese universe (cf.,
e.g., Covarrubias 1972: Plates 14-19, facing pp. 202-3). It may be
significant that the simple right angle is the basic unit of

Balinese geometry; and that the cardboard offering *puspe*, 'flower',
given to material human beings as they are being cremated in the
rite *ngabén*, is made without a bottom to the cone. Projections
through the point at '3' horizontally and vertically lead to a con-
figuration in which the two constituent parts are enantiomorphs.
Reading, as it were, the shapes which constitute each half from
right to left and from left to right, the first shape in one half
is the last in the other half; and the positions of the same shapes
in each half correspondingly. This reversal is similar to the one
which is discernible in the order in which one refers to or addres-
ses human beings and gods: addressing or referring to human beings,
one mentions the pre-eminent category first; addressing or referr-
ing to the gods, the pre-eminent category comes last. Further,
these two classes of being - usually visible and invisible respect-
ively - can be represented as being one on top of the other, as in
the dualistic configuration we have been considering.

In Figure 2, the points are drawn in the form of a rectangle.
If, however, these points are arranged in the form of a square (as
in Figure 3), then the relative proportions of the movements of the
planter's right hand from the point at '1' to that at '2' to '3'
and so on are 2:2:1:3:1:2:2.[11] A number of remarks can be made
about these numbers. First, they total 13, which is (consistently)
an odd number. As the Balinese say that it is imposible to have a
number which is larger than nine, perhaps '13' is made up of 9 + 3
+ 2 unities which merge to form 1, and hence 13, along the lines of
Ambonese arithmetic (cf. Jansen 1933). Secondly, the proportions
are symmetrical about '3'. This fact does not conflict with the
assertions made above about symmetry, asymmetry and content: the
apparent numerical content of these proportions is simply a repre-
sentational device for movements which, like dance steps, have no
numerical or other content in themselves. However, both '3' and
the totals of '5' to either side of '3' refer to numerous triads
and quintads which are discriminated by villagers as being signifi-
cant in the Balinese world. Finally, the form of the proportions,
which may equally well be represented as A:A:B:C:B:A:A, is termed
a retrogade inversion in classical counterpoint. In Balinese music
the nuclear (*pokok*) melody, a kind of *cantus firmus*, consists
basically of eight fractional beats. These fractional beats, which
must be expanded melodically to take on musical meaning, may be ex-
pressed as 3:3:2 or as 3:2:3 or as 2:3:3. These forms are used as
counter-rhythms in a gong-chime solo (*trompong*), for instance, and
they give the solo its vitality and its rhythmical drive. This
rhythm, in the form of the eight-beat unit, lies at the heart of
Balinese rhythm; and it is a germinal rhythmical unit which can be
developed in 'endless' ways (cf. McPhee 1966: 66-7, 74, 78).

If the developments of this eight-beat unit are employed lin-
eally as they are listed by McPhee, then the resultant form of the
three eight-beat units is an enantiomorph in a form similar to that

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[11] I am grateful to Dr Gerd Baumann for drawing this fact to my
attention and for discussing this and other matters with me at
length.

of the proportions described above, i.e., 3:3:2:3:2:3:2:3:3, which is symmetrical if the second '2' is taken as the centre of reference. In such a formation, this centre must be a point which is defined as occurring only once in the series, or else it must be symmetrical. This is explicable, perhaps, by the fact that Vidhi

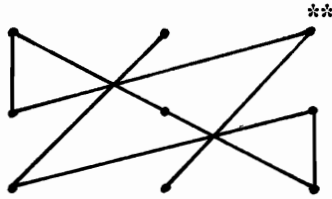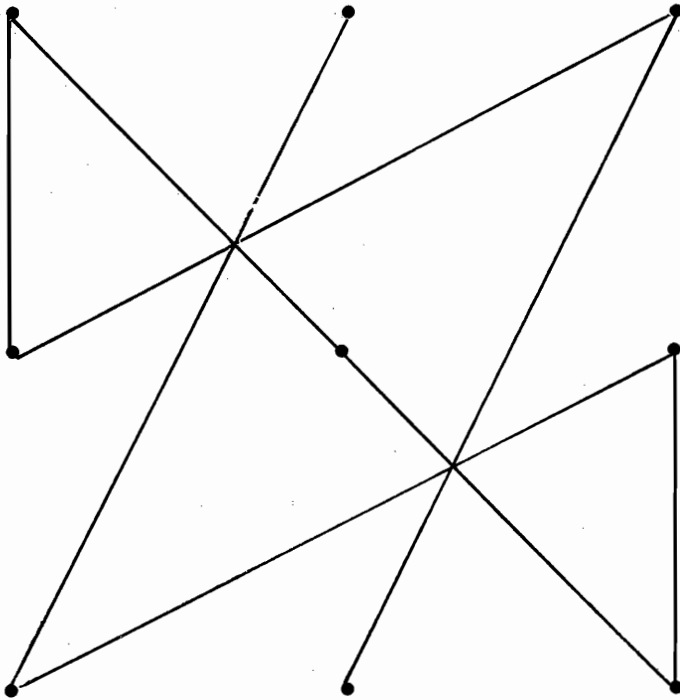*Figure 2. Path of right hand of planter of sacred rice*

Figure 3. Path of right hand of planter of sacred rice contained within a square

is both a duality, in which the relations between its constituent parts are symmetrical, and a unity.

McPhee does not suggest that this form of the eight-beat unit is used in this way; but that it should spring so readily from McPhee's explication and that it should be so fundamental to Balinese rhythm (as the 'sacred' rice and the *nini* are so important in rice-growing) is perhaps more than mere conincidence.

The two halves of the configurations shown in Figures 2 and 3, like the two forms of reference and of address and the other enantiomorphs which we have mentioned, constitute a totality. Totality in the form of *ongkara* is the colour of rock crystal (*spatika*) which is used to surmount a *padmasana*, seat of Surya, and the mitres and sometimes the walking-sticks of Pedanda. The form of crystals may be different, while their internal structure is identical. This fact applies also to Vidhi. The syllable *ongkara*, Vidhi, the crystals at the top of *padmasana* etc., and the configuration which we have been examining under various aspects, all represent totality. Not surprisingly, in   view of the fact that red, like demons, is associated with what is relatively to the left and low, red crystals in the form of the *mirah dlima* best repel the attacks of demons and other malevolent beings.

The shapes which have emerged in Figures 2 and 3, it should be remarked in conclusion, are composed clearly of three elements. It may be that these three elements refer to, among other matters, the three worlds (*loka*) which in some Balinese theological accounts (*sarva-tattva*) comprise the Balinese universe. That the highest and lowest elements are triangular accords with the importance of the notion of a centre composed of two constituent parts deriving from that centre, as children derive from their parents, which is discernible in many aspects of Balinese thought and social life. These shapes are also used in the patterns of batik which many Balinese wear and use for other purposes. Batik patterns have cosmological significance (cf., e.g., Geirnaert-Martin n.d.).

The relations between male and female are asymmetrical, as we have noted. Taken as a whole, the ideas and activities which constitute the rice-growing process show the male pre-eminent in some contexts, the female as pre-eminent in others. But the relations between the men and the women who harvest and carry unhusked rice back to the owners' compounds are symmetrical. Apart from the way of carrying out the activity - men carry sacks of grain on their backs, women on their heads - in all other regards the male and the female are interchangeable, i.e., the relations which obtain between the two sexes are thus far, and in this context, symmetrical. This fact is shown clearly in the teams (*klompok*), usually agnates, who harvest rice (*ngrampék*): each member of such a team receives an equal share of one-tenth (minus one share, which goes to the owner of the equipment, *alat pengrampékan*, used during harvesting) of the rice harvested. The invitation to landless people to harvest their rice by owners of rights in land is a gift. Payment for the labour in the form of one-tenth of the crop to the team is an equal exchange; the relations, though, which obtain between owner and labourers are asymmetrical, for the pre-eminent party (the owner) does not labour, in this context at least. This degree of asymmetry,

though, is very slight, especially as on the ground, as it were, the latter's situation in not in all ways preferable to working in the fields.

XI

Concluding Remarks

The present study, which could be extended lengthily, of course, began (it will be recalled) with a consideration of 'aspect'. In the light of Schärer's classical work, a meaning of this word was decided upon. The rest of this study has demonstrated by recourse to empirical cases how this meaning of 'aspect' can inform profitably the consideration of bodies of social facts.

It has elicited also areas of the rice-growing process which are viewed revealingly under an aesthetical aspect. However, our descriptive and analytical notions have been decided upon according to indigenous views of the matter. This approach orders the material economically, and it also gives rise to questions which need further consideration. Such systematic consideration of social facts I take to be the very essence of enquiry which is scientific. But we have been able to take advantage of the power of this method in the explication of social life because we have not eschewed metaphysics. Of course, there is nothing about metaphysics which should make it necessary for us to ignore it and its teaching (cf. Duff-Cooper 1984a: 36). The renewed recognition, indeed, of its sociological import and of what, in this case, Balinese metaphysics teaches, has given rise to a more exact description of the relations which constitute the Balinese form of life, in Pagutan at least. That is, for instance, we can no longer talk properly about asymmetry without specifying in some way (preferably formally) to what degree the relations are asymmetrical (cf., e.g. Howe 1983: 157 n.10; Duff-Cooper 1985a).

Moreover, this truly holistic approach to indigenously defined aspects of a form of life allows us to treat one of a number of activities which are fundamentally important in any form of life in a way which is sound methodologically. It is also a way, I take it, which would be intelligible to a learned Balinese. It therefore has a double utility.

Hampshire writes (1970: 216-7) that there is no doubt that we can sometimes 'contemplate reality, in perception and introspection, without any kind of comment, and even, with far greater difficulty, without in any way acting or intending action, and without even an apparent shadow of a practical interest'. At these times we are 'deliberately enjoying moments of pure aesthetic experience'; this experience is akin, perhaps, to a mystical experience (induced by drugs or not) or to an orgasm of great intensity. This kind of experience is such as to make it worth seeking out; but some social anthropologists will doubtless also want to take part in what Mauss calls 'the conscious direction' of forms of life. These

anthropologists can, of course, try deliberately to derive pure aesthetic experience from their work, as from other aspects of their lives. But in their more practical concerns and activities, studies such as the present one seem more likely to encourage and support their forays into what Mauss terms the supreme art, i.e., thinking politically in the Socratic sense of the word, than biased, unrigorous theorizing, based on a paucity of social facts and unreliable statistical data about, say, the spread of market rationality (cf., e.g., Gerdin 1982; Cederroth 1985).

This approach, further, takes the people with whom we live in the field seriously, and not simply as the purveyors of 'folk models' or something of the kind (cf. Duff-Cooper 1983b, 1985g; Cederroth 1985). It is appropriate, moreover, not only to the description or analysis of societies in South or Southeast Asia, as has been amply demonstrated already in French and Dutch anthropology, but to the description and analysis also of societies in other parts of the world.

The approach, finally, contributes data which are of crucial importance to the grander designs of philosophers of art and of aesthetics, for 'the only aesthetic theory that can now be critical and enlightening is at the same time a history of changing ideals of art that points a way to the future ...' (Hampshire 1970: 237).

For these reasons (at least) the approach via aesthetics has demonstrably much to recommend it.

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THE BODY, STYLE AND ETHNIC VALUES

Introduction

The discourse that follows consists of four independent essays that
are connected by a few tenuous threads. The links are less in the
subject-matter than in my approach, which has been to dissect the
components, i.e. lines, marks, signs or building-blocks, with which
my chosen artists have constructed their images. The sources of
artists' imagery in their personal and social experience are legion,
but the breakdown of their images into components does allow a few
useful connexions to be made between social environment and image.
I examine my subjects from the view-point of a fellow artist,
interested in the process, part-technical part-ideological, whereby
an image is built. The origins of any process go back to early and
progressively simpler states which may, in practice, be overlain,
obliterated, abandoned, elaborated or modified by later develop-
ments.
    The sequence I shall follow begins with primary school-child-
ren's drawings and ends with a very complex and technically elabor-
ate art form, the contemporary carvings of the Makonde in Tanzania.
This is not to suggest an ontogeny in the subject-matter but rather
a development of my own ideas. Thus each successive discussion has
been attached to a more complex but quite different situation.
Nonetheless there are common features in the subject-matter. The
first is that each derives from eastern Africa, where it first
caught my interest. Each seemed to me to be amenable to a sort of
'structural dissection' and each iconography focused on the human

body. There will therefore be a parallel to my practice as a zoo-
logical anatomist, but I shall try to dissect human images rather
than animal bodies. The analogy can be taken further in that an
organism's fitness to function is often best expressed in some
specialized detail of its anatomy rather than in its generalities.
In children's art, stereotyped ideograms of the human figure have
such wide currency that it is easy to assume that differences are
mere variations on universal themes, but the more abbreviated and
primitive the ideograms the more potentially significant small dif-
ferences will be. I also hope to show that senses and functions of
the body can not only be depicted as attributes of a recognizably
human image, but sensory or conceptual feelings can be so integral
to an image's meaning that they mould its character, dominate its
'style' and are a major factor in making the image and its subject
intelligible to the uninitiated. As the 'initiates' for my sub-
jects are obscure or disappearing, I have set out to be a partial
spokesman. Works by four different classes of African artists are
examined, and in each case there are alien observers or patrons
within our purview. However shadowy, their presence is an integral
thread of the discussion.

It is generally accepted that most established cultures impose,
however cryptically or unconsciously, a wide variety of disciplin-
ary mechanisms or assumptions upon artistic production resulting in
a recognizable style. Here I shall discuss some of the implica-
tions for work made in Tanzania and Uganda during a period of great
social change when limitations on what an artist could or could not
do had become weak or absent. I hope to show that in bypassing or
ignoring some of the cultural filters that might have conditioned
their artistic production the artists came up with peculiar and
surprising results. Any dominant preoccupation in the mind or
psyche of an artist is likely to surface as subject-matter. Less
obvious is such influence upon structural formats, but it is com-
monly assumed that intense consciousness of the body or sexual sym-
bolism may be evident in the building-blocks of which an image is
made, for example 'phallic' or 'vulval' forms are commonly seen in
sculpture and drawing and explained in this way.

Children's Drawings

I begin with some drawings by African children which were collected
by Mrs J. Allen, the wife of a colonial civil servant, while giving
basic literacy classes to children who would otherwise have had no
education and might never have attempted to draw. She called these
her 'ragged schools'. The children's parents were mainly illiter-
ate servants on her husband's outpost. Drawings were made as light
relief in-between classes in writing, reading and arithmetic. The
children were not provided with models nor did they get any teach-
ing or criticism, but Mrs Allen generally suggested the subject and
showed real interest in their productions. The drawings can be
examined bearing the following points in mind. The children's

Figure 1:   Tracings (approximately half-size) of pencil and chalk
drawings made in Mrs Allen's 'ragged schools' in Tanzania and Uganda
between 1943 and 1965 (A in Tanga; B in Arusha; C-H in Nyakatanga;
I-L in Makerere).   From top left by row: A) by Bondei children,
names not known; B) by a single child, name unknown; C) by Ashia, a
Haya girl; D)-H) by Haya children, names not known; I) by Omara, an
Acoli boy; J)-L) by Ugandan children, names not known.

first need is for a framework, a format that is acceptable to others as a representation or symbol. Whether the child finds acceptance or not will be a major determinant of forms and subsequent development. The youngest or the visually least experienced children tend to rely on very simple geometrical units as pictorial building-blocks. Children in an organized school will find formats that are already being used by other children. These generally resemble simplified models of the more developed iconography current in the larger society. Mrs Allen's classes were distinguished by the absence of such traditions, and so highly individual or eccentric techniques for constructing their images were invented by the children. The outcome of their efforts can be conveniently labelled as primary ideograms.

The simplest drawings representing people consisted of lines extruding from a circle (see Figure 1A). The four figures shown here were traced from pink chalk drawings on small blackboards; they were made by young Bondei children while Mrs Allen was in Tanga. The centre figure typifies a basic format which is only remarkable for the prominence given to the ears. That the top right figure is female is suggested by two dots signalling breasts. The subject of the lower right drawing is concerned with hairdressing, and a comb is indicated by the pronged lines above the circles which stand for head and ears. Extra importance for the arms and hands in this activity is given away by the care to enumerate five digits, emphasize the lower arm and even suggest a palm. Mouth, nose and legs are not considered important for this subject. The problems posed by trying to depict a different sort of human are evident in the drawing on the left which shows a European eating. In 1943, when this drawing was done, hats and shoes were almost universally worn by Europeans; neither were much used by Wabondei. Apart from these symbols it is the length of nose or face and pale eyes that signify a white. Depiction of these peculiarities has demanded the invention of a different conformation to that used in the other drawings.

In Arusha (see Figure 1B), somewhat different conventions appeared in Mrs Allen's classes, among them jagged profiles which were made up from letter-like units, C,M or W. Similar use of letter-like forms turned up in Nyakatanga, western Tanganyika (Figure 1C). This sheet includes a B converted into a car. By contrast all the human figures depicted in Figure 1D are made from an open loop like an undulating inverted U. Notwithstanding their abbreviated form a pipe-smoking man in baggy shorts and a killer of snakes subceed in being remarkably expressive. Another convention (shown in Figure 1E) is also 'open', but instead of being sinuous is sharply angular. Yet another figure (1F) from the same school consists of a loop for the head above a cross made into two triangles with arms and legs looping out of the corners. A similar cross can indicate scissors. A square with a loop over it signifies a house, the same with circles on each corner signifies a car and so on.

The use of different methods to depict people in different circumstances is shown in Figure 1G. A group of children playing football are summarily drawn using the 'C3' formula, two dots one

above the other stand for eyes and vocalizing is shown by a dash
sign for the tongue. By contrast, the frontal view of a man in a
fez or tarboosh is drawn quite differently. Figure lH was done in
the same school and shows that the 'C3' formula was widely used,
but with many variations; images are repeated in much the way that
letter exercises are, and the formula of two loops like the figure
'3' repeats itself over and over again. Every now and then the
mechanical rhythm of the hand making the loop seems to run on and
make a third loop. This seems to have become a playful elabora-
tion of 'method' in Figure lI, drawings by a ten-year-old Acoli
boy called Omara, drawn in an informal class for the children of
employees on Makerere campus, Uganda. The resemblances in style
are striking. Other drawings from the same classes show other var-
iations on the 'C3' formula, and two rather Picassoesque variants;
Figure lJ uses an 'S' form to enclose the eyes; Figure lK combines
a side view with frontal eyes, like a flatfish.

It is scarcely surprising that letters and number-forms should
dominate the children's imagery when learning the alphabet and num-
erals takes up so much of their time. Examples from other schools
in East Africa occasionally show similar reliance on letter forms.
These examples have demonstrated that a pictorial structural form-
ula has derived from a dominant preoccupation, in this case figures
and letters. Mrs Allen was surprised that children in five widely
disparate stations came up with very similar stereotypes. She
interpreted an indented oval for the face as 'a mango man' and sug-
gested that the children's acquaintance with and love of mangoes
had spilt over and come to dominate their imagery. Another drawing
(Figure lL) was given to me in support of this idea. It certainly
evinces relish for this king of fruits, but the circular head of
the child contradicts the contention. My own interpretation is
that the children relied more on simple additive geometric compon-
ents and seized on letter forms as mnemonic devices.

A methodical formula-based approach to drawing (or carving)
has obvious attractions for the maker. Older children can be quite
articulate about their procedure, and the drawing (Figure 2A) of a
head by J. Mulira, a Muganda secondary-school pupil, was accompan-
ied by notes which showed that after his first demarcation 'to show
the forehead clearly' he proceeded to draw in what he called 'cheek
bones' and jaw, taking care to make them 'stick out'. In the
artist's mind it would seem that the position of arcs on the peri-
phery of the facial place implied physical prominence. They are an
odd mixture of conceptual components with anatomical ones. He con-
sidered that the eye-sockets, nose ('with deep parts e.g. the
nostrils') and lips should be shown, and made to look solid. The
organization of units in this drawing is remarkably similar to a
West African Toma mask (Figure 2B), and subdivisions of this type
turn up in masks and carvings from as far afield as Hudson Bay (see
Figure 2C).

Yet another structural principle is evident in drawings (Fig-
ure 3A) which were chalked on a blackboard in Mrs Allen's class by
a twelve-year-old girl from the Uganda/Sudan border area whose
father had come to work on the Makerere campus as a servant. She
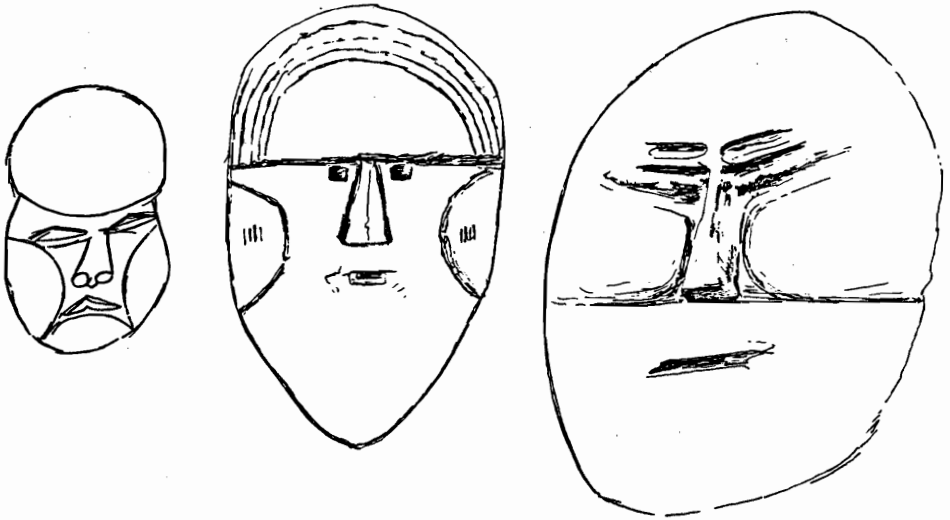was described as precociously adolescent, wild and unruly. The

Figure 2.   From left: A) tracing (approximately half-size) of draw-ing by J. Mulira, a Muganda Secondary-School boy; B) author's draw-ing from a photograph of the facial plane of a Toma mask; C) author's drawing from a photograph of the facial plane of a soapstone head by the Inuit sculptor Tiktak.

phallic connotations of these images are obvious but I was unable to ascertain whether the drawings reflected her developing sexual-ity or derived from memories of carved post images (Figure 3B) from

Figure 3.   From left: A) tracings (approximately half-size) of chalk drawings by a twelve-year-old girl at Makerere 'ragged school'; B) author's drawing from a photograph of an Agar Dinka carved post.
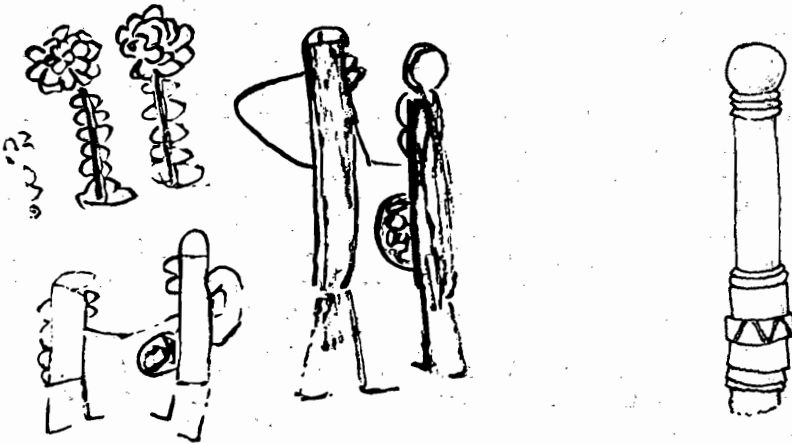
her traditional Nilotic background. I incline towards the latter
derivation. A directly Freudian interpretation leaves out of ac-
count the bridging of idea and image. In the process of seeking
technical solutions to the problem of representation, children gen-
erally look to objects and artefacts that present themselves ready-
made within their surroundings. There is not only less effort re-
quired than actual invention but such images carry a certain meas-
ure of social acceptability, even authority, by virtue of their ex-
istence. In other words, they are already a part of the culture's
visual vocabulary and have the advantage of being easy to con-
struct. If this is the case here, there has been a translation from
three-dimensional artefact to two-dimensional chalk drawing. One
implication would be that in her mind's search for a structural
'principle' on which to build up an image her memory of carved
posts provided a starting-point. To a simple column accretions
could be attached so as to distinguish one subject from another.
On the right a woman is distinguished by the appendage of a belly
(with baby inside) and two broad shallow loops for breasts; her
head is drawn as a separate circle in contrast to the male whose
capped head is not differentiated except by the attachment of two
loops to suggest lips and perhaps nose. At first sight the smaller
drawing is a variant of the same theme, but it seems that the lower
extrusion has become a gigantic penis, and the other figure has a
series of decorative loops down her back possibly suggesting scar-
ification or flowery prints on a cotton dress. Above this couple,
some flowers are drawn according to the same 'accretion on a stem'
principle.

Directly sexual or visceral sources of imagery undoubtedly ex-
ist, but I am more concerned here to present a rather literal illus-
tration of the special difficulties posed by sudden exposure to the
concepts of anatomy and physiology. Mr Dormer, an expatriate
teacher in a Gulu school, introduced some Acoli primary-school
children to the subject of how their body worked and then asked
them to illustrate their knowledge. In the near-absence of any
visual aids as guidance (they may have seen, but not learnt to
'read' text-book diagrams), and with little but their experience of
slaughtered livestock to go by, they were faced by many problems of
representation. The results were exceptionally varied and individ-
ual (Figure 4). They can be seen as charts of the mind grappling
with new or little-understood concepts. Furthermore they may have
had to rely on a graphic vocabulary which, if the previous examples
are any guide, probably had comparably arbitrary beginnings. The
purposes to which the expatriate teacher was asking his pupils to
apply their drawing was largely alien. For some the act of drawing
was itself unfamiliar but few would be unacquainted with the act of
scratching in the dust or other ephemeral surfaces as a part of
childhood play. Drawings such as these are the outcome of a pecul-
iar form of cultural hybridization. They also exemplify lines be-
ing employed to follow temporal sequences as well as delineate ob-
jects in space. A drawing by an 18-year-old boy in this primary
school (Figure 4, lower right) is one of the most interesting in
that his single trailing line stood, in his mind, for a progression
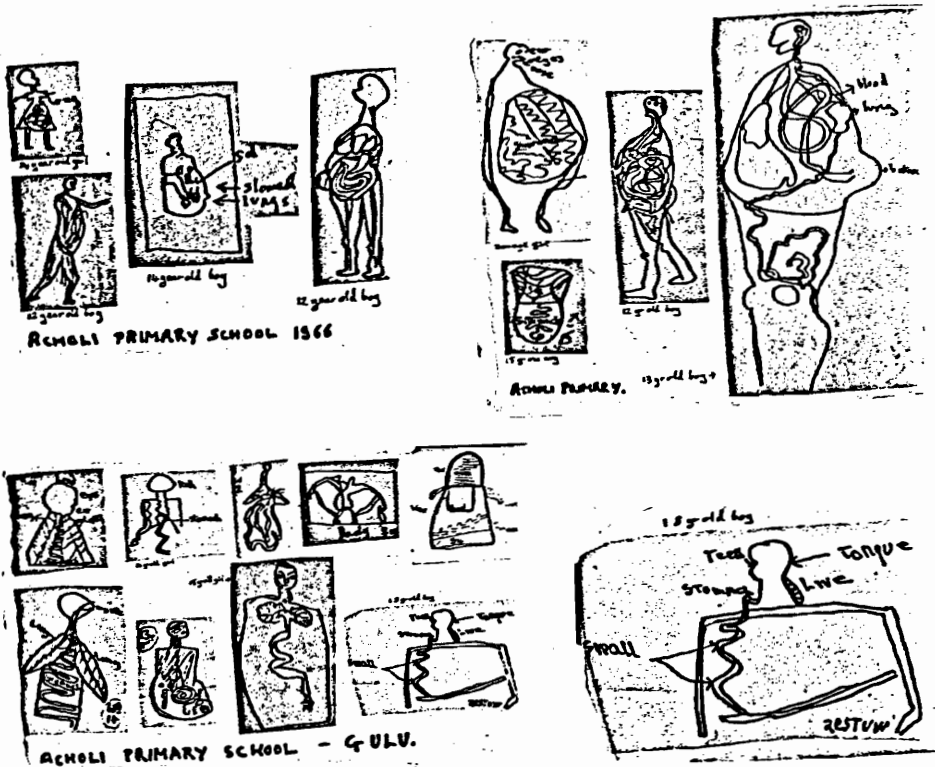from mouth through throat and stomach to gut and anus. These

Figure 4. Photostat (reduced) of drawings by Acoli children at Gulu Secondary School, Uganda, 1965-66; drawing at bottom right by an eighteen-year-old boy.

children do not typify a definable coherent culture, but if their background and assumptions are influential then it is useful to remember the variety of construction formulae used by very young children in their first efforts at depicting people. It is also instructive to consider alternative concepts to those implicit in the Western practice of drawing. I am unable to illustrate this in an Acoli context but I can demonstrate that drawings, as such, have been produced elsewhere in East Africa in social circumstances and with intentions that are almost diametrically opposite to those found in a modern school.

Sukuma

The connexion I am about to make is a purely arbitrary one in that
I happened to have been acquainted with two anthropologists who
collected two sets of drawings in mid-western Tanganyika. They al-
lowed me to trace their collections and gave me what information
they had. There the matter stood. I thought I had lost these
tracings until they came to light recently in a spring-clean. On
reflexion I thought that interesting and important points could be
made about the different assumptions that underlie the act of draw-
ing in certain untutored contexts and the highly structured and
functionally directed practices of modern schooling. Furthermore,
the interaction of differing cultural practices can result in pro-
ductions that are in themselves revealing.

Hans Cory was government anthropologist in Tanzania and an old
family friend. In the course of a discussion on African art in
1961 he dug out some drawings and notes he had collected in the
1940s. He subsequently wrote a short piece on them for a journal
of which I was the editor (Cory 1962). These pencil drawings were

*Figure 5. Tracings (approximately half-size) of pencil-drawn
versions of sand-drawings by Sukuma secret-society initiators.
From top left by row: A) Kusole; B) Chicken Sacrifice; C) Earth-
quake; D) The Food Arrives; E) Igele; F) Face.*
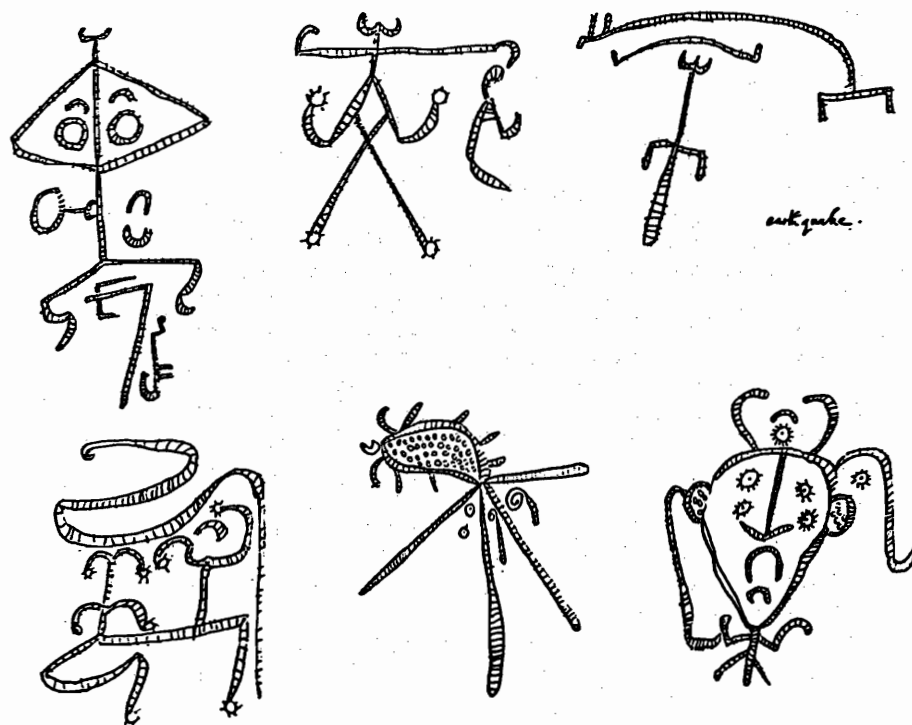
made by secret-society members as direct copies of sand pictures
that the same artists had scratched on the specially sanded floor
of the initiation hut. One drawing (Figure 5A) was called *Kusole*
by the artist. *Kusole* is the name of an animal which disturbs nov-
ices sleeping in the *ntanda* initiation hut and is so integral to
initiation that an older man is detailed to go through the hut
growling and pushing sleeping initiates - escaping before they wake
up. The image is of a sleeping initiate with the *kusole* represent-
ed by a single circle with nippers on a stem. The nippers reflect
the etymological root, *kusola*, which means 'take hold of'. Between
the initiate's legs are two further figures which were called 'the
distant thunder' by the artist. Cory did not know but presumed
that they represented symbolic beasts linked with virility or fer-
tility. The spatial concept is of the human body subjected to two
quite separate hidden forces. The symbol for *kusole* has a temporal
connexion with the ceremonial of initiation in which the drawing
was made. By contrast, the distant thunder implies a potential
hidden beneath the initiate and encompassed within his thighs. The
total drawing therefore implies present and future, the seen and
the unseen. Like the children's drawings examined earlier, the
figure of the initiate only includes a few relevant features, eyes
and brows and a horn-like projection above the head, while the
splayed legs form a frame for the second concept of distant thunder.

Connecting two components in a drawing, whether in time or
space, involves problems of representation and interpretation (in-
deed the invention of perspective could be said to have been a re-
sponse to this challenge). In Figure 5B there is a very interest-
ing implication built into the pictorial device and linking its two
component parts. It depicts a spirit agreeing to accept the sacri-
fice of a chicken. The spirit's power is symbolized by horns and
by pronged circles which are in the position of hands and feet.
Acceptance of the chicken is implied by the hook on the right while
the crossbar links the two concepts. Implicit in the spirit's
acceptance of the chicken is its acceptance of a judicial role and
the resolution of particular problems. It seems possible that the
asymmetrical hook on the other end of the link line could symbolize
the balancing reciprocity involved in such sacrificial practice.
When Cory saw this drawing being made his immediate response to its
superficial structure was to see it as a balance, so he told the
artist about the Europeans' symbolism for the spirit of justice.
Cory described the artist being thrilled when he learnt of this
totally fortuitous interpretation - he accepted his drawing as one
of political significance as a symbol for weighing guilt and inno-
cence. However, the crossbar was clearly a conceptual link and did
not represent any solid structure. It is interesting that Cory did
not explicitly recognize the extent to which his own perceptions
were dominated by Western conventions and that he was not content
to let the artists and their ceremonial setting be his guide and
source of appreciation. He could not resist following what he
called his intuition, the 'impressions' he received from looking at
the drawings.

Horns or tusks as symbols of power recur in another sand draw-
ing (Figure 5C) entitled *Earthquake*, where a hidden force buckles

the earth from below. This force is symbolized by the horned body.
Hidden and double meanings were given by the artist to the focal
points in this sand drawing. The pronged circles denote protective
medicines that are buried beneath the floor of the *ntanda* hut where
initiates learn lore connected with the Sukuma snake-cult. These
circles and their position also resemble the hands and feet of the
spirit depicted in the Figure 5D, but the connecting limbs are more
agitated and serpentine. The dominant sinuous shape seems to pro-
vide an essential frame of reference for this drawing, as the art-
ist described it as the *ntanda* hut, implying its purpose which is
to give shelter to people dealing in snake-lore. However, his
title was *The Food Arrives*; food might be symbolized by the small
arc centre-right, but Cory thought that the drawing was concerned
with the pleasure of anticipation and that the digestive canal was
the most appropriate vehicle for this emotion. Implicit in the
title and subject-matter is the suggestion that the appetites of
fasting initiates are heightened. The Acoli schoolboy who labelled
his trailing line 'tongue, teeth, stomach and intestines' as a re-
presentation of his own anatomy may have had a concept of what he
was doing comparable to that of this Sukuma artist.

In a drawing such as Figure 5D there are several layers of
implicit meaning. In the context of initiation it is obviously
important that the drawings have predictive, anticipatory as well
as didactic, ceremonial and entertainment functions. Inevitably
there is considerable scope for ambiguity in drawings with multiple
functions and built-in time-warps because they rely on such ex-
tremely simple pictorial elements. The artist's presence and the
context of the drawing's production alone determine what particular
meaning be given to a circle, squiggle or floating line and it is
remarkable that Sukuma drawings show few signs of standardization,
relying instead on the authority of the artist's statements. Cere-
monial which emphasizes solidarity will not seek to criticise re-
presentations or symbols. Cory remarked that viewers considered it
to the artist's merit that he made a tree or bird the object of his
efforts, irrespective of similarities. No idea of value was ever
attached to the product; it was not preserved so there was never
any model by which subsequent production could be measured.

The central point of reference for Sukuma sand drawings is the
human being, and the linking of body parts with the socializing
function of ceremonial is, according to Cory, evident in a drawing
(Figure 5E) where the *ntanda* hut encloses the novices for their
rite of passage. The artist called the drawing *Igele*, which means
'a group of people', and the *ntanda* is shown as a distorted oval
surrounded by magic pegs. Cory (1947-48: 165) reported the initia-
tion hut being directly compared with a womb, and he described this
drawing in those terms, with the novices emerging from initiation as
if newborn.

Another sand drawing (Figure 6A) is a most compelling image in
which a vaguely anthropomorphic structure contains the central sym-
bols of fertility. The artist called the picture *Rain*.   Accord-
ing to Cory the two horns above and the falling arrows are male
elements, while the 'breasts' below are among the female elements
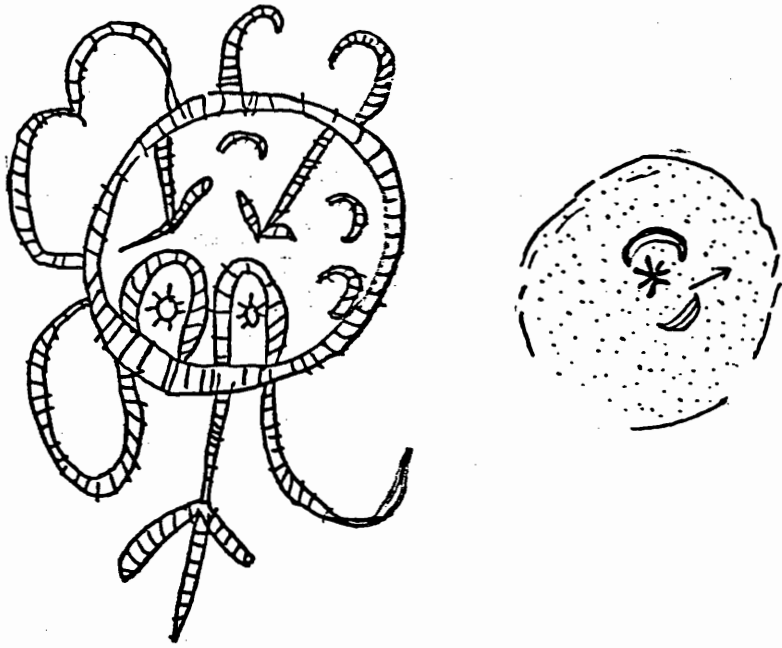and represent hills receiving the rain. The appendage below car-

Figure 6. From left: A) (details as for Figure 5) Rain; *B) tracing (approximately half-size) of pencil drawing,* A Good Rainy Season, *by Juma Ndamulo.*

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ries symbolic antithesis still further; it is a peg with wings which carries the breasts. Among the arches may be representations of rainbows. Although this structure contains a complex set of abstract associations, its iconography is partially borrowed from a simpler ready-made format. This can be deduced by comparing it with one peculiar representation of a human face in Figure 5F. Unfortunately Hans Cory was so carried away with his own interpretation of this as 'a lonely outpost official' that he failed to record the artist's own title and explanation.

Juma Ndamulo

These latter drawings were directly associated with traditional ceremonies and probably show little external influence. It is instructive, therefore, to compare them with some pencil drawings made in the 1950s, at the request of his District Commissioner Ralf Tanner, by a Sukuma boma messenger. This man, Juma Ndamulo, also used arches, lines and arrows, presumably remembering drawings similar to those collected by Cory, but he subtly changed their nature. Where the traditional drawings were ceremonial charts, Ndamulo's

drawings imparted more the character of a hieroglyph. The function
and context of such drawings, even if drawn from similar sources,
is fundamentally different.

Ndamulo was drawing for a foreign employer who was curious
about him as an individual, peculiar for his skill and willingness
to draw. As an urbanized Sukuma, Ndamulo would have absorbed a
variety of external influences, perhaps most evidently in his
glyph for the concept of 'worship' where people gather beside a
cross raised above an arch (Figure 7A). His glyph for a 'good
rainy season' (Figure 6B) looks like an extremely abbreviated and
ill-remembered version of the sand drawing (Figure 6A); notice, for
example, the containing circle, vestiges of arrows and arches -
perhaps rainbows. In another glyph entitled 'marriage' (Figure 7B)
there are the bold arches typical of Sukuma sand drawings, and these
seem to symbolize pelvises or buttocks on either side of genitalia
that are almost clinically illustrative and quite different in
nature from the sand drawings. Consciousness of the body is para-
mount in Ndamula's sign for 'plenty' (Figure 7C). Here the stomach
is shown distended with food, and the stippling was explained as
representing skin. Bellies are also the base for Ndamulo's glyph
for 'happiness' (Figure 7D). Two short dashes are signs of a full
stomach and dots are signs for laughter. Two flanking bodies (bold
arches) contain happiness which escapes, chased into the outside
world by two arrows. In a second glyph entitled 'to be happy'

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*Figure 7. Tracings (approximately half-size) of pencil drawings by
Juma Ndamulo. From top left by row: A) Worship; B) Marriage;
C) Plenty; D) Happiness; E) To Be Happy; F) To Be Angry; G) To Jump.*
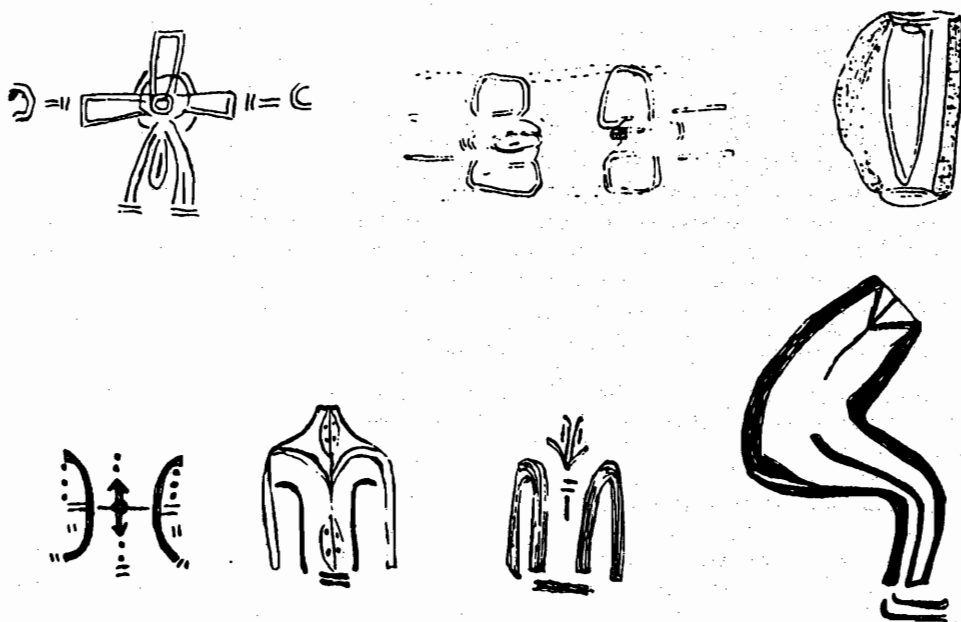
(Figure 7E), the heart is portrayed sending happiness up into the head. Another chest-like format signifies 'to be angry', but the arrow cuts into the heart (Figure 7F). His most representational glyph is 'to jump' (Figure 7G) which also uses arcing lines but succeeds so well that it almost looks like a photographic detail of a jumping athlete. Ndamulo's drawings suggest a coming together of elements from different sources, among them his tribal back-ground. His drawings were elicited in response to a foreigner and need to be seen in that context. Inasmuch as the activity of draw-ing is traditional, its focus has made a significant shift from a confident, shared affirmation of group knowledge and solidarity towards a more solitary initiative. A stranger solicits a state-ment and thus challenges the artist's individual ability to artic-ulate an identity that is no longer confined by tribal limitations and conventions.

Makonde

Comparable situations are being faced by many artists and art move-ments in Africa, and I wish to end this discussion with a brief look at contemporary sculpture made by the Makonde of Mozambique. The switch from drawing to carving will seem less perverse when it is realized that both types of artists have mixed observed structures with abstract concepts and readily construct linear links between disconnected units using inscribed lines or carved wooden bridges or struts.

An important feature of Makonde work and something they have in common with Ndamulo is that although the bulk of the ideas and iconography are drawn from traditional sources, the economic incen-tives and cultural setting for contemporary work has been provided in a transplanted existence to the north in Tanzania. The making of masks and figurines was a well-established tradition in Makonde tribal custom, but among the Wazaramo close to Dar-es-Salaam the Makonde encountered a flourishing trade in ebony carvings for the tourist market, and individuals seem to have tried augmenting their earnings from carving as early as the 1920s, a practice that gathered momentum in the early 1950s. Most of their production is handled by middlemen so they seldom come into contact with their foreign patrons. The work tends to be made in a social setting, often in bachelor communities close to the sisal plantations that originally attracted large numbers of Makonde migrant workers. As is so often the case in all-male relationships, joking and ribald sexual fantasising are prominent in their conversation. The making of sculpture provides a functional focus for these men. Further-more there is a direct association of this activity with themes that are central to the daily conversation and reminiscences that reinforce their sense of solidarity as a distinctive people far from home. Skills and talents are well recognized among the carv-ers, but I found no deprecation of less competent carvers. The market is a large one and has little discrimination, so the number

of carvers runs into hundreds, even in the immediate vicinity of
Dar-es-Salaam. Modern Makonde carving as a whole is probably the
production of a thousand or more carvers.

Mass production and bafflement as to 'what it means' has inhib-
ited analytical appraisal and appreciation of this extraordinarily
vital and imaginative art form. I cannot claim to have researched
the material in any detail, but I have discussed work with several
carvers at the sites where they worked. My intention here is to
discuss a few examples which seem to me to resemble the sand trac-
ings and the children's drawings for their selection of a few key
forms which have numerous and haptic references to parts of the
human body. (They also relate to a rich animal pantheon.) Al-
though modern Makonde work is purely secular and is recognized as
an opportunistic response to tourism, it has its roots in initia-
tion rites comparable to those of the Sukuma sand drawings. Wood
carvings used to be made as illustrations of proverbs that would
entertain as well as make the initiates think. In the practice of
commercial carving there may remain an element of replaying initia-
tion as the most intense period of learning in their lives.

Initiations involved songs, dancing and innumerable tests of
knowledge - hunting, ethno-botany, tribal history and folklore to-
gether with social education on manners, respect for the mother
(the Makonde are matrilineal) and some elaboration on the potential
and humour of sex, which Makonde see as a field for much experiment
and surrealistic entertainment. What is certain is that the carv-
ings' subject-matter and mode of production serve to reinforce
their *émigré* sense of identity and solidarity. Exile from their
homeland and exposure to a world in which non-Makonde values are
dominant has been a very long, protracted process which has led to
a steady erosion of tribal knowledge and practice. For instance,
carvers recognize that belief in spirits has declined; some claim
it has disappeared. With this decline there is less knowledge of
traditional symbolism and greater readiness to assimilate new folk-
lore picked up from Christianity, Islam and from other tribes.
Thus a complex interacting pantheon of spirits and mythic figures,
each of which was once associated with a time, place, animal, state
of mind or social condition tends to filter out into a rag-bag of
shetani and *djinn* (both deprecatory words borrowed from Swahili).
Crude sculptures of *shetani* have long been a part of Ramadan cele-
brations. The Makonde acceptance of verbal denigration of their
own spirit images has possibly facilitated tolerance of their work
and practices within the potentially hostile Muslim and Christian
milieux.

For some forty years or more their art has reflected the
changing relationship of the Makonde with their traditions and with
the new world in which they find themselves. It is also possible
to see the retention, and in some respects possible development, of
certain ethnic concepts and values that are peculiar to the Makonde.
These are made all the more distinctive by being associated with a
valuable material, ebony, and a rare technical virtuosity that ex-
cites admiration in its own right. The Makonde therefore find some
confirmation of their own values in the marketability of their
carvings and in the surprise, fascination and admiration which they
elicit in others.

Figure 8.   Tracings of photographs of Makonde sculptures.   From left: A) an ebony bullroarer; B) and C) light-wood traditional carving - two views; D) ebony slat representing a hermaphrodite.

Some of the Makonde ideas are given shape by processes that are analogues of those governing the drawings that were examined earlier. For example, a bullroarer, shown in Figure 8A, is decorated with geometric shapes and heads almost as abbreviated as the children's drawings shown earlier. A one-armed figure (9A) also resembles a child's drawing in that it eliminates all but the simplest expressive elements. Figures 8B and 8C illustrate an enigmatic headless sculpture which may not be of very great age but was certainly carved to serve the Makonde's own purposes rather than to sell off. Significantly, it is not carved in ebony but in a commoner light wood. It represents a female figure with swollen body and breast and no head, but it can also be read as a capped head on legs with one eye and a navel as nose. Where the neck might be expected there is an area of chiselled texture and a similar texture covers a large opening cut in the belly. Both these areas have been painted blood red to increase the viewers' sense of shock and surprise. The figure seems to be extracting dung from its anus. It is difficult to believe that a mythical figure with such assertive and memorable symbolism was not carved to play some important
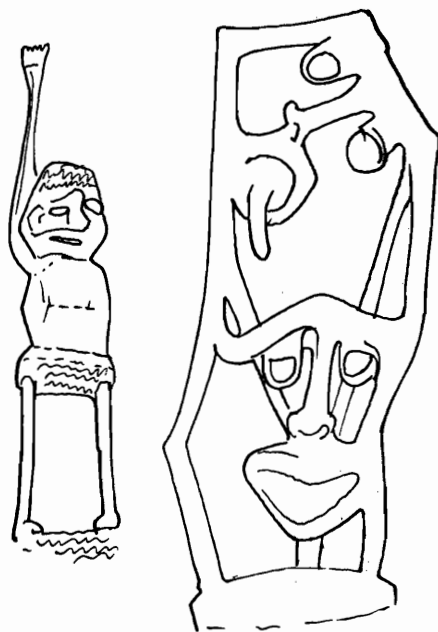
*Figure 9. Tracings of photo-
graphs of Makonde ebony sculp-
tures. From left: A) one-armed
figure; B) double-entendre face/
figure carving.*

structured role within the traditional pantheon. The figure may be
an initiation carving or a travel talisman and it seems to repre-
sent a class of spirit called *Kutumbo* or *Shautumbo* which go about
with the gut exposed and symbolize greed or unbridled appetite.
For the time being my modern Makonde sources seem unable to take the
significance of this figure any further.

        Spirits remain a major source of inspiration for Makonde art-
ists. A hermaphrodite (Figure 8D) is effectively 'drawn' on a thin
slat of ebony, below it is a childlike figure and its head is the
flat assemblage of a pair of horns, two large eyes with male and
female organs where the mouth should be. This is an appropriate
position to symbolize hermaphroditism because the Makonde often
synonymize vulva with mouth and penis with tongue. They also use a
mouth-like structure, complete with 'teeth', as one of several con-
ventions for female sex organs.

        Figure 10A was carved in the mid-1960s by a Makonde artist
called Manjema. He used a narrow slab of ebony but it has been
opened up and carved from both sides to explore sensations during
the act of sex. The sculpture combines the overall structure of a
head with eyes and nose in roughly appropriate positions and a
headless figure with shoulders and coiled contorted legs. The nose
is repeated at the base where two rows of teeth flow in towards
flared opened nostrils. This symbolizes the smell of sex. A labi-
ate slab down the sides represents sound, and at the point where
this elongated ear lobe meets the 'waist' there are two eye-like
structures, one facing down, the other upwards. These eye-like
conventions were described to me as 'taking things in', and in dif-
ferent sculptures seem to stand for a wide range of active percep-
tions or sensations, in this case auditory, tactile and genital,
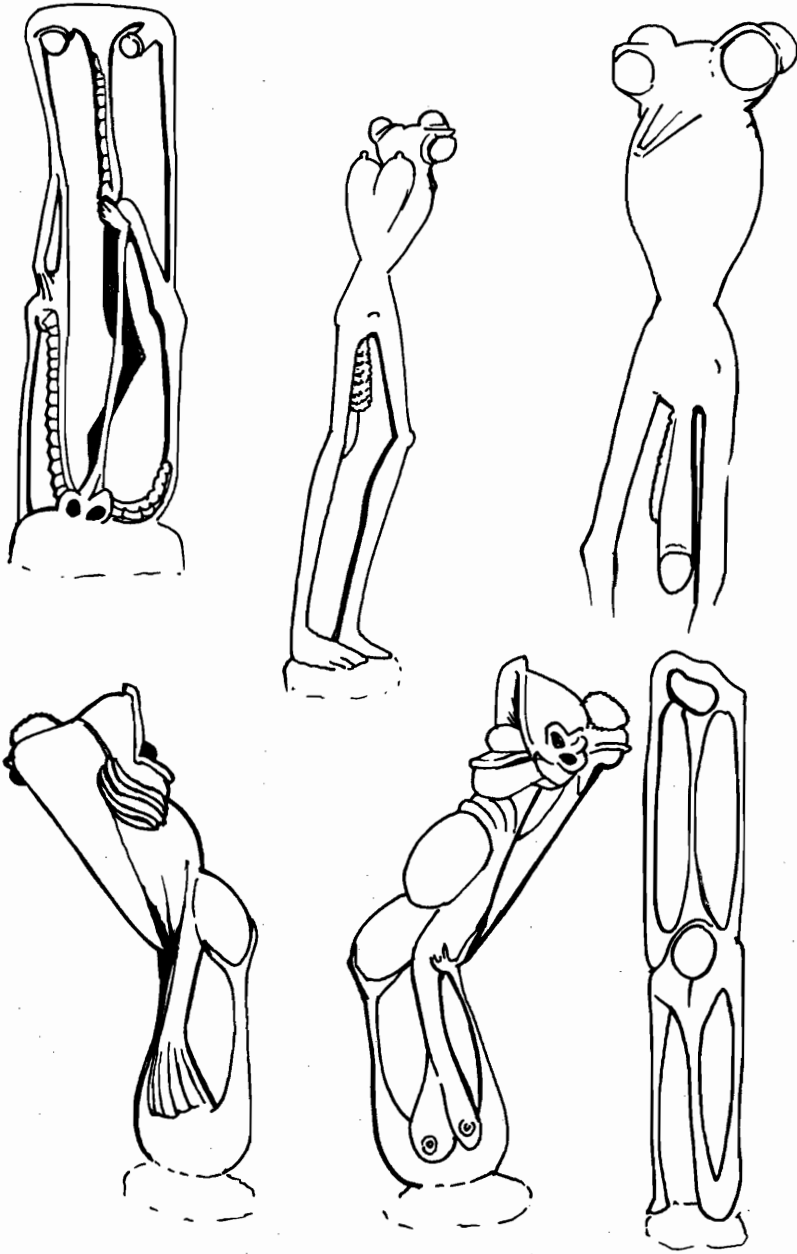
*Figure 10. Tracings of photographs of 'openwork' Makonde ebony
sculptures from Dar-es-Salaam. From top left by row: A) Sexual
Sensation by Manjema, c. 1965; B) and C) Copulation by Chanuo, c.
c. 1968 – two views; D) and E) Mermaid (Mamedi) by Chanuo,
c. 1969 – two views; F) untitled sculpture by an unknown artist,
c. 1974.*

since the three eyes are linked with an ear, hands and clitoris.
One leg of this figure is firmly planted on the base but between it
and its pair, which faces upwards, is a double loop which encom-
passes the open vagina. This inverted log stands for the active
principle so that whereas the vaginal symbols are outside the open
nostrils on the sculpture's base, they are contained inside the
column of the nose above and so represent a later stage of sensa-
tion. The eyes, which become breasts when the sculpture is read as
a figure, are bulging; this describes a feeling of pressure in the
eyeballs at the moment of orgasm. There is therefore a temporal
implication to this sculpture which travels up from the base and
culminates at the top.

Graphic three-dimensional explorations of sexual themes were
very popular with Makonde carvers in the 1960s and they vied with
each other in daring, imagination and inventiveness (see Figure 9B).
Another figure (10B), by Chanuo, also celebrates copulation but is
more of a straightforward assemblage of male and female organs
mounted on legs - like the last example it culminates in bulging
eyes. The same artist took a non-Makonde theme for a piece which
concerns the mermaid or sea siren (Figure 10C). The sculpture
links elements of fish and woman and brings erotic feelings, in the
form of hands supporting and caressing buttock or breast, with
slithery fish forms. The prominent nose suggests that the fishes'
smell may also be part of the equation. The example of a mermaid
joining the mythic inventory of Makonde subject-matter is but one
aspect of rapid change and stylistic development.

Makonde transplanted to Uzaramo or Kenya have been both wit-
nesses of, and participants in, rapid social change. Beginning as
a sizeable part of the labour force on plantations, they have over
a relatively short period of time created an economic niche for
themselves as carvers with an unassailable ethnic identity. When
Wakamba imitate Makonde work, which they do, their efforts are
crude and obvious copies. What are less easy to assess, in a still
living and contemporary art form, are the stylistic changes and
developments which are initiated by the young and talented artists
in second or third generations of carvers. These men grow up with
an established market and practice, and those in touch with richer
clients or middle men encounter some pressure to develop further
originality of style or subject-matter. It is obvious that respect
and the incentive for originality exist within some Makonde commun-
ities, but the expression of this in an upgraded price tag depends
upon non-Makonde who have no or very little personal contact with
the carvers. In this situation one might expect mannerism to set
in. This may actually be happening, but there is a characteristic-
ally subtle Makonde twist. The commercial success of their carving
has, for some carvers, engendered such a confidence in their tech-
nical skill and imaginative daring that they can even dispense with
a subject. Once conventions have been elaborated and have acquired
some currency they become subtly transformed and Figure 10D illus-
trates that process. Bought in the 1970s, it suggests that the
medium had begun to be the message. Eye-like conventions for the

perception of sensation have ceased to be adjuncts of a more com-
plex story and have become the subject of the sculpture. It simply
declaims 'Look! - listen! - touch!'.

JONATHAN KINGDON

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COMMENTARY

RETREATING UNIVERSES AND DISAPPEARING WORLDS

The television series *Disappearing World* is one of Granada Tele-
vision's most successful products, purchased by television compan-
ies throughout the world and seen by some as anthropology's public
face in Britain. A new book, *Disappearing World: Television and
Anthropology*, states on the dust-jacket that it is the first to be
'linked' with the series.* Written and compiled by a former direct-
or and series editor (Singer) with contributions from a current
director (Woodhead) and a former producer and series editor (Moser,
who wrote the short 'Foreword'), the book 'draws upon an archive of
unique interviews and memorable photographs, taken specially by the
film-makers'.
     The series itself has been 'linked' with anthropological writ-
ing from early in its history. Singer notes a turning-point around
1974 when, starting with the first film on the Mursi, the films be-
came 'parallels' to the written research of the collaborating
anthropologists: 'Television was thus able to close the gap between
anthropological ideas and public awareness of them', a gap that had
previously resulted in misleading stereotypes of other cultures be-
ing fed to the public by popular novelists and the like. With this
new publication we turn full circle: the films of the books have
been followed by the book of the films.
     The volume is unashamedly presented as a coffee-table book:
large format, glossy paper and an abundance of luscious colour
photographs on every page. The text, although almost marginalized
by the photographs and their captions, is interesting and

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informative - much of it given over to short, occasionally extend-
ed, quotations from members of the society in question.

The book was written, according to Singer, to 'encourage [a]
voyage of discovery' and because 'it was always obvious that Dis-
appearing World ought to make a book as well as a series'. While
I cannot comment on the validity of the latter point, the former
is probably true. The text is clear, well written and as uncontentious as one could expect; the photographs are charming, informa-
tive and beautiful by turns; the price reasonable for the quality
of printing and photographic production. While all this would not
necessarily instigate a voyage of discovery, it would certainly
help ease the passage. Located within its own cultural framework,
and more especially the framework of a television series, the book
avoids the banality into which it could easily have slipped.

While the series may be the instigator of voyages, the book can be
read as a voyage itself.

First there is the send-off by the head of state (Dennis
Forman), followed by quotations from sacred texts (a command from a
native voice, a Mehinacu, and a quotation from Malinowski).   These
are followed by personal testimony and a recounting of the origin
myth from an old member of the crew, no longer making the voyage
himself but waving bravely from the quayside (Moser's 'Foreword').
Singer then takes over as our captain and, after another quotation
from scripture (Boas), gives a brief illustrated lecture on the
sights we are going to see. This helps allay our fears of the un-
known - Dennis Forman is quoted as saying that the purpose of the
series is to 'allow' other cultures 'to be understood'; sets the
moral tone - 'He [Boas] firmly refuted the belief that any race was
superior to or more intelligent than another'; modestly blandishes
the satisfied endorsements of previous travellers - '"the series has
always seemed to me one of the most valuable on television" wrote
Sylvia Clayton'; and prepares us for the coming thrills - 'quotes
from indigenous people have been woven into the narrative'. Most
significantly, a note of pathos is introduced when we are told that
fears expressed in some of the early films that some groups were in
danger of 'Disappearing' have been tragically fulfilled today.

But this feeling of loss is soon forgotten in the first mate's
rollicking narrative of previous voyages (Woodhead's 'On Location:
Filming *Disappearing World*'). Despite the jokes, the humorous
anecdotes ('sometimes hilarious' according to the dust-jacket),
there is an underlying note of unease: the voyage in the past has
been dangerous - 'we've got lost, become stranded, been accused of
murder' - and there is 'a worrying amount of guesswork: How do we
get there? Where will we live? What will we eat?'. Certainly,
film-making is tough - 'even ... the lists of items needed are
surprisingly daunting'. Luckily, on our voyage we are in good
hands because of the anthropologists - 'their experience and in-
sights have always been the basic fuel of Disappearing World, the
vital ingredient through which we can hope to move beyond the level

of travelogue towards something more revealing and lasting'. The
anthropologists are the gatekeepers and guides; Singer (wearing his
captain's hat) and Woodhead are merely the technicians who struc-
ture their experiential knowledge.

A few more travellers' tales and then, before we really know
it, so well prepared have we been by the nesting narratives, we are
meeting out first societies, guided again by Captain Singer. These,
conveniently, are 'Societies in Change' (Chapter 1), as though they
had helpfully come part of the way to meet us so that the first im-
pressions will not be too dislocated. The journey progresses
around the world's cultures, a kaleidoscopic vision of open-air
blues and forest greens: the people we meet are changing (Chapter
1), clashing their cultures (Chapter 2), making choices (3), hiding
behind 'the' curtain (4), obsessed with order ('Order, Order, Ord-
er', Chapter 5), gaining control (6), being Christian or pagan (7)
and celebrating (8). They are also, should we have failed to not-
ice, men and women (Chapter 9). The journey finishes rather abrupt-
ly given the many preparations and preambles, but we can organize
our memories with a complete list of the films (there is also an
index), shake hands with those helpful anthropologists on the way
out and look forward to winter evenings by the fire reading up on
other voyages of discovery.

The book's subtitle, *Television and Anthropology*, invites comment.
The book is not 'about' the relationship between television and
anthropology, nor 'some thoughts on' or 'an investigation into', it
simply is television and anthropology. Or rather, given that it is
a subtitle, it is *Disappearing World* which is both television and
anthropology. It is undoubtedly the former and there are many ways
in which it could legitimately claim to be the latter. The book
and the series rest on a binarism which makes television and
anthropology separate fields of action, which posits separate cate-
gories of person as the concern of each. This is expressed in a
sentence from the dust-jacket: *'Disappearing World* ... has brought
some of the remotest peoples on earth into the living rooms of
millions of viewers all over the world'. The viewers, the objects
of television's attention, who live in 'the world', consume remote
people, the objects of anthropology's attention, who live on 'the
earth'. The title of the series is often acknowledged to be inap-
propriate, given that some of the societies filmed, the Han Chinese
for example, are not 'disappearing' in the way that others, the
Cuiva for example, are, or have done.

But in another sense the title is entirely appropriate; it is
a key to understanding the series and the book. *Disappearing World*
is an epic voyage of great hardship: chosen randomly from Wood-
head's chapter are phrases such as 'remotest places', 'memorably
uncomfortable', 'horror stories', 'hundred-mile treks', 'two agonis-
ing weeks', 'tribal war', 'punishing heat', 'daily sleaziness',
'throat-clogging darkness'. Crucially, even when the hardships of
the voyage are surmounted, 'at the end of the journey, there's often

anti-climax'. The object of the search is elusive, shifting, absent. Woodhead talks of 'hanging around', of 'waiting', of 'times when nothing happened' and, revealingly, 'it's the waiting that really tells me I'm back on *Disappearing World*'. The disappearing world is, by definition, unavailable; its apparent presence and solidity of form illusory.

Sometimes this is disguised by apparent others that mimic the desired others, screens behind which mirages lie hidden; the realist quest demands that these impostors be exposed. Hence the passages in the book which relate to the films shot in Mongolia denigrate the state for attempting to hide and distort the real Mongolia: 'The necessities of a modern urban existence have made many of the older practices and customs redundant ... other symbols of traditional Mongolian life ... are being forgotten or repressed'; 'inevitable constraints [meant that] ... many of the social issues that fascinated Moser remained concealed from his camera'. Islam is also an apparent other, its 'rigid system of repetitive prayers' hides breakaway sects such as the Qaderi dervishes. Two photographs of Muslim women bear almost identical captions: of a Kirghiz woman, 'although the Kirghiz are Muslims, they do not require their womenfolk to be veiled or live in seclusion'; of a Tuareg woman, 'although the Tuareg are Muslims, their women do not veil and seclude themselves like women in many Islamic societies'. The deceptive otherness of Islam is torn away with the veil: the desired other is made visible.

Doubts remain about the solidity of the world discovered, however. How can we prevent it retreating before the 'bossy one-eyedness' (a quote from Paul Baxter) of the camera's lens, how can we redeem the vision from the charge of 'travelogue'? Hope can only lie with the anthropologists because they are 'steeped in intimate knowledge of a people'. But the strategy is doomed to failure: 'anthropologists have different priorities, of course', their visions cannot be accommodated within the frame because 'as film-makers seeking to communicate with a mass audience, we had to be a little more realistic'. As Singer goes on to say, 'to show such people as simply human beings ... makes for boring viewing'. Thus we are back to Woodhead's 'anti-climax'; the object of the realist quest is unfilmable: for a television audience it is not there, it has disappeared.

The vision of *Disappearing World* is at once binary and totalizing, a paradox that is at the heart of the series' enterprise. It is binary because there are two kinds of people, those who live on the earth and those who consume them in the global living-room. The consumption becomes revelation - 'we can hope to move beyond the level of travelogue towards something more revealing and lasting' - and in revelation the nature of worlds to disappear is countered. But because revelation is consumption and a negation of the quest, *Disappearing World* must always continue the endeavour; its vision is thus totalizing. The inadequacy of the present - 'there were too many gaps. Where for example were the films from North America, eastern Asia or India?' - must be rectified, the gaps must be filled. Once filmed, a remote group is incorporated into television's world, becoming one with those in the global living-room.

They become consumers of their own culture, like the Mursi who seem
to exist in some cinematic hall of mirrors, being watched in the
act of watching themselves (see, for example, the frontispiece and
the photographs on pp. 40, 59 and 60). The 'remotest peoples on
earth' are still out there - the global living-room can only exist
if there is an other for it to consume - retreating 'gaps', manag-
ing to evade capture.

The tension that the book admits to is one between the aims of
television and the aims of anthropology: 'the anthropologists have
different priorities, of course'. But this is easily resolved;
each side agrees to differ and a working relationship is estab-
lished: 'we've managed to rub along together productively for al-
most twenty years'. This is a dissimulation. The tension exists
between the totalizing goals of *Disappearing World* (both the series
and the book) and the fragmentation it creates. The 'peoples of
the earth' are a unitary other until fragmented by the appearance
of a part of their corpus; capture by the lens negates a claim to
be a disappearing world. The self-congratulatory tone of the book's
introductory chapters hides a deep sadness, a *tristesse* that is re-
vealed in the title of both book and series. The book itself re-
veals fracture even while setting the agenda for totalization:
there is the discussion of the alternative forms the book could
have taken, there is the fact that the book is unsure of its aims
vis-à-vis the films (it is ambiguously 'linked' with them), there
are the themes of change, of loss, of anti-climax - the unconscious
acknowledgement that the 'real' disappearing world is a gap, an ab-
sence not a presence, a universe forever retreating, forever evad-
ing capture.

MARCUS BANKS

COMMENTARY

EVERYDAY PEASANT RESISTANCE 'SEEN FROM BELOW': THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH OF JAMES C. SCOTT

Peasant rebellion and protest have interested many social scientists in the West since the Vietnamese War. While they have emphasized the role of political parties and collective, organized action, they have tended to underestimate the workings of politics outside formal structures. Collective and organized actions by unions and individuals have been praised, but the fact that peasants have a way of fighting of their own has largely been ignored.

One of the very few people in the field of political anthropology not to have overlooked this is James C. Scott. Not only has he examined the nature and forms of day-to-day peasant resistance, he also claims that these forms are a legitimate and effective, if not a better, means of defending their interests against the state. For Scott, it is wrong to suppose that subordinate classes are dominated to such an extent as to render autonomous and resistant subcultures impossible (1985: 335). He believes these classes can and do offer resistance even though apparently resigning themselves to their lot.

This essay aims at presenting Scott's anthropological approach, which deals especially with the unwritten history of resistance in a village in Malaysia and the consequences of peasant resistance on class relations. I shall be discussing mainly his *Weapons of the Weak* (Scott 1985), in which this approach is most evident. This is the product of two years of fieldwork in a Malay village in the northwest Malaysian state of Kedah. The village, to which Scott gave the name 'Sedaka', is a rice-farming community which, like many other villages in Southeast Asia, has been sucked into the Green Revolution.

In *Weapons of the Weak*, Scott challenges our concepts of resistance and thrusts at us point-blank the question of just what resistance is. Not only does he force us to re-examine our preconceived ideas of resistance, he also pleads for a broadening of the conventional understanding of the term:

> Lower class resistance among peasants is any act(s) by member(s) of the class that is (are) intended either to miti-gate or to deny claims (e.g. rents, taxes, deference) made on that class by superordinate classes (e.g. landlords, the state, owners of machinery, money-lenders) or to advance their own claims (e.g. work, land, charity, respect) *vis-à-vis* these superordinate classes (Scott and Kerkvliet 1986: 22).

In view of this definition, foot-dragging, non-compliance, decep-tion, stealing, pilfering, sabotage, slander and gossip all have to be seen as legitimate forms of resistance. In Scott's opinion, there are several reasons why these forms are chosen in the so-called Third World. The social structure of the peasantry in these countries is such that they are scattered across the countryside and lack formal organization. Consequently, peasants engage in in-formal, low-profile techniques of resistance which - although mak-ing no headlines - can accumulate and become an effective force in helping them obtain whatever they are fighting for.

It is rare in such countries for peasants to risk an outright confrontation with the authorities over development policies, tax-ation etc. Whereas outright, organized action has proved to be dangerous, if not suicidal, throughout peasant history, informal networks within the village allow messages to be passed on im-plicitly. Individual acts requiring little or no co-ordination or planning are thus the most suitable tactics.

A precondition for comprehending the forms of resistance the peasantry engage in is a full understanding of their decision-making processes. According to Scott, the conventional hierarchy of status among the rural poor - smallholder, tenant, wage-labourer - can be explained more effectively by the principle of subsistence security than by increments in average income (Scott 1976: 37). The economy of the peasant is based on a subsistence ethic. The peasant living so close to the margins of subsistence is in constant fear of food shortages. His need for a reliable livelihood dictates his decision-making behaviour. Instead of go-ing for big profits, which may be lucrative but risky, he chooses to apply the 'safety-first' principle, thereby avoiding the failure that may ruin him. This means preferring to use certain varieties of seeds or particular techniques of production so as to reduce the probability of disaster, instead of attempting to maximize his average return (ibid.: 5).

The smallholder is most secure because he directly possesses his means of subsistence. He may get a lower average rate of re-turn than a wage labourer, but he still prefers the security of his land to the uncertainties of the labour market. Likewise, his ten-ancy is preferred because of its link to a patron who is expected to help in a crisis and has to provide a minimum for the tenant's

subsistence.

Scott also points out that in areas where traditional village patterns are still dominant, the social strength of the subsistence ethic endows the village with protective power. Institutionalized patterns of social control and norms of reciprocity allow for the minimal needs of the village poor. The rich in the village receive legitimation only to the extent that they are generous to the poor. They are also expected to sponsor celebrations at weddings and other local rituals, extend charity to neighbours and those in need, and even provide employment to those seeking work - indeed, they must fulfil these implicit needs of the village, lest they become the object of malicious gossip and slander. Stories of bad land- lords can at times turn into effective propaganda against them and have disastrous results: for example, 'the mention of Haji Broom's name by the poor villagers conjures up a vision of the greedy, penny-pinching rich, who likewise violate the accepted standards of village conduct' (Scott 1985: 23). The story of Sedaka itself has proved the effectiveness of 'character assassination' as a social weapon. Scott explores the language of resistance in a chapter entitled 'The Vocabulary of Exploitation' (1985: Ch. 6). His com- mand of the Malay language is impressive, and he takes the reader into the quarrels of Sedaka, providing an insight into the way words are used as a form of resistance.

The subsistence ethic also causes peasants to develop a notion of equality. The struggle between rich and poor is therefore not merely a struggle over work, property rights and cash, but 'a struggle over the appropriation of symbols, a struggle over how the past and present shall be understood and labelled, a struggle to identify causes and assess blame' (ibid.: xvii).

On the other hand, links of kinship, friendship and patronage and other alliances in the village only allow peasants a small lee- way in which they can act. The fear of repression and the survival of the household are additional factors determining the kind of op- tions available to them. More often than not they prefer to use 'avoidance protest' (see Adas 1981) - flight - as a way out rather than risk an outright confrontation with their class superiors. This form of resistance seems to be historically significant in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, in view of its demograph- ic and social structure.

To appreciate why peasants choose the so-called 'garden- variety' forms of resistance - arson, sabotage, boycotts, disguised strikes, theft etc. - it is helpful to consider the kind of agri- cultural transformation taking place in Kedah during the first years of the Green Revolution. Although the Green Revolution was to have an impact on almost every facet of peasant life, on the whole the changes it brought about were experienced gradually, in the form of shifts in land-tenure and in agricultural techniques. For example, the introduction of fixed rents, payable before the planting, affected tenants adversely. However, they were, on the whole, able to hold on to their tenancy, at least for a few seasons, even though this created an additional burden of debt. In this way there were only a handful of victims at a time, discouraging collec- tive defiance. Mechanization, in the form of the huge combine

harvesters introduced as part of the Green Revolution Scheme, has also caused harm. Rather than directly exploiting the poor, it removed them from the production process. Rich farmers and landlords could afford to hire combine harvesters or lease the harvest work to outsiders for a fixed sum. Although genuine efforts to stop the introduction of combine harvesters were reported throughout Kedah, they failed to prevent the implementation of mechanization.

These many transformations have severed the bonds of economic interdependence between agrarian classes. Whereas in the past rich landlords had to secure labourers at the appropriate time by giving them modest gifts and loans, nowadays they do not have to listen to the pleas of their tenants, nor negotiate or show kindness towards them. These new forms of capitalist activity have destroyed the traditional patron-client relationship and overturned the moral values of village life. Profit maximization and property rights have taken over from moral obligations, and the social harmony of the village has been destroyed.

The pattern of capitalist development in Sedaka has not only resulted in a growing maldistribution of income, the polarization of rich and poor, and the breaking of customary social ties, it has also increased the role of politics in peasant life. An important factor here is that the dominant political party, UMNO (United Malay Nationalists' Organization), an exclusively Malay party, depends largely on Malay votes to keep it in power. As most of the peasants are overwhelmingly Malay, this has a direct bearing on government strategies and development projects. UMNO's efforts to secure its political base in the rural areas are reflected in policies aimed at benefiting the rice-producers. A major political opposition party, PAS (Partai Islam), has also emerged, exploiting 'fears' of the economically influential Chinese community. PAS and UMNO were at one point competing with each other for control. Against this background, the case of Sedaka has to be seen as typical of Malay villages but not necessarily of Chinese ones.[1]

The introduction of state policies, or 'soft options', as Scott calls them, has especially widened the gulf between rich and poor. For example, government-sponsored resettlement schemes in the form of rubber and oil-palm estates did not resettle the poorest, and settler selection was highly politicized. While direct government subsidies in the form of fertilizers and production loans were distributed, this was done on the basis of acreage farmed, which in turn benefited the large-scale commercial producers. The overall impact of state intervention has made the state a direct participant and decision-maker in peasant life. Agriculture in this sense is controlled by the government. The schedule of water in irrigation schemes, for example, provides a basis for direct confrontation between government and peasantry. In addition, the pro-Malay policies of the government of Malaysia have created an instant Malay commercial class which has become a new 'protected species' of the petty bourgeoisie. These 'state-sponsored

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[1] For a brilliant account of local-level politics in Chinese villages in Malaysia, see Strauch 1981.

capitalists' operate with special licences in protected markets and receive guaranteed credit from public loan funds. They are parasites of the state. Anyone familiar with the politics of Malaysia would attest to the kind of corruption and scandals that exist there.

In the final two chapters of *Weapons of the Weak* Scott makes use of the history of resistance in Sedaka to show that peasants have a form of 'trade unionism without trade unions' and to criticize the Marxist concepts of hegemony and false consciousness. Walkouts and strikes, contrary to what is generally believed, do take place in the village. The restraint the poor impose on one another not to act as strike-breakers provides them with a sense of solidarity. Together with the use of social sanctions such as gossip, public shunning etc., such acts of resistance are very powerful, especially in the long run. In conditions where power and the possibility of repression make open acts of disrespect dangerous, gossip can be a kind of 'democratic voice', and shame a very strong means of punishment.

Summing up his case for everyday forms of peasant resistance, Scott attacks the utopian ideal of collective and organized action. He says that the privileged status accorded to organized movements 'flows from either of two political orientations: Leninist, or preference for open, institutionalized politics' (1985: 297). The debate he raises here is, must resistance be based on principled, selfless and collective actions? What about the basic material survival needs of the household? Is a self-indulgent, individual act not to be regarded as real resistance? Scott believes the combination of self-interest and resistance are the vital forces animating the resistance of peasants and proletarians. To ignore the self-interested element in peasant resistance is to ignore the determinant context of peasant politics. Yet the individual and often anonymous quality of peasant resistance has received far less historical attention.

The examination of class relations in Sedaka further suggests that the concept of hegemony or ideological domination requires a fundamental rethink'. Here, Scott argues that the 'notion of hegemony and its related concepts of false consciousness, mystification and ideological state apparatus not only fail to make sense of class relations in Sedaka, but are just as likely to mislead us seriously in understanding class conflict in most situations' (1985: 317).

Scott makes a number of points in this connection. First, he believes that, contrary to what is often supposed, most subordinate classes are able to penetrate the prevailing ruling ideology. However, this penetration of official reality by the poor may be overlooked if we observe only the superficial public encounters between the rich and the poor, that is, their 'on-stage' behaviour, and ignore entirely the insinuations beneath the surface, that is, the 'off-stage' behaviour that occurs daily.

Secondly, theories of hegemony often equate what is inevitable with what is just. Scott sees this as an error, and he criticizes authors like Richard Hoggart (1954) and Barrington Moore (1978) for failing to provide any convincing logic for the process by which the inevitable becomes just. He goes on to show by way of an analogy – the weather, which is surely inevitable and unavoidable – that what is inevitable cannot automatically be considered just or legitimate. On the contrary, the inevitability of the weather has not stopped traditional cultivators from performing rituals to influence its course.

Thirdly, Scott argues that any hegemonic ideology provides within itself the raw material for contradictions and conflicts. In Sedaka, for example, 'the precondition of their [the land-owners'] new wealth has been the systematic dismantling of the practices that previously rationalized their wealth, status and leadership. Their economic domination has come at the cost of their social standing and of their social control of their poorer neighbours' (1985: 345).

Fourthly, Scott questions Gramsci and other Marxist scholars who argue that revolutionary action can follow only from a thoroughly radical consciousness that is not only opposed to the dominant ideology, but also striving towards an entirely new order. According to these scholars, the role of the vanguard party is to mobilize the working class, which by itself is not 'able to rise above an incoherent and fragmentary conception of its situation' (ibid.: 341). Scott does a brilliant job here in tearing down these assumptions by means of examples. Interestingly, he uses Moore's analysis of German workers in the Ruhr after World War I to support his case. Moore says of these workers (1978: 351): 'over and over again the evidence reveals that the mass of workers was not revolutionary. They did not want to overturn the existing social order .... ' What they wanted rather, was something new that amounted to their perception of the old order minus the disagreeable and oppressive features. Such examples show that the objectives for change were reformist in nature, not revolutionary.

Scott has been criticized by a number of scholars, such as Christine White (1986: 53), who claims that his approach 'does not help in explaining the power relationship between the peasants and the power structures', because it is the power structures that are more crucial in determining the success or failure of resistance'. Talib (1987), supporting White, even goes so far as to say that 'searching for everyday peasant resistance in the social reality is a futile business'.

This commentary, on the other hand, has tried to show that Scott's approach, in looking at politics outside formalized structures, that is, at everyday forms of peasant resistance, actually helps to explain class relations. He has built a case for the existence of this form of resistance by viewing things from the bottom. Seeing all historical resistance by subordinate classes as

being 'rooted firmly in the homely but meaningful realities of daily experience' (1985: 348), he has forced us to reconsider our ideas on resistance. *Weapons of the Weak* has certainly opened up new ways of looking at peasant rebellion.

SWEE LAHUSEN

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BOOK REVIEWS

JAMES CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press 1988. xii, 381pp., Illustrations, References, Sources, Index. £23.95.

Between the almost unanimous American praise for Clifford and the surprisingly unified British desire to attack him, an Irishman like myself has to pick his way cautiously. I have to tread with care in order not to be hit by a sudden burst in the continuing crossfire. If the adulation of Clifford's compatriots is comprehensible, the harder question is why the Anglo-Saxons are so keen to bash him on the head. For it is suitably ironical that 'British anthropology' has only re-emerged as some sort of meaningful rubric by defining itself negatively in opposition to 'the bratpack' – as several anthropologists have branded the contributors to the collection *Writing Culture*, which Clifford co-edited with George Marcus.

Like many well-known anthropologists, a good part of Clifford's power lies in his rhetorical force. It is not so much what he says (for that really is not so very new) but the way he plays with language to say it. Reading Clifford is always a pleasure. Often it is very instructive. All the chapters bar one were previously published elsewhere but often in obscure journals or magazines. 'On Ethnographic Authority' was the crucial text which fired the 'ethnography as text' debate. 'On Orientalism' is an early piece, a fine-grained assessment of the holes, blindspots and confusions in Edward Said's polemic. His papers on Marcel Griaule as fieldworker and on the Parisian encounter of ethnography and surrealism are already approaching classical status within the history of anthropology. (Michel Leiris, however, in a recent interview in *Current Anthropology*, states that there was very little intellectual exchange between surrealists and ethnographers in the interwar years.) The greatest disappointment is the last, long chapter on a trial he attended in which the 'identity' of a native American 'tribe' was the central issue under deabte. Clifford hops and skims here, and refuses to state in detail why he believed the defendants were the Indians they said they were.

For Clifford, like many influential anthropologists or commentators on the subject, is no fieldworker in the hallowed mode. Like Susan Sontag he is a better reporter than practitioner. And those who get dirty doing fieldwork do not like listening to some undusty character telling them where they ought to be headed next. It is even more galling when this anthropologist of our own cultures speaks the language better than most of we academic natives and bothers to write on topics we have always discussed but never got down to. Of course his work is self-interested, but do his critics think they can be innocent of that charge themselves? Of course we

always knew that our writings were governed by certain literary conventions, but why did we never tease out the consequences of this? Of course being anticolonialist is no longer a very radical pose, but isn't it worth reminding ourselves of colonialism's insidious, pervasive nature? Of course he overstated his case in order to gain attention, but are the hands of his critics clean?

Social anthropology has already digested its literary turn with no more than a few hiccups. The subject has not disappeared, nor has it beeen revolutionized. But it is the richer for it, and it is Clifford, the most astute of 'the bratpack', we have to thank for that.

JEREMY MacCLANCY

ROBERT GOLDWATER, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1986 [1938]. xxv, 314pp., Appendix, Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £11.95.

The publication of this enlarged edition of Goldwater's classic study will be welcomed not only by historians of twentieth-century Western art, but also by those anthropologists who are interested in the study of art. Originally published in 1938, as *Primitivism in Modern Painting*, a revised edition appeared in 1967. The present edition is a reprint of the 1967 edition with the addition of two of Goldwater's important later papers: 'Judgments of Primitive Art, 1905-1965' and 'Art History and Anthropology: Some Comparisons of Methodology'. A bibliography of Goldwater's publications is also provided.

Whilst justly famous for being the first comprehensive account of the impact of 'primitive art' on modern Western art, Goldwater's study attempts and achieves more than this. Indeed, a careful reading reveals how limited the impact has really been. Modern Western artists found in non-Western arts what they were looking for, not necessarily what was there. And quickly, these artists' use of 'primitive' forms and techniques were what inspired other artists, not the original 'primitive' works themselves.

Primitivism in Modern Art is also an intellectual history demonstrating both how the 'primitivist' tendency in modern Western art is a product of its age and how it relates to its nineteenth-century precursors 'archaism' and 'romanticism'. Though Goldwater does not bring but the point himself, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to see the interests of early twentieth-century artists in the primitive and the 'elemental' as the art-world equivalent of the Année Sociologique's interest in 'elementary forms'.

Anthropologists will also be interested in Goldwater's illustration of how far ahead of anthropologists artists were in taking seriously the arts of non-Western peoples. Early anthropological

studies of non-Western arts focused on decoration as the artists of
the time (notably Gaugin) focused on the decorative aspects of the
non-Western arts they were beginning to appreciate.   The study of
African and Oceanic sculptural forms was seemingly dependent upon
the achievements of Picasso and his contemporaries in making
anthropologists, in common with the Western public in general, *see*
the sculpture as art.   Anthropologists interested in the study of
art will also be interested in Goldwater's illustration of how the
methodological development of the anthropology of art mirrors that
of the history of art.

     There is, then, more to this book than might be thought at
first glance.   It is to be hoped that Goldwater's intelligent,
subtle and sober reflections on his subject-matter will be absorbed
by those who, in the wake of the New York Museum of Modern Art's
blockbuster show *'Primitivism' in 20th-Century Art*, would have us
satisfy our intellectual curiosity about the arts of non-Western
societies with references to 'affinities' between 'tribal' and
'modern'; as well as by those whose academic pursuits never seem to
get beyond the pedestrian questions of which artist saw what
'primitive' piece where, when and with whom - and what he or she
painted the next day.

JEREMY COOTE

BENNETTA JULES-ROSETTE, *The Messages of Tourist Art: An African
Semiotic System in Comparative Perspective* [Topics in Contemporary
Semiotics], New York and London: Plenum Press 1984.   xviii, 238pp.,
References, Index, Figures, Tables, Illustrations. $39.00.

The anthropological study of tourist art is a steadily growing
field.   Jules-Rosette's new book is an informed and, therefore,
very welcome contribution to the literature.   The author has wide
experience of art and craft production in Africa and draws here on
fieldwork amongst ivory carvers in Liberia and the Ivory Coast;
with carpenters, potters and the Kanyama Artists' Circle in Lusaka;
and with Kamba carvers in Kenya.   She does not make it quite clear,
but it seems that most of the information she presents was collect-
ed through interviews and questionnaires rather than through part-
icipant observation.   The best parts of the book are the more ethno-
graphic chapters in which she gives detailed accounts of the pro-
duction and marketing processes and, once in a while, allows the
artists to speak for themselves.   For example, Diouf Kambaba sums
up well the complexities of the situation of artists like himself
who rely on Westerners to buy many of their works: 'Do we produce
only for the European?   No, we produce for our people, the Africans.
But if we produce for the Africans, we have to produce something
that they will understand ...   We can't be too advanced.   We can't

be too far back. We want to be ... eh ... a bit in step with our milieu' (p. 226). Much half-researched material has been published on African tourist art traditions - as if they were not themselves quite serious enough so did not require or deserve serious study. Drawing on her first-hand knowledge, especially concerning Kamba carvers, Jules-Rosette, however, provides us with solid information as well as exploding many common myths.

The more theoretical sections of the book do not seem to me to substantially advance the understanding present, at least implicitly, in the more ethnographic presentation of the central chapters. Surely there cannot be much mileage left in the anthropological approach to art which takes the model of art as communication as central. Jules-Rosette's attempt to get away from linguistic models but still to talk about African tourist art in semiotic terms as about communication do not help her to get very far. The diagrams offered as illustrations of various processes hinder rather than help to deepen understanding.

Much of the book is taken up, quite rightly, with explicating the differences and similarities between the various enterprises the author discusses. This helps to give the lie to any idea that African tourist art can be lumped together as a single phenomenon. There is much variety, for example, in the organization of production and marketing, in the sources of new designs and in the valuation of creativity. Jules-Rosette suggests explanations in terms of gender differences, levels of technology and economic development etc. (The influence of the colonial authority and its educative values might also be relevant; a comparison of tourist art traditions in former British and French colonies, for example, might be rewarding.) At times, however, Jules-Rosette falls into talking in general terms of African tourist art as if it were one tradition. This is unfortunate, as is the sub-title of the book itself. There is surely not one African semiotic system to be studied semiotically, but a variety of semiotic systems.

The Messages of Tourist Art will be valued for its contribution to our knowledge of the production and marketing of tourist art in Africa. The author promises more information than she is able to give here on the consumer response to these art traditions. I look forward to seeing the results of this research, to seeing if she continues to adopt a semiotic approach - and to seeing too if she can persuade her future publishers to reproduce her valuable illustrations in a rather more satisfactory fashion than that adopted here.

JEREMY COOTE

N. ROSS CRUMRINE and M. HALPIN (eds.), *The Power of Symbols: Masks
and Masquerade in the Americas*, Vancouver: University of British
Columbia Press 1983. 244pp., Bibliography, Plates. $40.00.

This is a highly important work which covers most of the central
themes and paradoxes which mask and masquerade have inevitably in-
volved. The volume attempts to establish specific ethnographic
enquiry as the basis for a general theory of masquerade in place of
the popular psychologism and broad empirical generalization which
has long hindered an adequate understanding and appreciation of its
specific ceremonial and ritual contexts. It is divided into an
introduction composed of two papers by Crumrine and Turner, and
four sections. The papers in the first three parts treat specific
ethnographic examples and are divided geographically between North,
Middle and South America. The final section is meant to provide a
synthesis from comparative ethnography, but the contributions by
Makarius, Webber *et al.*, and Halpin are idiosyncratic and do not
appear to make adequate use of the rich data found elsewhere in
this volume.
      In the introduction, Crumrine defines masquerade as 'the ritual
transformation of the human actor into a being of another order'
(p. 1). Such a broad definition is meant to allow the inclusion of
a wide range of activities including carnival, ritual drama and a
number of different techniques which express symbolic transforma-
tion such as costuming and face painting. Although Crumrine and
Halpin have restricted contributions to those that deal with the
manifestation of transformation through the use of artefacts,
Crumrine is cautious not to rule out that in some societies it may
be another part of the body rather than the head that is the symbol-
ic focus which expresses change. (Note, for example, the use of
back ornaments among the Aztec and the use of side-shields among the
Mexican Huichol.)
      In a statement that is the best comparative synthesis of the
ethnographic cases reported here, Crumrine notes that an essential
characteristic of masks is their use in generating, concentrating,
transferring and exchanging powers between themselves, their audi-
ence and the persons wearing them. Sturtevant's essay on the
Seneca describes how the mask itself is the focus of power. Walens
explains how, among the Kwakiutl, the mask invokes supernatural
power to transform its wearer into an extension of the spirit world,
and Fogelson and Bell interpret the use of Booger masks among the
Cherokee as a means of transferring the physical powers of the
young dancers who wear them to the old men of the community who re-
port feelings of renewed strength and virility at such ceremonies.
      The theme of masks and the transmission of power is most clear-
ly treated in those examples from North America and in Christopher
Crocker's discussion of the Bororo. In these examples, historical
change is ignored or minimalized. However, in those societies
clearly articulated to national and international politico-economic
systems, masks seem to express power relations between different
sectors of the population rather than create them. Under these
different circumstances other distinct themes occupy the attention

of the ethnographers that have described them. The difference of orientation between contributors who have focused on more tradition-al societies, and those such as Gillmore, Brody, Bricker and Pollak-Eltz who have described communities often profoundly compromised by the vicissitudes of colonial and independent history, may be explic-able through Crocker's use of Gluckman's distinction between cere-mony and ritual.

Crocker takes up basic problems of ontology and epistemology, and contrasts private knowledge with public secrets in discussing the status of the indigenous beliefs in the transformation of Bororo dancers into spirits. Gluckman distinguished between ritual as a means of redressing social equilibrium and ceremony as an af-firmation of a normative activity. For Crocker, this distinction may correspond to differences in attitude towards masquerade: 'al-though both ritual and ceremony aim at the momentary representation of the not-self, ritual intends the portrayal to transform morally the actor, the audience or both. Ceremonial masks accomplish no such thing; when they are removed, social life continues ostensibly as before' (p. 162). In the ritual use of masks the participants and the audience may express public belief in their transformative powers, while the ceremonial use of masks allows greater ambiguity or outright recognition of their use as disguises. (The theme of public conviction of the voraciousness of masks is also the subject of Crumrine's essay on the Mayo Parisero, and Walens' contribution on the Kwakiutl also concentrates on ontology and demonstrates well the importance of interpreting masquerade in relation to indigenous notions of the person and the complex semantic fields of which they form part.)

A strong theme in the essays which describe the ceremonial use of masks is the encodation of the past and its expression through masked dance dramas. Richling on the Inuit, Brody on the Tarascans, Bricker on Tzotzil carnival and above all, Gillmore's description of Nahuatl and Zapotec dance dramas, interpret such dramas as re-affirming important events in the history of the community and the present condition of their participants. The use of masks in these dramas symbolizes the power relations between different groups or between the sections within a community. The appearance of heathen spirits at Epiphany among the Inuit as described by Richling, is interpreted as expressing the relation between that part of the season devoted to traditional subsistence patterns and the period of enforced dependence on Moravian Christian missions which was in-stigated to ensure their proper observance of the Christmas cere-monies. The failure of the heathen spirits to reveal non-Christian beliefs among the children is rewarded by gifts of sweets which the spirits leave them before withdrawing. These events, per-formed at the close of the Christmas period when the Inuit are about to resume their traditional subsistence patterns, express the rela-tion between their traditional beliefs and Christianity and affirm the power of the latter over them.

Gillmore and Brody both demonstrate that while the structure of performances can be remarkably consistent over a long period of time, their semantic significance can vary and provide a source for a plurality of different interpretations by the audience and

performers. Gillmore describes how Los Tastoanes, a masked dance drama performed by villages in the states of Jalisco and Zacatecas, incorporates themes which permit it to be interpreted variously as representing the struggle between Christians and Moors, the conquest of Mexico or events in the 1910 Agrarian Revolt. Brody reveals a similar propensity in the Tarascan winter ceremonies where masked dancers express the oppositions between male and female behaviour and that of Tarascan females and urban females. Rural and urban values are contrasted, and thus imply a comparison of indigenous and mestizo customs, to affirm a model of behaviour appropriate for Tarascan women. History is telescoped in performances of this kind which compress events of the same qualitative significance into parallel structures that offer a rich repertoire for possible interpretations. In Venezuela , masks are principally used in popular folk-plays, but Pollak-Eltz shows the adoption of old forms to incorporate new subjects and suggest something of the process of the sedimentation and stratification of layers of meaning in such genres.

Bricker's discussion of carnival in San Pedro Chinalho is a more singular interpretation which equates the celebration with the dramatization of certain historical events and conditions taken from the Tzeltal uprising of 1712. (This example does not demonstrate the latent propensities in carnival for encoding events outside of the one described, nor the possible range of significations that its participants might attribute to it, and leaves Tzotzil carnival looking a little anachronistic.)

In his essay about the evolution of the iconography of the Andean devil masks Delgado argues that contemporary devil masks have evolved from pre-Hispanic llama masks by the gradual substitution of horns in place of elongated ears. In discussing the iconography of such masks as they are used in carnival, and in order to uphold his thesis of historical continuity between the pre-Hispanic and contemporary periods, he insists on the traditional nature of masks surmounted by three-headed dragons which he believes developed from earth snails. His adherence to a unilinear view of evolution is not substantiated by carnival in Oruro, where such masks have been a recent adaptation of simpler forms of devil masks, and which are rejected by some mask makers such as Jorge Vargas who has attempted to revive traditional Andean symbols. Delgado's approach does not take full account of the process of bricolage which is very much evidenced in the masks that he discusses. As in Bricker's essay on Tzotzil carnival masks, Delgado does not describe the indigenous meanings applied to such artefacts and their conjunctions in performance.

A further theme raised in the collection is the phenomenon of inversion between forms as masquerade as practised between neighbouring peoples and, within a community, between different periods of the ritual calendar. Although raised by Crumrine and Turner, this aspect is only developed in Zuidema's contrast between the representation of external forces and in-groups and their relation to community structure.

The final theme that I shall mention here is that of historical change and acculturation and, in particular, the role of rituals

and ceremonies in mitigating or expressing outside influences on indigenous systems of classification. Among the Kwakiutl, the re-establishment of the spirit world through masked rituals denies external influences and exigencies, while the Naskapi use of trance affirms indigenous beliefs in activities which are not covered by Christianity, creating a relationship of complementarity between the two semantic fields. In the Venezuelan communities discussed by Pollak-Eltz, the indigenous content of ceremonies appears to have been relinquished leaving the performance of masked dancers as a popular entertainment. However, the most common response among the peoples discussed in the present volume is to incorporate and encode new exigencies semantically in a form whose structural continuity can be demonstrated to have deep antecedents.

We are still far away from establishing what Crocker calls the 'comparative phemenology of symbolic experience', but from the essays in the present volume the development of such a field might imply the de-construction of 'mask' and 'masquerade' as useful categories in anthropological discourse. Whatever, the present volume is an important contribution which will profoundly influence our view of the complexity, significance and variety of masquerade in the Americas, and will be indispensible in formulating new and related problematics.

ANTHONY SHELTON

JUDITH LYNNE HANNA, *To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1987 [1979]. xxii, 243pp., Appendixes, References, Index, Figures, Tables, Plates. £11.95.

The first edition of *To Dance is Human* was published in 1979. It is a measure of the success and integrity of the book that the second edition, apart from minor corrections and tightening of one or two phrases, is unchanged from the first edition. There is, however, a new preface. The interest and development in dance studies over the past ten years supports and sustains such a book and its continuation as a valuable text for both anthropological and dance studies. The entire book relies on the premise that dance is both cognitive and affective non-verbal communication. The various relationships between dance, the individual mind and society, explored through psychobiological bases and evolutionary perspectives, help the reader to understand why dance is used in many different contexts and for many different reasons. Socio-cultural patterns, religion, political thought and action are examined in greater detail to identify the involvement of dance and its potential in these areas as a human phenomenon.

Few people have confronted successfully the complex and

unfathomable question of 'what is dance?'. Most definitions are concerned with the physical aspects, the style, the rhythm, particular movements; how the dance is performed within the technical aspects of the movement. In the chapter entitled 'Dance?', Hanna attempts to identify the essence of dance in terms of its components, its purpose and function within a society, its values and styles within a cross-cultural background and conceptualization. To understand dance in this way is essential for students of dance, whether performers, teachers, historians or social anthropologists. However, it has to be recognized that the book is an anthropological study of the subject, and could only have been written by an anthropologist. Consequently, it is helpful to have an anthropological background and approach to appreciate to the full a book written in this way. Students who are primarily concerned with dance as a performing art can use the book to gain an insight into dance which they rarely consider, and in this context I have found the book very useful.

Hanna sees dance as a total means of communication dealing with 'sensory stimulation, cognitive structures, evolution and hereditary skills'. It communicates socio-cultural patterns and relates to the supernatural within the context of religion. Dance may be used to enhance political thought and action under the headings of role, power and social control. Within warrior dances, for example, we are told of confrontation, status marking, sexual display, rationalization, prestige, displacement and political behaviour: aspects hitherto unheard of by many dancers! One very interesting debate initiated by the book is about whether urban conditions have an impact on dance. I have not seen this question discussed in these terms elsewhere. Finally, the book deals with the future study of dance and the possible applications of dance research.

To Dance is Human, although complex, is innovative, thoughtful and offers many new perspectives on the study of dance. Certainly it widens the interest in dance. To use the book fully, one needs to understand the research methods, the thinking behind the structure and writing, the categories for analysis and the bias of the book towards theoretical aspects of function and cross-cultural reference. For the dancer/anthropologist, familiar with both disciplines, the book is invaluable and provides an excellent framework for thinking, understanding and deliberating on dance as non-verbal communication and human behaviour.

SALLY MURPHY

MELISSA BANTA and CURTIS M. HINSLEY, *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery*, Cambridge MA: Peabody Museum Press 1986. 127pp., Bibliography, Index, Plates.

This volume was published to accompany an exhibition of the same name of material from the extensive photographic archives at the Peabody Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology at Harvard. Its aims, and that of the exhibition, were to look at the way in which anthropology has used photography in the pursuit of scientific data and to examine the nature of that evidence, its uses and abuses in historical perspective. Although the volume states that it is an overview and makes no claim to be definitive, the scope and range are still vastly ambitious. This is ultimately where its weakness lies, for in 127 profusely illustrated pages it can do no more than scratch the surface.

After a general introduction to both anthropology and the technical aspects of photography, the relationship between photography and each of the anthropological sub-disciplines, social and cultural, biological, museum, archaeology etc., is examined, first in a short general résumé and then as a series of short case-studies. These presumably follow the various sections of the exhibition. In the course of these chapters most of the major issues discussed by visual anthropologists are set out in general terms; the relationship between anthropologist and the 'other', the manipulation of visual evidence, the power of interpretation and the control of information: 'armed with the camera, anthropologists can probe, scan, magnify, reduce, isolate, debase or idealize their subjects' (p. 23).

Much of this is clearly and strongly put, but it necessarily hangs on broad generalizations and poses as many questions as it answers. For example, writing of professional travel photographers of the mid-nineteenth century, it is stated that 'these images influenced Western perceptions of other people and played a role in fostering the discipline of anthropology' - to a degree perhaps, but surely perceptions of 'others' already held were applied to photographic representation, given that new media adopt existing schemata until they develop their own, as for example, the clear relationship in representation between Orientalist painting and the early photography of the Middle East. Or secondly, the great photographer of the U.S. Geological Survey Expeditions to the Southwest, J. Hillers, is described as coming 'closer to our perception of documentary realism today'. True, but what is that perception? What was that of contemporaries in the nineteenth century? And how do they differ? Surely these kinds of questions are central to understanding historical photographic material and indeed the power of imagery of the title. On the other hand, some of the case-studies of more recent material in the field of social and cultural anthropology are most interesting as working anthropologists, for example Cora du Bois in Alors and Thomas Barfield in Afghanistan, comment on their use of the camera in the field and underline some of the more general points, such as those on intrusion and control

made earlier in the book.

Nevertheless, one must remember that the authors do not claim the volume to be definitive, and it is unfair to judge it as such. While specialists might find it frustrating, it undoubtedly provides a useful introduction to the problems of creating and using still photography as a historical record and the diverse applications of photography in pursuit of anthropological data. Given the growing interest in visual evidence in anthropology, scant attention has been paid to the wide range of still photography available in archives. Banta and Hinsley have tackled many of the 'political' issues which surround the use of some historical anthropological material with a calm sensitivity. One hopes that the exhibition and this accompanying volume will lay the foundations for further objective and constructive discussion of the problems.

Finally, although the book is superbly produced with excellent black-and-white, sepia and colour photographs, a British price of £27.50 is quite horrid.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

ALLAN F. BURNS, *An Epoch of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya*, Austin: Texas University Press 1983. xiv, 266pp., Bibliography, Maps. No price given.

For those that know Yucatan, the stories recounted here are an allegory of that flat land covered by jungle which is broken up only by the small house compounds and the soaring front façades of pastel-covered churches. For those who know the Maya who live on this paradoxical peninsula, the stories recall the mystery, pathos and tragedy of their life and history. And for those with just a simple appetite for narrative analysis, the care and detail Burns has lavished on preserving the style and manner of delivery raises fundamental methodological questions on the recording of oral literature. In all cases, to read Allan Burns's *An Epoch of Miracles* is an exercise in nostalgia; the book's textual beauty should not fail to move the dowdiest of readers. To write such a work is a test of the ethnographer's concord and sympathy with the people he or she studies, and testifies to his or her closeness to the narrators.

In the Introduction we are told of the extraordinary importance that the Maya give to sound. Aural perception plays the same important and preponderant role as visual apprehension does among North Americans. The tonality of the pronunciation, the pace of speech and periods of silence are indicated in the text by the use of conventions, so that the original voice is preserved in the reader's encounter with the written word.

Burns emphasizes the essential dialogue-like character of Maya
narrative, which usually demands the role of respondent to be
played alongside that of narrator. The respondent raises questions,
and supplies answers at certain places in the recitation, but may
also narrate a sequence or episode within the story. Narratives
thus unfold through dialogue as a conversation between narrator and
respondent. This corresponds with the indigenous idea of story-
telling, *tzicbal*, which falls into different categories. Burns
writes: 'in Yucatan Mayan, it is not possible to say "tell me a
story". Instead, the only way to bring a story into verbal ex-
pression is to ask someone to "converse" a story with you' (p. 20).

From the point of view of method, this is the well important
claim of the narrators to which Burns faithfully adheres. It is
interesting to compare this perspective with other studies of Meso-
American narrative traditions which have been influenced by classic-
al structuralism. Burns's work falls into quite a different tradi-
tion, the one pioneered by Bakhtin and Volosinov, which sees mean-
ing as a product of the strategy adopted by the subject in his en-
counter with others. Structures may well govern the construction of
the discourse, but the meaning is a product of the context and does
not exist independent of the utterance. It is created anew each
time and according to the conception of a perceived order of
difference.

For the Yucatac Maya, the problem of production is central.
Burns does not present us with different versions of similar stor-
ies, but he explains the inevitability of different versions by the
nature of a conversation which demands statement and response. The
difference between these creates a new story each time, but one that
remains thematically recognizable. Moreover, the meaning attributed
to a story is contingent on the context of the narration. The Maya
themselves define different genres of narrative, each of which is
exemplified in seven of the nine chapters of Burns's book. The
meaning of a narrative is thus also a product of the relation be-
tween a story and a context. The story may even be said to create
the event which defines the context. The word is magical and brings
a state of being into existence - just as, according to the *Popol
Vuh*, the world was brought into existence by a divine conversation.
There is a continuity between thought and the perception of the
world, between the earliest Latinized Maya text, represented by the
Popol Vuh, and the stories created for Burns. His work offers a
glimpse at the creativity of its renewal, repetition, and sometimes
re-orientation.

ANTHONY SHELTON

FRANCES KARTTUNEN, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl* [Texas Ling-
uistic Series], Austin: Texas University Press 1983. xxxiv, 349pp.,
No price given.

This is the first English-Nahuatl dictionary to appear on the mar-
ket and will be an important resource for scholars of the historic-
al civilizations of central Mexico. Previously, Nahuatl diction-
aries existed only in Spanish and French: Molinas' *Vocabulario en
lengua Mexicana y castellana*, first published in 1571, and Remi
Simeon's *Dictionnaire de la langue Nahuatl ou Mexicaine* (1885),
which was based partly on the former and on the grammar of Andrés
de Olmos.
     'Nahuatl' signifies 'harmonious language that gives pleasure
to the hearer', and it is particularly appropriate, in the light of
this allusion, that this new dictionary focuses attention for the
first time on vowel length and glottal stops. Unfortunately, the
attention it focuses on the phonetic aspects of the language detract
from its usefulness as a source of information on semantics and
morphology, and its superiority over other dictionaries in the for-
mer area is achieved only at the expense of clarity on these latter
matters.
     The dictionary contains approximately nine hundred entries
which are drawn from three disparate sources. Horacio Carochi's
grammar (1645) and a seventeenth-century manuscript 'The Huehue-
tlatolli' or 'Sayings of the Elders' represent the oldest sources
from which entries are drawn. But Karttunen has also drawn her
entries from dictionaries which describe contemporary dialects
spoken in the two different regions of Zacapoaxtla, Puebla, and
Tetelcingo, Morelos. Thus the entries as a whole have been derived
from three geographically distinct areas, two of which are separat-
ed from the classical language by a duration of approximately three
hundred years. While these additional sources are necessary in pro-
viding accurate information on the phonetics of the language, their
inclusion without reference to word derivation introduces further
limitations on the accuracy of the dictionary for semantic
information.
     Finally, a further problem must be mentioned. Karttunen
uses the letter H to denote a glottal stop in place of the more
usual diacritic. The employment of the letter interferes with the
alphabetical ordering of the words and makes some of them difficult
to find as well as complicating comparison with the entries in
other dictionaries.
     The points raised here are those that strike a reader whose
interest lies primarily in the semantics and do not detract from
the inestimable value of the work for those for whom phonetics is
an overriding concern.

                                        ANTHONY SHELTON

MANIS KUMAR RAHA and SATYA NARAYAN MAHATO, *The Kinnaurese of the Himalayas* [Anthropological Survey of India Monograph 63], Calcutta: The Anthropological Survey of India 1985. 345pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Plates, Tables, Figures. Rs. 293 / £29.00 / $88.00.

Strung out along the Sutlej River in Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur is a heterogeneous region, Buddhist where it adjoins Tibet, increasingly Hindu as one moves downstream. The authors apparently spent some ten or twelve months there in the summers of 1970, 1971 and 1972, concentrating on three villages in different zones; but we learn nothing of their (collaborative?) fieldwork methods. They clearly did not settle down to the language (or languages - we hardly know).
    The work is almost too easy to criticize. It needs a serious proof-reader and a ruthless editor. The repetitious text is padded out with extracts from the old gazetteers and with unnecessary diagrams; statistical matter of dubious significance is presented in tables and then laboriously rehearsed in prose; percentages where N = ca.100 are given to the second decimal place; a blurry photograph of a temple is duplicated by an even blurrier sketch; the bibliography (containing more than one entry such as Allain, D. for Daniélou, Alain) is infiltrated by irrelevant and uncited titles; and so on. The book was ten years in press, which will limit its value to administrators, just as the remoteness from current approaches to theory or analysis will limit its appeal to anthropologists. Nevertheless, area specialists will find in it some worthwhile new information on Kinnaur, for instance, on the hierarchy of territorial deities.

N.J. ALLEN

DIPALI G. DANDA and SANCHITA GHATAK, *The Semsa and their Habitat* [Anthropological Survey of India Memoir 64], Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1985. vii, 68pp., Appendixes, Tables, Maps, Diagrams, Plates, Selected Bibliography, Index. Rs. 113.00 / £11.00 / $33.00.

This is a very brief and unpretentious account of an endogamous village of some 700 Tibeto-Burman speakers in Assam. Based on a two-month visit in 1979, it concentrates on the economy, in particular on the slash-and-burn agriculture, whose ten-year cycle has recently been halved owing to the increasing population. The most interesting material concerns the system of double descent, with its five patriclans and sixteen or (the authors are inconsistent) seventeen matriclans, both sorts of grouping being exogamous. The north-east of the subcontinent is generally patrilineal in emphasis, while the Garo and Khasi of nearby Meghalaya state are classic

examples of matriliny, so there are presumably important compara-
tive and historical questions waiting to be asked. The data pre-
sented here are too thin to take one far, but let us hope for more.

N.J. ALLEN

BAGESHWAR SINGH and AJIT K. DANDA, *The Kodaku of Surguja*, Calcutta:
Anthropological Survey of India 1986. ix, 128pp., Plates, Tables,
Appendixes, Glossary, References, Bibliographies, Index. No price
given.

This monograph on a Scheduled Tribe of Madhya Pradesh is a quite
typical product of the ASI - problem-oriented, but inconclusive and
theoretically both unambitious and old-fashioned. The focus is
equally on economic and social organization, though there is also a
short chapter on religion. The only really interesting fact is
that, faced with the government's ban on swidden agriculture and
its desire to introduce settled agriculture in its place, the
Kodaku have reverted instead to the gathering of forest products
for their livelihood. But generally the data are unexceptional for
such a tribe and their interpretation superficial, though as this
is the first ethnographic monograph devoted to the Kodaku, it is to
be welcomed as a basic source of information about them.

ROBERT PARKIN

HENRY SUMNER MAINE, *Società primitiva e dirrito antico* (transl. and
with an Introduction by Anselmo Cassani) [Collana Parerga], Faenza:
Faenza Editrice 1986. 206pp., Index. No price given.

Though a lawyer by profession, Sir Henry Sumner Maine is better
known today as one of the proto-anthropologists of the mid-Victorian
age. He is especially remembered for his contrast of status and
contract as bases of social organization and for his 'patrilineal'
stand (along with Fustel de Coulanges) against the 'age of matri-
liny' theories of Bachofen, McLennan and Morgan. Now a selection
of his writings have been translated into Italian by Anselmo
Cassani, who also provides an introduction (one which draws heavily
on previous commentaries on Maine) to set them in their contemporary
social and economic context. There has been substantial editing,
for apart from one article, no work of Maine's has been translated

in its entirety. The bulk of the book is taken up with *Ancient Law* (1861), but other work is also represented, including *Village Communities in the East and West* (1871).

ROBERT PARKIN

Representations, no. 17, Winter 1987 [Special Issue on 'The Cultural Display of the Body']. 166pp., Plates.

Though now [1987] in its fifth year of publication *Representations* is little known outside the USA where it is published by the University of California Press. It is an interdisciplinary journal whose aim is 'to transform and enrich the understanding of cultures'. With its primary focuses on the symbolic dimensions of social action and the social dimensions of artistic practice, it should be of interest to many social anthropologists.

    This Special Issue includes one article by an anthropologist on 'Endocannibalism and the Feast of the Dead in Borneo', while the other articles draw on anthropology, explicitly and/or implicitly, to varying degrees. More importantly the journal provides a forum for communication between scholars - whether anthropologists, art or social historians, students of literature etc. - interested in the social aspects of culture. It deserves to be better known.

JEREMY COOTE

ALTORKI, Soraya, and Camillia FAWZI EL-SOLH (eds.), *Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society* [Modern Arab Studies; ser. ed. Tareq Y. Ismael], New York: Syracuse University Press 1988. xii, 178pp., References, Index. £27.95 / $14.95.

BARRATT, Glynn, *Southern and Eastern Polynesia (Volume 2 of Russia and the South Pacific, 1696-1840)* [Pacific Maritime Studies Series], Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1988. xx, 221pp., Notes, Bibliography, Indexes, Illustrations, Maps. £23.15.

BATE, Barbara, and Anita TAYLOR (eds.), *Women Communicating: Studies of Women's Talks* [Communication and Information Science; ser. ed. Brenda Dervin], Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation 1988. ix, 314pp., Indexes. £21.00.

BOURDIEU, Pierre, *Homo Academicus*, Oxford: Polity Press 1988. xxvi, 225pp., Appendixes, Notes, Indexes. £25.00.

BRIGGS, Charles L., *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art* [Conduct and Communication Series; gen. eds. Dell Hymes, Gillian Sankoff and Henry Glassie], Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1988. xix, 376pp., Notes, Bibliography, Index, Figures, Plates. No price given.

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GREG, Susan Alling, *Foragers and Farmers: Population Interaction and Agricultural Expansion in Prehistoric Europe* [Prehistoric Archeology and Ecology; ser. eds. Karl W. Butzer and Leslie G. Freeman], Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1988. xx, 238pp., Appendix, Bibliography, Figures, Tables. £19.95 / £7.95.

GRIFFITH, Jeremy, *Free: The End of the Human Condition*, Sydney: Centre for Humanity's Adulthood 1988. 217pp., Index, Plates. No price given.

GROTTANELLI, Vinigi L., *The Python Killer: Stories of Nzema Life*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1988. xii, 190pp., Appendix, Notes, References, Plates. £19.95.

HOCKINGS, Paul, *Counsel from the Ancients: A Study of Badaga Proverbs, Prayers, Omens and Curses* [Trends in Linguistics, Documentation 4; ed. Werner Winter], Berlin etc.: Mouton de Gruyter 1988. xiii, 601 pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Glossary and Concordance, Index, Figures, Tables. DM198.

JOHNSON, Douglas, and David ANDERSON (eds.), *The Ecology of Survival: Case Studies from Northeast African History*, London: Lester Crook Academic Publishing 1988. xi, 303pp., Bibliography, Index, Maps, Figures. £19.95.

JOHNSON, Shiela K., *The Japanese through American Eyes*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1988. x, 171pp., Notes, Index, Illustrations. £22.50.

KALTER, Johannes, *The Arts and Crafts of Turkestan*, London: Thames and Hudson 1984. 165 pp., Bibliography, Maps, Illustrations. No price given.

KLIGMAN, Gail, *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics and Popular Culture in Transylvania* [Studies on the History of Society and Culture; ser. eds. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt], Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1988. xiii, 284pp., Appendixes, Notes, References, Index, Glossary, Map, Illustrations. No price given.

LEISS, William, *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities*, Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1988 [1976]. xx, 134pp., Notes, Bibliography. £13.55.

LEVINE, Nancy E., *The Dynamics of Polyandry: Kinship, Domesticity and Population on the Tibetan Border*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1988. xvii, 279 pp., Appendixes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index, Figures, Tables, Photographs. £37.95 / £14.50.

PRASAD, Onkar, *Folk Music and Folk Dances of Banaras* [Anthropological Survey of India, Memoir no. 71], Calcutta: Government of India 1987. xi, 143pp., Bibliography, Glossary, Appendix, Notation. No price given.

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SARKAR, Jayanta, *Society, Culture and Ecological Adaptation among Three Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* [Anthropological Survey of India, Memoir no. 68], Calcutta: Government of India 1987. 205pp., Glossary, Plates, Table ables, Figures. No price given.

VERNANT, Jean-Pierre, and Pierre VIDAL-NAQUET, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (transl. Janet Lloyd), New York: Zone Books 1988. 412pp., Notes, Index. £25.95.

WEISMANTEL, M.J., *Food, Gender and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1988. xii, 195pp., Appendix, Bibliography, Figures, Illustrations. No price given.

JASO

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Book Reviews (continued)

THE SKEAT COLLECTION AND MALAYAN ETHNOGRAPHY

The Skeat Collection was assembled by the late Walter William
Skeat (1866-1953), who was a notable collector of ethnographic
material in Malaya in the 1890s and whose books are still in use.
It contains English-language and Malay-language books, journals and
offprints, some Malay manuscripts, and various items from Skeat's
working papers and diaries, and is held in the Tylor Library of the
Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford.

Skeat grew up in Cambridge, where his father was Professor of
Anglo-Saxon and a Fellow of Christ's College. Skeat himself later
became a classical scholar of the same college. After graduating,
he decided to make his career overseas. He joined the Selangor
Civil Service in 1891, and became District Officer, Kuala Langat, in
1895. He then began the systematic collection of artefacts and
data which he used in writing his two major books, *Malay Magic*
(1900) and, with C.O. Blagden as joint author, *Pagan Races of the
Malay Peninsula* (1906).

Late in life he produced an account of an expedition, of which
he was joint leader, to north-east Malaya in 1899-1900 (Skeat and
Laidlaw 1953). This was his third important publication. He also
wrote a number of papers for learned journals as well as essays of
a more popular type. [1]

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[1] See Gullick 1988: 143 where I list Skeat's published works. I

On his return from the expedition Skeat was found permanently unfit for service in the tropics. During the period 1900-1914 he was occupied mainly in writing. He then became an official 'guide-lecturer' at the British Museum (1914-1934) and spent the years of his retirement, until his death in 1953, in Devon.

On returning from Malaya in 1897 Skeat had presented his large and valuable collection of Malay and Malayan aboriginal artefacts to Cambridge University, and 'the very great interest so kindly taken' in it helped him to obtain University funds for his expedition of 1899-1900. But this support was confined to a small, though influential group of Cambridge dons who had recognized the importance of the pioneer ethnographic work done by A.C. Haddon in his expeditions of 1888 and 1898 to the Torres Straits. Haddon advised and encouraged Skeat in planning the latter's Malayan expedition. However, anthropology, then called 'comparative ethnology', was a new and undervalued discipline at Cambridge. The first lectureship, to which Haddon was appointed in 1900, carried a stipend of only £50 per annum, and for some years no accommodation was provided for the new department.

The large collections of material which Haddon and Skeat brought back from their expeditions were - in Skeat's words - 'housed in a temporary building of a truly lamentable character'. Moreover, the artefacts were left in their packing cases for many years until funds had been collected for the erection, by stages, of the present Museum building. About 1920 Haddon, by now elevated to a Readership, unpacked his collection and put it on display (Quiggin 1942: 104). Skeat's collection had to wait still longer. Let him take up the story:

> In 1938, when some substantial progress had been made with the building of the new Museum, Mr T.T. Paterson, who had become Curator, wrote to me as follows: 'Since ever I came to the Museum, some years ago ... I had been struck by the "Skeat Collection". To my mind it is one of the most interesting collections for the teaching of anthropology, in view of the complete picture it presents of the material culture (of one Asiatic people). Therefore since I became Curator at the beginning of this year ... I kept well in the forefront the problem of adequate exhibition of your material.[2]

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have since traced two minor items not included in that list. These appear as Skeat 1901 and 1902 in the list of references at the end of the present essay.

[2] Quoted from a draft Introduction written by Skeat to his journal of the expedition (Skeat and Laidlaw 1953). Either the editor of *JMBRAS* or R.O. Winstedt, who assisted Skeat (then over eighty years old) in preparing his manuscript for publication, decided to omit the passage on Skeat's collection of artefacts at Cambridge from the Introduction, presumably because this was not thought to be relevant to the Journal. The typescript of Skeat's draft Introduction is held in the Skeat Collection at Oxford.

However, Paterson's plans were frustrated by the outbreak of war, as everything of value in the Museum's collections was stored away for the duration. It was only after the war that Skeat's former colleagues from the British Museum were able to assure him that his collection was now adequately displayed. It seems that Skeat, then over eighty years old and living in Devon, never saw the display of material which he had presented fifty years before on condition that it was to be 'exhibited within a reasonable space of time'. It may now be seen at the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Downing Street, Cambridge.

Skeat's disappointment undoubtedly contributed to his decision to transfer his books and papers to Oxford. Another factor was that, in the 1930s, the Colonial Office had instituted a training course at Oxford for recruits to the Malayan Civil Service (Heussler 1963: 124). An approach was made to Skeat, among other retired administrators, to contribute books to the reference library. The final bequest of books and papers was made at Skeat's death (see Dr Barnes's note below).

The presence of the Skeat Collection, by then held at the Institute of Social Anthropology, encouraged Kirk Endicott, who was a student at the Institute in the 1960s, to undertake a major study in Skeat's field, based partly on Skeat's materials (Endicott 1970: vii).

The original Skeat Collection is what remains of the reference material collected by Skeat for his own use. It is valuable, but rather heterogeneous. An annotated list of the Malay texts, both handwritten and printed, has been compiled (Ricklefs and Voorhoeve 1977: 127-9). Among them (item 15) is a copy of the *Salasilah Negeri Patani*, which is one of two extant texts of a local history of the Malay State of Patani.[3]

Skeat had discovered a copy in the hands of a Malay informant when he was in Patani in April/May 1899. The owner would not part with it, but Skeat persuaded him to make him a copy. The modern editors of what is now usually called the *Hikayat Patani* have found it a valuable source for comparative analysis of the text (Teeuw and Wyatt 1970: 31-6).

Skeat was at all times an assiduous collector of Malay and aboriginal ritual formulas. He attached much importance to linguistic material of this kind as a source of ethnographic information. The final hundred pages of *Malay Magic* is made up of Malay incantations as recorded by Skeat in romanized Malay. There are also some manuscript notes by Skeat on the vocabularies of aboriginal groups, and he published a paper on the language of the

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[3] Patani had originally been one large Malay state. However, in the course of the nineteenth century the Siamese had divided it into a group of smaller states (see map at p. 4 of Skeat and Laidlaw 1953). In 1902 they deposed the Malay ruler of the reduced Patani. 'Patani' is here used to denote the reduced Patani and other successor states as a group.

Besisi (Skeat 1896).[4]

The large collection of assorted journal articles and off-prints are catalogued by author in the Institute's 'Skeat Catalogue'. Skeat was much interested in education, and the Collection includes a number of Malay schoolbooks in use a century ago. In this part of the Collection one may discover obscure publications whose existence would otherwise be unknown, and obtain access to things which it would now be difficult to locate elsewhere, or indeed would not be found in other reference or research libraries in this country.

Skeat's diaries, typed drafts and manuscript notes are only a small part of the Collection but, as original and unique material, they are of particular value for research. Skeat's diary of the year 1899-1900, which he spent in north-east Malaya and the adjoining area of Thailand, fills two notebooks. Written in pencil, it covers almost 400 pages. There is a wide variation in the number of words on each page but, at a rough estimate, it comprises some 80,000 words. It does not cover some weeks in 1899 when Skeat was attempting to reach the summit of Gunong Tahan, the highest peak in Malaya. At this point he merely notes that he kept a separate record of that period, which almost ended in disaster (Gullick 1988: 138).

The manuscript diary, as it now exists, bears the mark of editorial revision by Skeat to make it usable by a typist as the draft of the account of the expedition published in 1953 (Skeat and Laidlaw 1953).[5] As the published version, which does take in the ascent of Gunong Tahan, is about 70,000 words it seems that a considerable part, perhaps 15,000 words, of the diary text is not included in the published account. Examination of the original diary shows that, while much of the omitted material consists in unimportant facts about the movements and arrangements of the expedition, some ethnographic material has been pruned. In spite of much

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[4] Skeat's 'Besisi' are still to be found in the Carey Island area of coastal Selangor and are more correctly known as the Ma' Betisék. Some researchers, however, refer to them as the Mah Meri, their own term meaning 'people of the forest' which they apply to *all* aboriginal groups and not to themselves alone (Wazir-Jehan Begum Karim 1981: 13).

[5] Skeat prepared a full account of his expedition soon after his return from Malaya in 1900. His hopes of publishing a book on the expedition came to nothing (Gullick 1988: 149). However, he planned to present his typescript version, based on his original diary, to Cambridge to be used in support of his specimens at the Musuem. As his collection did not go on display, he retained the typescript and, on the outbreak of war, deposited it for safekeeping in the cellars of the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford. The 'personal account' published in *JMBRAS* (Skeat and Laidlaw 1953) is a revised version of it. He may have begun to work on it again in the late 1930s after his retirement, but he certainly did not complete a final revision until 1952 (information from Skeat's letters in the Oxford Institute's file of correspondence with Skeat).

deletion and alteration of particular words and phrases it is generally possible to read the original text of the diary.

In addition to the diary itself, there are two other sources of related information. Skeat entered ethnographic information in notebooks under pre-arranged subject headings, probably taken from the second edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* prepared by the Anthropological Institute (Anthropological Institute 1892; see Urry 1972; Coote 1987). This fact is interesting confirmation of Skeat's preliminary contacts with the Anthropological Institute and cognate bodies, to whose journals he contributed numerous papers after his retirement from Malaya (Gullick 1988: 143). Primary fieldwork records of this period are comparatively rare among the archives of social anthropology, and so Skeat's surviving notes are documents of intrinsic historical interest.

Secondly, Skeat wrote an Introduction to the published account of his expedition, to which reference has been made above in connection with the display of his material at Cambridge.

The Collection also includes some working notebooks with pages divided by perforations, so that slips can be torn out. On these slips Skeat wrote individual Malay words and their English meaning. Presumably he intended to remove the slips and rearrange them in alphabetical order as a dictionary or vocabulary. He himself never produced a dictionary, but he did, in 1895, collaborate with R.J. Wilkinson, who was in the early stages of collecting material for his *Malay-English Dictionary*, the first edition of which was published in 1901 (Wilkinson 1901). In the revised edition of 1932, Wilkinson (1932: i) describes how he and Skeat collaborated. One can find items in Skeat's notes, where there is a notable similarity with entries in Wilkinson's dictionary (e.g. *utama*; Wilkinson 1901: 3).

In addition to the contents of the Skeat Collection at Oxford, the Skeat family retain a few of his papers and letters, and one of his annotated copies of *Malay Magic*. The other annotated copy of this book and Skeat's annotated copies of *Pagan Races* and of Wilkinson's dictionary are held at Oxford.

In the course of two short visits to Oxford, I have made only a general appraisal of the Collection and its potential as a source for reference and research purposes upon which to offer some tentative comments. Dr Endicott gave very close attention to the conceptual material to be extracted from *Malay Magic*. This book also contains much descriptive information relating to rights of passage and Malay court and village life. Examples of the latter are passages on housebuilding and rice cultivation (Skeat 1900: 143, 218), and his description of the Selangor regalia which he had inspected since the royal capital was in the Kuala Langat district (ibid.: 40). In addition there is the extensive linguistic material (incantations etc.) already mentioned.

In this respect, Skeat's work is best treated as a contribution to the total stock of ethnographic material on Malay culture collected by administrators in the latter part of the nineteenth

century. W.E. (later Sir William) Maxwell, who was Resident of
Selangor when Skeat joined the State service in 1891, was outstand-
ing among his contemporaries.[6] Maxwell had founded in 1877, and
became the first editor of, the *Journal of the Straits Branch of
the Royal Asiatic Society*. He contributed to that Journal more
than thirty papers (listed in Lim and Wijasuriya 1970). Maxwell's
major essays include two monographs on Malay 'slavery' and Malay
land tenure (Maxwell 1884 and 1890).

Skeat himself wrote papers for *JSBRAS* and was also joint
founder and editor of the *Selangor Journal* (1892-1897). Skeat's
numerous contributions to the latter publication include a series
of eleven papers on 'Malay Customs in Southern Selangor', which are
the first drafts of passages in his book, *Malay Magic* (Skeat 1900).[7]

Other administrators wrote for these journals. In addition,
Skeat and other district officers produced annual, monthly and
special reports in the course of their official duties in the late
1880s and the 1890s which are a useful source of fragmentary data
on Malay culture, especially its economic aspects.[8]

Thereafter the bureaucracy became more desk-bound. One of
Wilkinson's purposes in founding the series of *Papers on Malay Sub-
jects* in 1907 was to provide a source of ethnographic information
for a new generation of British administrators (see Burns 1971,
especially pp. 9-10; Hooker 1970). Wilkinson and Winstedt were
prominent among administrators who continued to write (as Skeat,
now in England, no longer could) for *JSBRAS*.[9] More technical
papers were published in the *Journal of the Federated States
Museums* from 1905.

Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula, written mainly by Skeat
but with chapters on linguistic subjects by C.O. Blagden, was

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[6] William Maxwell (1846-1897) served in Malaya from 1865 to 1894,
reaching the position of acting Governor. He then became Governor
of the Gold Coast, where he died in 1897. He was a member of a
celebrated 'colonial service dynasty' in Malaya. His major achieve-
ment was the introduction of a system of registered title to land,
including peasant smallholdings, in Malaya (Maxwell 1894).

[7] Skeat's articles in the *Selangor Journal*, twenty-three in all,
can be identified by the initials 'W.S.' appended to them. He
wrote on a variety of subjects, such as the customs of Javanese
immigrants who had settled in the Kuala Langat district as well as
those of the local aboriginal groups.

[8] See, for example, reports published in the *Selangor Government
Gazette* of the 1890s (PRO [Public Records Office, Kew] Series CO469).

[9] Lim and Wijasuriya 1970 lists the Wilkinson/Winstedt *JSBRAS/JMBRAS*
input, and Bastin and Roolvink 1964: 10-23 is a complete list of
Winstedt's enormous ouput; note Winstedt 1925 in particular. Wil-
kinson and Winstedt were both personal friends of Skeat, the former
from Cambridge student days.

published in 1906 (Skeat and Blagden 1906). It has not stood the
test of time as well as *Malay Magic*. Neither author had a profound
knowledge of aboriginal cultures. In their Preface they described
the book as 'essentially a compilation from many sources', written
to bring within the covers of a massive two-volume work all which
was then known.

Much of this data was of inferior quality. Writing in 1910,
Wilkinson summed up the existing state of knowledge of the aborig-
inal groups with the dismissive comment that 'with all this mass of
literature we know next to nothing about the aborigines of the
Malay Peninsula' (Wilkinson 1910). However, he excepted from his
criticism Skeat's 'prolonged study of the Coast Besisi [which]
added very materially to our knowledge of the aborigines' (see
Skeat 1896).

Although *Pagan Races* has been overtaken by later and better
research among aborigines, it still has its uses. Skeat went to
much trouble to obtain a large and comprehensive collection of
photographs for use as illustrations, which are an excellent record
of aboriginal life in his time. He also wrote an Introduction
entitled 'Environment', which is a first-rate description of the
Malayan jungle and its flora and fauna as a habitat, and he also
included a bibliography which, among other things, takes in the
work of continental scholars of his day on Malayan aborigines
(Skeat and Blagden 1906: 1-16, xxv-xl).

In planning his expedition of 1899-1900, Skeat chose north-
east Malaya and the Malay area of southern Thailand as a region
which, at the turn of the century, had been little affected by ex-
ternal economic and demographic pressures. It had, and still has,
the largest concentration of Malay population in the Malay Pen-
insula. The States of Patani, Kelantan and Terengganu each present-
ed interesting features of Islamic activity and organization.

Skeat began his travels at Singgora (Songkhla), which is
further north than the limits of the predominantly Malay cultural
area. Hence he has valuable data in his journal on Siamese and
other non-Malay communities and the effect of alien Asian cultures
on the Malays of the region. One of his companions, Annandale, was
much interested in this aspect of their work and wrote about it in
his own anthropological notes, based on the Skeat and the Annandale/
Robinson expeditions (Annandale and Robinson 1903). Another of
Skeat's contemporaries, Graham, who was the Siamese-appointed Ad-
viser to the Malay ruler of Kelantan (from 1903 to 1909), also de-
scribed some features of Siamese influence on Malay culture (Graham
1908). In later years, Skeat himself wrote a popular essay on the
Siamese (Skeat 1909). This cross-cultural aspect of the work of
Skeat and others in the north-east region of Malaya would repay
further analysis.

However, the main focus of Skeat's fieldwork in 1899-1900 was
Malay culture. As with *Malay Magic*, the data Skeat obtained during
his expedition forms part of a larger body of information: Hugh
Clifford (1895 and 1902), Henry Norman (1895) and C.F. Bozzolo
(unpublished, 1889) had been there before him. His companion dur-
ing the expedition, Nelson Annandale, returned to north-east Malaya
a year or two later (Annandale and Robinson 1903). Graham, in

addition to his book on Kelantan already referred to (1908), wrote
one on Siam (1924) which has passages on the Patani area, and in
his official capacity he wrote annual reports on Kelantan.

Skeat's short popular essays (Gullick 1988: 144) on north-east
Malaya offer little new in factual information but preserve, as
illustrations, numerous photographs taken by Skeat or his contemp-
oraries.

Modern writers have tended to concentrate on specific politic-
al, economic or Islamic themes.[10] However, there is still useful
data from Skeat's time awaiting more general analysis.

Skeat's reaction to the news (in 1951) that the Oxford
Institute had recently made considerable additions to his Collec-
tion by the purchase of books by Dutch authors was characteristic of
of the man: 'I was particularly pleased ... Dutch contributions to
our knowledge of Malaya are *invaluable*. Two of them came to see
the Cambridge collection in Downing Street *twice*, and were deeply
interested' (Oxford Institute's files). Always a modest man, he
viewed his own work, and his specimens, books and papers, as a con-
tribution to a collective effort in scholarship and research. In
this essay I have tried to describe the Skeat Collection at Oxford
in that context.

J.M. GULLICK

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[10] The north-east region has proved a fertile ground for modern
research. The classic Firth studies (Rosemary Firth 1943; Raymond
Firth 1946) of a Malay fishing community need no introduction.
Fraser 1960 and 1966 describe a Patani Malay fishing village. The
Kelantan studies edited by Roff (1974) are historical, cultural and
biographical essays supplemented by a valuable bibliography of pub-
lished work on Kelantan. Cuisinier's work (1936) on shamans and
related topics was used by Endicott as a supplementary source and
relates closely to one of Skeat's principal interests; see also
Firth 1967. Matheson and Hooker (1988) analyze Islamic religious
books. Islam is one of the main themes of the Roff collection and,
in a political context, of Kessler 1978. Khoo Kay Kim 1988 illus-
trates the Malay perception in Skeat's time of Siamese cultural
'aggression' (as do Matheson and Hooker). Shaharil Talib 1984 is a
political and social history of Terengganu resistance to external
pressures. Teeuw and Wyatt (1970) have similar descriptive material
on Patani.

In addition, there is yet more varied literature on Malay
culture and society in the north-east, which can be traced through
the *Index Malaysiana* (Lim Huck Tee and D.E.K. Wijasuriya 1970;
Wijasuriya and Lim Huck Tee 1974 and 1985), Cheeseman 1959 and
other more specialized bibliographies. Lim 1962: 185 has some
unusual entries.

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APPENDIX: A NOTE ON THE SKEAT COLLECTION

In 1936, A.S. Haynes, a friend of W.W. Skeat, learned of the possible dispersal of Skeat's personal library. He then contacted the University to see if it would be possible to lodge the library somewhere in Oxford. In 1937, Henry Balfour offered to provide storage for the books at the Pitt Rivers Museum until a permanent home could be found for them. Eventually, Professor Radcliffe-Brown, who had just assumed the Chair of Social Anthropology, agreed to accept them for display in the Department of Social Anthropology. Skeat gave a number of books without charge, but the main part of the Collection was purchased with funds provided by Captain Walter Ogilvy, so that it could be presented to the University as a free gift. The University's gratitude and the conditions were published in the *University Gazette* of 23rd November 1938. The entry read:

> Decrees carried *nemine contradicente*....

2. That the thanks of the University be accorded to W.W. Skeat, Esq., Captain Walter Ogilvy, M.B.E. and A.S. Haynes, Esq., C.M.G.,

whose joint efforts have secured to it a valuable collection
of Malayan books, and that the collection be accepted with
gratitude on the following conditions:-

(1) that its unity be preserved under the title of the
Skeat collection of Malayan books;
(2) that a separate catalogue be prepared;
(3) that it be made accessible, under proper safeguards,
to all persons who may wish to make use of it;
(4) that additions be made to it from time to time as may
be appropriate and proper.

A copy of this decree is kept posted in the Bagby Room of the Tylor
Library in the Institute of Social Anthropology, where the books
are shelved.

Skeat provided additions in 1939, including 150 pamphlets and
the 'bulk' of his Malay manuscripts, Malay lithographed books, and
Malay printed works. In the same year, Haynes solicited a grant of
£23.6s. 8d. from the Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements, Singa-
pore for the purchase of additional books for the collection. The
actual selection and purchase of the books was made by Skeat in
consultation with Radcliffe-Brown. In 1940, Skeat's son, T.C.
Skeat, passed on an extensive collection of Malay manuscripts be-
longing to G.M. Laidlaw. Skeat had persuaded Laidlaw's daughter to
present them to the Library. The Collection was further supplement-
ed in 1942 by books from the bequest of Captain H. Berkeley.
Skeat's sons T.C. and W.O. Skeat sent a final consignment of books,
notes and manuscripts to the Institute of Social Anthropology in
1955.

The Collection's unity is still preserved, and it is still
separately catalogued. The library continues to purchase scholarly
works on Southeast Asia which are added to the Collection. It also
includes a number of publications by staff and former students of
the Institute, whose own research it has greatly aided, and it pro-
vides an invaluable resource in teaching. The manuscripts and off-
prints are securely stored in the Tylor Library.

An annotated list of the Malay manuscripts may be found in
Ricklefs and Voorhoeve 1977: 127-9 (see list of references above).
Reference to a further Malay manuscript from Skeat's original col-
lection now held in the University's Bodleian Library may also be
found on page 104 of the same work.

The Skeat Collection is open for consultation by senior members
of the University. Other persons who have a serious scholarly
interest in the Collection may obtain access by application to the
Institute.

R.H.B.

THE STATUS OF 'UNBELIEVERS'
AS A GROUP IN POLISH SOCIETY

Introduction

Unlike Polish society between the two world wars, which was ethnic-
ally, religiously and politically pluralist, post-war Poland is
highly homogeneous. Ethnic minorities constitute no more than two
per cent of the population, and the percentage of people with a non-
Roman Catholic background does not exceed five (Kłoczowski 1986:
376-8). Exact data are not available, however, since neither
nationality nor religion are demographic categories in Poland.
Officially, there are three political parties in Poland, but the
leading role of the Communist Party (or 'Polish United Workers
Party') is an imperative written into the state's constitution.
The official ideology, based on Marxism-Leninism, is of an anti-
religious character. Atheist propaganda (the propagation of the
so-called 'scientific world view') had been, at least until 1980,
and in a sense continues to be, an important element of the party-
controlled educational system and mass media. It has never been
successful, however. The Roman Catholic Church has been and still
is considered by the majority of Poles to be the guardian of the
national heritage. Most teachers and most Party members are also
members of this church. What is ironical is that, even among the
membership of the Association for Secular Propaganda (around
140,000 in 1986), the majority, according to the estimates of some

of its activities, believe in God and consider themselves Roman Catholics.[1]

What has been said above does not mean, of course, that all Poles are profoundly religious people. On the one hand, even those sociologists of religion who sympathize with the Roman Catholic Church are of the opinion that the religiosity of the Poles is superficial.[2] On the other hand, in Poland, as everywhere else, there are people who declare themselves to be unbelievers.

The percentage of unbelievers in the population of Poland changes according to various factors. According to rather super- ficial findings of 1977 to 1978 (i.e., just before Cardinal Wojtyla of Cracow was elected Pope), 85% of people who were interviewed in a national survey declared themselves to be believers (their denom- ination was not considered here), so we can say that the remaining 15% can, roughly speaking, be considered as religiously ambivalent or non-believers. In 1983, however, i.e., after the first Solidar- ity period and during martial law, the percentage of believers jumped up, according to the same survey data, to 91%. This in- crease, and the concomitant decline in the number of non-believers, affected mostly people with a university education. In 1977 to 1978, 54% of people with a university education declared themselves to be believers, whereas in 1983 their proportion equalled 87%. Among people with only an elementary, grade-school education, the increase in this period was less than three per cent (Darczewska 1986).

The dynamics of the Polish situation is quite different from that in countries where religion is not overloaded with various political and cultural functions. In recent American history, for instance, secularization means an increase 'in the percentage of Americans claiming no religious preference. While in 1957 only 2.7% of the American population said they had no religious prefer- ence (i.e. were 'nones'), in 1982 the percentage was 7.1' (Condran and Tamney 1984: 415).

Whatever the dynamics and trends, the percentage of unbelievers seems to be relatively higher in Poland. People who do not believe in God and confirm this attitude in their behaviour are considered officially to be ideal, model citizens. Despite this, there are no data available concerning the attitudes of these people. Even an analysis of the membership of the Association for Secular Propaganda would not help, for the majority of its members are in fact religious. As a consequence, this essay can only be provisional; it is not based on any hard data.

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[1] This association, totally controlled by the Communist Party, emerged in 1969, when the Association of Atheists and Freethinkers was forced to unite with the Association for Secular Education.

[2] See, for example, Piwowarski 1983. The Marxist sociologists are obviously of the same opinion: see, for example, Ciupak 1973.

Unbelievers in Poland: Aggregate or Social Group?

Secularization is not merely a phenomenon occurring since World War
Two. In pre-war Poland, its manifestations could be found both in
urban and in rural areas. However, secularization meant anti-
clericalism rather than an increase in the number of people claim-
ing no religious preference. The clergy were perceived by many work-
ers as pro-managerial and by many peasants as sympathetic to the
owners of large estates. Most of these workers and peasants be-
lieved in God and considered themselves good Catholics; they op-
posed the church hierarchy rather than religion itself. It is an
interesting question whether or not today's unbelievers come from
the families that were under the influence of anti-clerical ideo-
logy or, to put it another way, whether or not the fact of becoming
an unbeliever is one step forward within a longer process of secular-
ization, a process that takes place within large family structures.
The answer seems to be important: if we have here a kind of inter-
generational continuity, non-believers constitute a social group in
a stronger sense than would be the case if this continuity is
absent.

     Social groups of class or ethnic character consist of families,
which means that from the point of view of   this larger group the
family is homogeneous. This does not seem to be true of unbelievers.
In the majority of cases there is a difference with regard to reli-
gious faith not only between the generation of the parents and the
generation of adult children, but also, very often, between husband
and wife.

     Our next important problem, particularly crucial when we dis-
cuss unbelievers as a social group, is the question of the funda-
mental cultural values which would distinguish this aggregate from
other aggregates and be a basis for collective social behaviour. It
seems to me that unbelievers, seen also from this point of view,
cannot be considered a group in a strong sense of the word. The
rejection of religious values, which is an attribute determining
the character of this part of the population, can be a guarantee of
its separateness and distinctiveness in a predominantly Roman
Catholic and intolerant society only if it is combined with a match-
ing kind of behaviour. The rejection of religious beliefs is not,
however, linked with any 'positive' values that could serve as a
background for collective activity, social associations etc. It is,
to some extent, related to Communist ideology and political atti-
tudes, but we must not exaggerate this connection. Moreover, the
vast majority of Party members, including some activists with a
university education, are religious people.

     There are social problems that non-believers face in a pre-
dominantly Catholic environment, problems that might have united
them. Unbelievers prefer, however, to remain invisible rather than
to organize themselves.

     Another question is the existence of unbelievers as a field of
interaction and communication. Again, it seems to me that because
of the very small number of these people, and for reasons mentioned
above, they interact and communicate mostly with believers. This
does not shake their identity, but it weakens the chances of a new

social group emerging.

    Gathering together what has been said so far, unbelievers in
Poland are an aggregate of individuals who share certain values,
rather than a quasi-ethnic group, at least in Barth's sense of the
term 'ethnic group' (Barth 1981: 199-200).

Unbelievers as Aliens

Those non-believers who want to confirm their convictions with a
matching kind of behaviour constitute in Poland an alien population.
Attributes distinguishing them from the majority are of great import-
ance in a society which stresses so much the cultural and political
significance of the Roman Catholic Church (from now on, I shall ig-
nore religious minorities). I must agree with Kwen Fee Lian (1982:
47), who says:

> Members of the minority group have to operate within the limit-
> ations of the dominant ideas and social imagery that are accept-
> ed and recognized as legitimate by the dominant group. In
> other words, the minority group has to impose a moratorium on
> its own values and beliefs and operate within the context of
> the majority society. To do this it may have to resort to an
> ideology that is acceptable to the dominant society. A minor-
> ity group, however, may practice its own values and beliefs
> which are unacceptable to the majority society so long as they
> are confined within the boundaries of the group. This, in
> turn, will serve to strengthen group boundaries.

    Unbelievers in Poland operate within the context of the
Catholic 'majority society'. According to the ideology of the dom-
inant group, being a good Pole means being a member of the Roman
Catholic Church, or at least believing in God. Everyone else is an
alien, an alien who cannot be eliminated but who potentially can
and should be transformed into a member of the dominant group. In
this situation, unbelievers who manifest their own attitudes find
themselves subjected to strong social control. Obviously, this con-
trol is not the same in big cities as in small villages. Also, some
kinds of behaviour are under more control, others under less.
Attendance at Sunday mass, especially in cities, is weakly con-
trolled. Many believers do not attend church regularly, so unbe-
lievers are not visible. The problem arises mostly when children go
to school. There, social pressure becomes very strong, and class-
mates and their parents very often demand an explanation as to why
some children do not attend religious classes in church. The prob-
lem becomes particularly important in villages and on the new hous-
ing estates in the big cities. In the latter, religious education
in church is a kind of copy of the official schooling system.
Priests have managed to obtain the lists of students of each class
in the neighbouring elementary school and use them in marking attend-
ance. Absence is highly visible. Young children of unbelievers

become victims of harassment, and many parents eventually yield to the pressure and send their children to the religious classes. A very important moment is First Communion, a kind of religious rite of passage that falls in Poland during the second grade of elementary school. This is an important event in the social life of each class group, and the children who cannot participate in it are outsiders, aliens. Again, unbelievers are forced to consider imposing a moratorium on their own values and beliefs. The next rite of passage under the strong control of the dominant group is marriage. The civil ceremony in Poland is compulsory, but even unbelievers are very often married in church under the pressure of their parents.

Funerals also indicate that unbelievers are constrained by the ideas and rules that are recognized as legitimate by the dominant group. It is almost only Communist Party leaders of different levels who have civic funerals. For most other non-believers, family   pressure to organize a church ceremony is very strong. What is interesting is that in some cases a religious funeral is organized in spite of the wishes of the person who passed away and of his family. In rural areas and small towns, cemeteries are administered by parish priests. The priest cannot refuse to bury an unbeliever but demands that he participates in the ceremony, and in this way he is able to turn the occasion into a religious funeral. The family may sue the priest or move the funeral to another graveyard, but this takes a lot of time and money.

As we can see, the minority situation of unbelievers in Poland is one in which they must give up most of the ways they would otherwise prefer. It is also a situation in which the collective practice of their own values and beliefs, being unacceptable to the majority, is quite difficult. First, as has already been said, these common values and beliefs have a 'negative' character: non-believers demand the freedom not to do what they do not wish to do, not the freedom to do something in particular. Secondly, the political context is here very important. Not all unbelievers, and probably only a minority, are supporters of the Communist political system in Poland. The Communist Party claims, however, a monopoly in the representation of their interests, especially when this representation is useful in the Party's relations with the Roman Catholic Church. Unbelievers who do not consider themselves as Communists are manipulated by the ruling group and, moreover, are treated as Communists by the religious majority. Very often they prefer to keep their own beliefs and values to themselves and to give up some behavioural manifestations of these values, in order to avoid being guilty by association. Being an unbeliever does not provide an individual with any sense of belonging, nor any self-esteem. Therefore it would be difficult to attribute any 'basic group identity' to them.[3]

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[3] See, for example, Cohen 1984: 1031 and Isaacs 1975: 34.

Unbelievers constitute an aggregate that is discriminated against in a cultural sense. However, in a certain sense they are, in Poland, a politically dominant collectivity. Through political arrangements, it is possible for a person known to be a believer to become Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, or Deputy Chairman of the Council of State. It is nearly impossible for a believer to become a regional governor, a school principal or the manager of any state-owned industrial or commercial company. These hundreds of thousands of positions (as opposed to the very few at the highest levels of the political system) are kept for those who may believe in God and even attend church on the sly, but who in public never declare their loyalty to values different from those accepted by the Communist ideological system.

The Heterogeneity of the Population of Unbelievers

The homogeneity of the aggregate of unbelievers, though exaggerated by outside observers, is not particularly high. Horowitz was right when he wrote: 'What often happens...is that there is a lag in the identifications. Others at first perceive the...group as more homogeneous than it sees itself' (1975: 131).

In their 1985 article on the USA, Condran and Tamney distinguish three reasons for being an unbeliever or a religious 'none'. Two of them are described as structural, the third as cultural. They also find three types of unbelievers: 'isolated nones', 'class-based nones', and 'cultural nones' (1985: 419-22). This classification does not seem to be valid in the Polish case. Moreover, it seems necessary to suggest a classification which takes into account different degrees of the intensity and consistency of the phenomenon.

The vast majority of Polish unbelievers are people from families in which Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran and other religious traditions have been or still are relatively strong. In a situation in which religion is an extremely important social and cultural phenomenon, and the Roman Catholic Church a powerful political organization, everybody is acquainted at least with this particular religious tradition. In my view, if the 'isolated nones', those who are isolated from or out of touch with religious institutions and so have no religious preference, do exist at all in Poland, their number must be very small. For the reasons mentioned above, when discussing the population of unbelievers we also have to take into account not only philosophical convictions, but also attitudes towards religious tradition, social behaviour that is related to religious values and beliefs, and the choice available between political loyalties.

Our first category, rather hypothetical, might be labelled the core of the population of unbelievers. This core consists of people who do not have, nor continue to observe, any family religious traditions, and who have no religious needs or interests. They do not participate in any kind of activity connected with religious

institutions: they do not marry in church, do not baptize their children, and organize Christmas and Easter in a totally secular way. Religion does not exist for them. This category of unbelievers must be very small: for people who do not live in special enclaves or niches, the external pressure is strong enough for them to become at least interested in religion. However, some such enclaves do exist in Poland. Party activists at the highest levels live in separate buildings and even city quarters, meet only people of their own sort, and educate their children in special schools. At the opposite pole the lumpenproletariat may be a social base of this type of unbeliever.

Our second category, probably larger but still quite small, are the anti-religious hardliners. Whatever their family traditions, they have a very active and negative attitude towards religion and are sometimes called 'personal enemies of the Lord'. Obviously, they do not marry in church, do not baptize their children, and do not allow their religious education in church. They do not observe Christmas and Easter and decorate what is called by other people the Christmas tree only after Christmas and before New Year's Eve. Activists (but not necessarily rank-and-file members) of the Association for Secular Propaganda are recruited from this category. Among these people there is a relatively strong 'group identity' based on their negative attitude towards religion. Similarly to the first category, this one is located to some extent on the periphery of Polish society. Out of necessity, its members meet socially mostly with other members of the same category. If they do not belong to the very small group forming the highest, central Party apparatus, they educate their children in regular institutions and often fall into conflict with the dominant group of the faithful. In the political context of the Polish situation, where overt criticism of religion itself and of religious institutions is very closely identified with official propaganda, it is probable that people who are engaged in this kind of activity are supporters of the current political system.

Our third category are people who are unbelievers but at the same time interested in religion as a complex social phenomenon. Whatever their family traditions they do not attend church and are often subject to strong condemnation on the part of their family and social milieu. In this respect they do not differ from the second category. This category of open-minded unbelievers does not consist, however, of 'personal enemies of the Lord'. Its members appreciate the various social, political and cultural functions of religion and of religious organizations. Quite often they know much more about these problems than the average religious person. They solemnly observe Christmas, Easter etc., but stress their national and cultural, not their religious character. If invited, they participate as guests or witnesses in the religious ceremonies of their friends and relatives, because socially they meet both with other unbelievers, and with religious people who do not mind this kind of relationship. Their values are not, therefore, a boundary limiting interactions and communication. At the same time, they have a relatively clear self-consciousness as unbelievers.

Two additional problems are connected with this category. First,
there is the problem of family consistency. Whereas it was hardly
possible for a person belonging to the other two categories to
marry someone declaring him- or herself a believer, in this case it
is possible, provided that both parties are tolerant enough. The
second problem is of a political character. The political options
of members of this category may be different, but others identify
them, very often unfairly, with supporters of the Communist régime.
Our fourth category could be labelled opportunistic unbelievers.
This category is quite large and constitutes the vast majority of
the whole category of unbelievers in Poland. Declaring themselves
to be unbelievers, they behave none the less like Catholics. They
are interested, though not necessarily very profoundly, in religion
and its cultural, social and political functions in contemporary
Poland. Under pressure from their family and social milieu they
marry in church and baptize their children. When children go to
school, these parents also send them to the religious classes in
church. Three types of justification for this behaviour are
presented particularly willingly: a) that children should know
everything, including the religious traditions of the nation; b)
that it is a precaution against alienation within the class group;
and c) that it is a precaution against harassment on the part of
priest-ridden public opinion. This kind of unbeliever observes
Christmas, Easter etc. in a religious way. Socially, they meet
people of different orientations, and again, the fact that they
declare themselves unbelievers does not determine their interaction
and communication with other people.

Family consistency and political context are quite significant
for this category too. It very often happens that one spouse is
an unbeliever while the other is   religious or ambivalent yet
under the strong influence of Catholic relatives or social milieu.
The usual way of accommodation in Poland is for the unbeliever to
give up his or her values or at least preferred behaviour and to
conform to the customs of the stronger party, which is backed by a
powerful church organization and national tradition. The second
problem is political choice, which is not obvious at all. We find
in this category some people who sympathize with the political
opposition and engage in religious activities only to show that
they prefer the Catholic Church to the ruling party. This kind of
behaviour has become particularly visible since 1980 and has become
the source of many jokes. We also find in this category some people
who are not interested in politics, though others are Party activ-
ists. They may criticize church and religion in public and in
private, but under the influence of their wives and parents - and
'just in case' - they marry in church, accept the religious educa-
tion of their children etc. Some of them marry in church not in
the town or city where they live but elsewhere, sometimes quite far
away. In this way their career is not endangered, and the church
is also satisfied. This kind of behaviour is also the source of
many jokes.

Conclusions

The possibility of classifying unbelievers into four types, and the discussion offered above, indicate that the boundaries of this aggregate are not clear, that they determine social interaction and communication to a very limited degree, and that it is unlikely that this Polish minority population will transform itself into a group of a quasi-ethnic character, with explicit, manifest interests and group identity. It seems to me that sociologists and anthropologists are right when they say that what really count are not convictions, beliefs and values in themselves, but rather those which are or can become translated into social actions that confirm them. The most important question is, therefore, why this kind of activity does not occur and why it probably will not occur in Poland in the immediate future. Following Dahrendorf, we might say that what is lacking in the present case are the political conditions of group organization (1972: 186-7).

Processes of secularization will probably continue in Poland. The growth in the proportion of unbelievers in the population may be one of its aspects. This aggregate is growing, if very slowly and not without complications, and is very heterogeneous. Parts of it are under the strong influence of the Communist Party, parts are to some extent - at least in their behaviour - controlled by the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, those who feel endangered by the intolerance of the dominant religious group would probably seek a kind of organization that could defend and represent their interests. The institutional system in Poland is not pluralistic, however. The two actors that dominate the political scene, the Communist Party and the Roman Catholic Church, would strongly oppose any such organization. From the point of view of the Party, such an organization (the Association for Secular Propaganda) already exists, and a new organization out of its control would be intolerable. For the Church, even one is too much.

The democratic transformation of the Polish political system will have to entail the political strengthening of the believing majority. The Party would lose a large part of the political community and would not like to lose another part, one treated by both the Communists and their opponents as legitimately their own. So long as the unbelieving aggregate is politically heterogeneous and the majority intolerant, this aggregate will probably not turn into a social group with a strong group identity manifested in overt activities.

JANUSZ MUCHA

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BECOMING AN 'INSIDE-OUTSIDER'

This essay approaches anthropological fieldwork in terms of
'participant immersion' rather than the more usual 'participant
observation'. Clearly this methodology is not practicable for the
majority of students to imitate, primarily because of limitations
of time and material resources. It demands a considerable commit-
ment of one's self and optimally requires an existing network in
the field that is accessible to, and willing to incorporate, the
researcher.

I have been asked to share my experience because of its differ-
ent perspective on the study and chronicling of cultural and social
history. It seems to me that my long-term immersion in the Kongo
milieu considerably altered my earlier observations. The first
part of the essay will briefly describe my particular field situa-
tion, and my methodology. I will then indicate what to me now
seem to be the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of experi-
ence and type of approach, and what in retrospect has appeared most
useful for me in writing up my fieldwork. Even for those who do
not have the opportunity of remaining or surviving in the field for
so long, some of these reflections may be helpful in suggesting dif-
ferent approaches to complement their own fieldwork. At the end I
will suggest possible ways in which such researchers might tap, at
least vicariously or at second hand, the experience of long-term
residence through persons they might meet in the field. I will

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This essay is based on a paper prepared for the workshop on
'Christianity and Social Change in Africa' convened jointly by
Professor T.O. Ranger and Dr Phyllis Ferguson at St Antony's College,
Oxford on 27th May 1989. It draws on fieldwork carried out by the
author while living in Lower Zaïre between 1980 and 1988.

also point out some sources that might complement observations and inquiries necessarily made within a more limited time-frame.

A Description of One Fieldworker's Experience

My point of insertion in 1980 into the micro-society that I was to study was as a member of a religious congregation already long established in Lower Zaïre. From this perspective, I was received and accepted as an 'insider' (though I was in some respects also regarded as an 'outsider'). When I left the field in 1988, the composition of the Zaïre Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur numbered approximately one hundred sisters: of these, over eighty were Zaïreans (almost all kiKongo-speakers), twelve were Belgians, five Americans, and one Swiss. The first missionaries had arrived in the region in 1894 and since there were no Americans in the group until 1969, the old-timers - both Belgian and Zaïrean - consider the Americans, as recent arrivals, to be in many ways 'outsiders'. According to my own observations and the reports of others, new sisters coming to Zaïre are not normally accepted as full members of the Province until they have served one or two three- or two-year terms. Similarly, in the village the Kongo talk about the importance of 'testing people' (*kutonta muntu*) before trusting them. So on all of these counts, initially I was an 'outsider'. However, as a member of the Congregation myself, from the outset, I was given access to being on the 'inside'.

From the beginning, my intention was to do a field study of the social and cultural history of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Zaïre, particularly of how the African members were reconstructing the Catholic Sisterhood out of their experience as Kongo women. It was for this reason that I had been invited to go to Zaïre by the Provincial Superior, Sister Mbwanga. Since it had been decided that I would spend at least three years in the Province, she accepted my request to begin by simply living in a community with the sisters and serving in a school as most of them do. For the next five years I worked in rural secondary schools (three as a teacher, two as a principal) and lived in three different communities - all of them in an area with a radius of about eighty kilometres. During my last five years I was based in the headquarters and novitiate house about fifteen kilometres from Kinshasa while I was editing my notes and drafting an internal report on my findings for the Province itself. During this time I spent several stints of weeks, or even months, back in my earlier field sites to fill in and check data.

Posture of Fieldwork: 'Participant Immersion' (Methodology)

An important factor in my becoming an 'insider' was my insertion
into an existing role as a functioning member of the group in terms
both of living situation and of work. Like other members of the
community I had a full-time job as a teacher. And so, although I
was not 'doing' fieldwork a hundred per cent of my time, through my
work I was given a total field presence - albeit in a specific,
recognized niche. I think many of the sisters were vaguely aware
that I had been invited to Zaïre by the Provincial Superior for a
specific reason, but hardly any seemed consciously to view me as
being engaged in a study of the Province *per se*. I was simply a
sister among sisters and a teacher in the school, which gave me a
rather low-key presence among those with whom I was living and
working. I reinforced this field posture by making an effort not
to be too forward in posing questions, especially initially and in
group settings, and by doing my note-jotting unobserved in my own
room.

Earlier in this century, the Lower Zaïre was closely studied
by the Jesuit missionary ethnographer Joseph van Wing. Belgian
colonial ethnographers also examined facets of the *coutume indigène*
in the interests of establishing a form of indirect rule. Whereas
the Kongo people will sometimes refer to the explanations of these
writers about their customs, they have come to associate anthropo-
logists with persons who are interested in their lives for ulterior
motives. They still enjoy recounting how they successfully fooled
colonial ethnographers and administrators in order to mislead them
with regard to the character and functioning of Kongo chiefship.
Needless to say, I was not too eager to put myself forward as an
anthropologist, but was quite happy to be related to in the more
common role of a *maseri* (from French *ma soeur*) and of a teacher.
Clearly, this defined and limited the 'slice of life' to which I
was exposed, as I will discuss in the following section. None the
less, through these roles I was able to slip into an existing local
niche that in my own case was very congruent to my interests. It
gave me an opportunity to 'eavesdrop' on a wide range of relevant
and revealing settings. This type of unobtrusive presence facilit-
ates a greater 'contextualization' of information and data, it
seems to me, than collecting   through the mediation of an inform-
ant. Without a doubt, it is far more time-consuming and circum-
stantial. Obviously, in a long-term field experience this is not
so much a problem or concern as for the researcher who must work
under more limited conditions.

Assessment of Experience and Methodology

For the fieldworker there are considerable advantages, but also
problems and limitations, in experiencing long-term 'participant
immersion'. I will first explore how the posture may limit the

researcher's mobility and access to information in the field, and
then how it may make facets of writing up the material more
difficult.

One of the most obvious limitations is the fact that the re-
searcher becomes associated with a given role. As a result, his or
her field of vision and experience may become very much confined to
only that particular role. Further, in my own case I had to recog-
nize that pursuing certain questions too overtly would have jeopard-
ized my relationship with my sisters, and with the people as a
teacher. Because of the people's earlier experience with mission-
aries and colonial ethnographers, there were domains that they, for
their part, would have judged out of bounds for me to explore too
far. Two examples will serve as illustration here: 1) the relation-
ship of the people to the ancestors, which the missionaries had
first considered idolatrous; and 2) the role and function of the
female counterpart of the chief, the *ndona nkento*, whom they viewed
as a *nganga* (diviner, healer). These were consequently rather
delicate areas to investigate for any expatriate, but even more so
for me since I was clearly associated with the Mission. I could
pursue them only gently and cautiously. Both questions, which
were of great interest to me, I was eventually able to explore in-
formally with village friends who trusted me. In those cases, I
felt obliged not to show to others either my interests or even my
partial knowledge.

The researcher has to deal with another set of problems on re-
turn from a long-term field stay. Such an 'immersion' experience
tends with time to render so many of one's observations banal.
With this goes the related problem of retracing and unpacking what
have become almost 'second nature' understandings. After a while,
the researcher may as easily reply to questions with 'That's simply
the way it is' as informants often do. For myself, I am grateful
that I paid so much attention in the early part of my field stay to
description and to noting how I myself was reacting to the new
environment and what seemed to puzzle me. By choice, from the very
beginning I did not record my more 'objective' descriptions of
events and how I was 'subjectively' reacting to them in separate
places. Instead I clearly indicated these different types of entry
by codes. This method later helped me to 'track' the evolution of
my understandings and to identify more important sources of
clarification.

As for all field researchers, there remains always the chal-
lenge of translation. I am certainly aware that I can too readily
take for granted the context from which I am translating. In this
case also, my earlier field notes are of more help to me than my
subsequent ones. My later observations, however, had more depth in
analysis and are more useful in relating parts to the whole. Becom-
ing fluent in a given social context is similar to learning another
language. In the very beginning the student is not only aware of a
new vocabulary, she or he is very often baffled at the great differ-
ences in thought pattern and grammatical structures. Gradually the
person begins to think in the new language.

The longer one lives in another environment the less one will
even unconsciously be translating the once new social milieu back

into terms that were meaningful - and more appropriate - to her or his 'home environment'. The new reality begins to speak on its own terms. Even short-term fieldworkers know how difficult it can be on their return to find the vocabulary to translate words for very simple things and objects, such as local taxis, foods, or everyday expressions. One's removal from one's own former milieu does make translation difficult, although eventually it gives a certain freshness to the translated text.

In the field, many of these difficulties are reduced by periodically distancing oneself from the immediate local setting of insertion by changing milieux. This is true both over time and in space: I personally found it immensely helpful to let my field notes 'age' before re-reading them. On occasion I was also able to distance myself from the immediate situation vicariously. After several years in Zaïre, I twice lived in community with a sister who was a 'newcomer' from the United States. Watching and hearing her talk about her experience helped me step out of my 'immersion' and see the local social environment again from without.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of a long-term field experience is that one becomes very much identified with the situation and the persons among whom one has lived. As a result, it seemingly becomes increasingly hard to generalize because the researcher has come to know at close hand so many specific cases and exceptions. On the other hand, the breadth of experience sometimes allows a sharper perception of the degree to which one may generalize by distinguishing which areas and questions seem to be more idiosyncratic to individuals.

For me personally as a member of the same religious congregation as the sisters whom I was studying at the request of my superiors, there is the added problem of my on-going relationship with my colleagues. This was delicate for me both in the field and on my return. My first writing up of material was, in fact, for internal circulation among the sisters themselves. Redrafting my research now for the academic community has not constrained me in the same way, but this is still a consideration. Not unrelated to this question is the important concern for all fieldworkers of respecting confidentiality.

I turn now to the advantages of a lengthy 'participant immersion'. Reflecting on my own experience, the longer I was in the field the more I seemed to have a 'sixth sense' for predicting behaviour and reactions. As a result, I could more easily flow with situations and knew where to look for the 'action'. This allowed people who were around me to become less conscious of me, since I could follow what was unfolding with little prompting. In a way this seemed to render me less visible.

By virtue of the fact that I was a recognized member of a local group and was serving in a fairly common role, I certainly had ease of access to a wide range of situations where I could simply be present without causing any concern or comment. With time, naturally, as my web of relationships expanded, the level of trust that I could enjoy also increased. I could then pursue questions informally and explore matters without people feeling I was intruding or being threatening. This was particularly valuable in helping me get out

of the real messes that I easily fell into often enough. As most
field researchers quickly find out, mistakes can be extremely en-
lightening experiences, albeit painful and awkward. One small ex-
ample of this was how my mispronunciation of the French word for
ant, *fourmi*, got me into a rather lengthy discussion of swear-words
in the local language. The way in which I had said the word was,
in fact, a very impolite and most insulting expression for me to be
using among kiKongo-speakers.

Living over a period of time in a field situation also pro-
vides ample opportunity to test out emerging insights by wide and
varied sampling. I always had more confidence in understandings
which were borne out in several conversations than ones which were
derived from discussion with a single informant. This, in my view,
is one of the greatest advantages of this type of fieldwork. The
researcher does not have to become so dependent on only a few in-
formants, which may easily make one more susceptible to individual
bias.

Certainly, the greatest advantage of the 'inside-outsider' is
the facility of 'privileged eavesdropping', that is, of unobtrusive-
ly just being around. In writing up my research now, it is this
that I value most. My experience of 'participant immersion' gave
me the opportunity to listen in on conversations in which people
were 'explaining themselves to themselves'. When a person comes to
be taken for granted, others feel quite comfortable in simply car-
rying on in their presence. Very often, the most illuminating ex-
periences for me were literally hearing what I was seeing and often
puzzling about being spoken of by Kongo among themselves, using
their own metaphors. I am sure that often, the language had in fact
passed me by or been around me many times before. The time factor
greatly helped me register what was being communicated on its own
terms, since I gradually became more conversant with the social
environment, and with how different facets of life were socially
perceived. The importance of this point leads me to cite a few
examples.

Overhearing the conversation of a mother and her small child
on the road in Lemfu revealed to me that the population regarded
the sisters much more in terms of maternity than in terms of the
idea of sisterhood more usual in the West. The woman, who was quite
unaware even of my following her on the road, explained to her son:
'The sisters (*bamama bamaseri*) are mothers, but not like I am for
you. They are mothers of us all.'

Whenever strained relations developed between Zaïre and
Belgium, the sisters - as also the villagers - would talk about the
matter thus: 'Our uncles are disputing again, but when the heat
settles down they will arrange their difficulties. Just be patient
and don't add wood to the fire.' This explanation was given to calm
down a visitor who was anxious about the cancellation of her flight
to Brussels (at the time Zaïre had grounded Sabena's plane in
Kinshasa, since Belgium had impounded an Air Zaïre one in Brussels).

The sisters would periodically remark: 'One's mother always re-
mains one's mother.' This was particularly so when a sister was de-
scribing her mother's need for hospitalization or even home repairs.
Eventually I came to understand this as meaning that a person's

obligations to her family were permanent.

A large, overarching metaphor that englobed the sisters' under-
standing of their relationships to one another in the community was
revealed by the way in which kinship terminology was adapted differ-
ently for use within the group (addressing one another as *yaya*,
'elder sister') and when speaking of or to one another outside the
community group (referring to or addressing each other as *mama*,
'mother').

It seems to me that the listening in on how people explain
themselves to one another is particularly valuable in identifying
significant shifts of meaning and understanding in times of social
change. Such conversations, as most effective modes of communica-
tion, are a medium for moving from the known to the unknown. They
involve a translation of experience.

*Tapping 'Inside-Outsiders' as a Way In
for Shorter-Term Researchers*

As stated at the beginning of this essay, very few field researchers
have the possibility of long-term presence on the ground. Most must
adjust to the exigencies of coping with a more limited period in the
field than that described here. Anthropologists may find in their
locales other long-term expatriate residents apart from mission-
aries, such as traders and teachers. My specific intention in this
discussion is to point out the possibilities for drawing on the ex-
perience of the former, and suggest how mission sources might be
tapped for cultural and social history. As with any other inform-
ants and sources, the researcher will have to weigh the data re-
ceived in terms of other inputs and observations.

Many religious congregations require every house to keep what
in our tradition we term 'annals', which contain notes on all the
significant (and often insignificant) happenings: detailing activ-
ities, major events, minor crises, the comings and goings of mem-
bers, and so on. They are a 'house log'. Depending on who is the
responsible scribe, this type of record may include quite valuable
material and elaborations not only of events, but of the involved
parties' view of them as well.

I would encourage students to exploit missionary diaries when
they exist and are accessible. Understandably, these are not always
available. My impression is that few religious communities, at
least amongst Catholic congregations, are aware of the value of pre-
serving this kind of day-to-day account, which is usually recorded
from a highly personal point of view. Often, however, the corres-
pondence of missionaries, particularly with their religious super-
iors, may be found in the archives of congregations. These letters
can be a valuable source of information on local customs and events
of the time, missionary attitudes and practices, and their relation-
ships with local people and other expatriate groups. Some religious
orders publish magazines and newsletters to keep their benefactors
and other parts of the order informed of their work. The quality

of and detail in this type of publication naturally vary greatly.

My own work in the archives of the Congregation's Mother House in Namur, Belgium, was a very helpful complement to my fieldwork. As an illustration, the preserved correspondence of the sisters and the copies of house annals provided me with a wealth of information on a wide range of topics, such as the devastation of Lower Congo caused by an epidemic of African sleeping sickness at the turn of the century, and how the local population interpreted this catastrophe; the attitudes of Kongo chiefs and villagers towards the missionaries; copious descriptions of houses and the lay-out of villages, of local crafts, and of earlier funeral practices and rites; evidence of missionary attitudes towards the local people and their philosophy of work; and useful statistics on the missions, the incidence of disease, and school attendance. With this material were considerable contemporary photographic records, and some local news clippings.

The locally held archives of missions and religious houses - whether of missionaries or local congregations - might additionally include internal communications between communities, the correspondence and directives of superiors, reports of meetings, newsletters, and jubilee and anniversary programmes. The latter often include historical résumés and speeches with reminiscences. Another source that might help illuminate the question of local metaphors are the word-lists composed by or for newcomers and later revised in the light of their experiences. All of these might serve as ways to tap the experience and memories of the 'old-timers'. For some types of research, mission dispensary records might be a valuable source for much useful information on birth and mortality rates, population density, birth control, the incidence of disease, treatments, and other vital statistics.

If a researcher does have the occasion to enjoy the hospitality of a mission, a browsing of reading material on the bookshelves might prove interesting. For those interested in the evolution of missionary attitudes, such material can be quite illuminating.

A Tentative Conclusion

At the risk of undermining the credibility of all that I have said, I will now summarize what I see was the value for me personally of living for eight years in the field. At the end of my first three years, I had come to be quite comfortable with the predictability of the social environment in which I was living. This was borne out when, in that year, I went to live in a different community about sixty kilometres distant (but 120 by road). After a further year, I began to be more attuned to the shifting contexts and levels of meaning. Only at the beginning of my fifth year in Zaïre did I read through all my notebooks, classifying them and identifying both emerging foci for writing and obvious lacunae. As I then started to tackle the material and tried to make sense of it, I realized how very partial my understanding was. The more I wrote and then
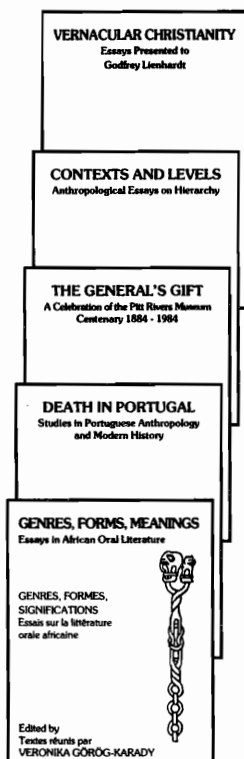
returned to my earlier field sites the more I became aware of the
fact that there are no simple, singular explanations of social ex-
perience - be it another's, or our own. Rather, it seems that
there are whole ranges of meanings, and veritable constellations of
understandings - all of which contribute to illuminating different
facets of experience. The emphases of these different explanations
can change frequently and significantly. Events, personalities,
conflicts, crises may occasion a burst of insight and create a
myriad of refractions of great brilliance: but these are always
partial, even as our efforts to capture them are no more than
approximations.

The longer one remains in a given context the more aware one
may become of these multiple dimensions - sometimes, but not always,
simultaneously. And so, it seems to me, the more I come to know
the less I think I understand. But at least the pieces do seem to
hang together better on their own terms. The question remains,
how to translate the patterns that emerge?

JOAN F. BURKE

JASO

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THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF AESTHETICS
AND THE DANGERS OF 'MAQUETCENTRISM'

The anthropology of aesthetics can boast only a limited literature.[1]
With the publication in 1986 of *The Aesthetic Experience* Jacques
Maquet could justifiably claim to be the author of the only two books
on the subject. While there are many books devoted to the anthro-
pology of art, and others to the study of particular aesthetic sys-
tems, Maquet's *The Aesthetic Experience* and his earlier *Introduction
to Aesthetic Anthropology* (1979 [1971]) are the only ones I know of
devoted to the general topic of the anthropology of aesthetics - or,
as Maquet prefers to call it, aesthetic anthropology.[2]

I should like to thank Anthony Shelton for his helpful comments on
an earlier draft of this essay. Except where otherwise specified,
page references are to *The Aesthetic Experience* (Maquet 1986).

[1] This is not the place to give an account of the literature that
does exist; Flores Fratto 1985 provides an excellent guide.

[2] 'Aesthetic anthropology' does not trip off the tongue as easily
as 'economic anthropology' or 'political anthropology' (though it
doesn't sound as odd as 'religious anthropology' or 'familial and
marital anthropology'). Tom Phillips remarks (1986) that 'aesthetic
anthropology' leads one 'to expect a field-worker sporting a green
carnation or an aesthete wearing boots'. Flores Fratto (1985: 38
n.2) takes exception not only to 'aesthetic anthropology' but also
to 'economic anthropology', 'political anthropology' etc, preferring
rather to speak of the anthropology of aesthetics, anthropology of
economics etc. I suppose it does not matter much, though it can be
said in favour of 'aesthetic anthropology' that as Maquet is the
only writer to have used the term so far it might become associated

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The Aesthetic Experience has now appeared in paperback, this presumably reflecting its success to date and/or its anticipated success at a paperback price. This success, whether actual or anticipated, contrasts markedly with the lack of critical attention the book has received in anthropological journals.[3] However, as a large-format, lavishly (but only in black-and-white) illustrated volume, printed on glossy paper, and published by a leading American publisher, it has attracted considerable attention in non-anthropological periodicals. In Britain it has been reviewed in a leading literary journal, the *Times Literary Supplement* (Phillips 1986), a leading philosophy journal, the *British Journal of Aesthetics* (Crowther 1987), and a leading political weekly, the *New Statesman* (Spurling 1986).[4] While mixed, these reviews are united by an assumption that the book, and Maquet himself, are to be taken as foremost and representative examples of the subject and its practitioners. Phillips comments in the *TLS* that aesthetic anthropologists 'are a tiny tribe, probably as yet no larger than would fill a modest conference hall' and that 'Jacques Maquet is one of the discipline's leading figures and has written the standard introductory work on the subject'. Crowther comments, in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, that Maquet might be 'just the person' to inaugurate a collaborative project between anthropologists and philosophers' (1987: 376), while Spurling in the *New Statesman* remarks that *The Aesthetic Experience* 'should become a classic'.

So here we have the remarkable situation of a book on aesthetics by an anthropologist receiving substantial attention in circles well beyond the anthropological, and yet seemingly ignored by the anthropological journals. This may be because the anthropology of

with his particular brand of the anthropology of aesthetics, thus usefully distinguishing his approach from the mainstream.

[3] As it happens, the *Introduction* also seems to have received scant attention. The only review of it I have been able to find was in the pages of this Journal (Bowman 1980). Apart from that *JASO* review the most extended comment seems to have been in Toni Flores Fratto's two essays reviewing and defining the anthropology of aesthetics (1978: 130-1; 1985: 27-8). There are occasional references in the literature, but the *Introduction* does not seem to have been widely used. This must be due in part to its having been published, in both editions, in rather obscure series (see the entries in the list of references). Whatever the case, it is clear that the *Introduction* is not, *pace* Phillips (1986), 'the standard introductory work in the subject'.

[4] In the United States of America it has been reviewed, among other places, in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (Boucouvalas 1986), the *Library Journal* (Lambrecht 1986), *Leonardo* (Shields 1987), as well as in *American Anthropologist* (Johnson 1987) and the quasi-anthropological *African Arts* (Stevens 1986). In light of the negative nature of the present essay, I should perhaps stress that the majority of these 'American' reviews are generally positive, as is Spurling's in the *New Statesman*.

aesthetics - and the anthropology of art - are still considered marginal to the discipline as a whole. Or it may be because anthropologists do not consider it to be a book worthy of attention. Whatever the case, it is surely important that such a rare attempt by an anthropologist to deal at length with the topic of aesthetics should be subject to critical comment - if only to help counteract the danger that *The Aesthetic Experience* might be perceived by the general reader of the *TLS* and the *New Statesman*, the philosophical reader of the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, and perhaps even by the non-specialist anthropologist, as representative of what anthropology has to say about aesthetics.

I shall try to give my view of Maquet's 'look at the visual arts' by presenting an account of how he proceeds in constructing his account of *The Aesthetic Experience*, by criticising his procedure, and finally by considering the book in relation to the anthropology of aesthetics and of art in general.[5] Unfortunately, it is difficult to credit *The Aesthetic Experience* with a coherent argument. I freely admit to having failed here to present a fully convincing account of the argument of the book. I should maintain, however, that this is not all my fault - it is also Maquet's.[6] I begin, though, with some introductory references to Maquet's *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology*, of which *The Aesthetic Experience* might fairly be described as an extended and expanded version.

Maquet's Procedure

Maquet's *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology* made a potentially very valuable contribution to the anthropological study of aesthetic phenomena by dismissing the anthropology of art as a valid enterprise and arguing instead for an aesthetic anthropology or an anthropology of aesthetics. Maquet argued that 'focused on the exclusive function of display, granting a privileged status to representation, the notion of art is too narrowly ethnocentric to

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[5] I shall only be concerned here with the contribution of *The Aesthetic Experience* to the anthropology of aesthetics and art. Much of the book is taken up with detailed accounts of Maquet's own experiences (which he universalizes) of looking at art. Others seem to have found these of value - Crowther (1987: 376) speaks of Maquet's 'great sensitivity to art', and Phillips (1986) speaks of the book as 'stimulating' in this aspect - but I shall not be concerned with it as a 'how-to-look-at-art' book.

[6] I am encouraged in this view by Phillips' comment (1986) that the book has 'no identifiable continuous thesis' and by Crowther's comment (1987: 375) that the book is 'bedevilled by an extraordinary degree of philosophical naivety, which leaves many difficulties unnoticed and therefore unanswered'.

define a cross-cultural field of study. There cannot be an anthro-
pology of art' (1979: 45). Maquet's point here is, I think, groun-
ded in the practicalities of the matter. In whichever ways we
attempt to define 'art' to make it valid cross-culturally, the
notion of display and the centrality of representation to what we
take to be art will be there in the background dogging our steps,
as, indeed, will the notion that the visual arts - in particular,
the fine arts of painting and sculpture - are what we *really* mean
by art. 'Aesthetics', however, offers us a cross-culturally valid
field of enquiry which partially subsumes 'art' without detracting
from the latter's historical and cultural specificity.

Rather than continuing to search for universally valid defini-
tions of art, we can just stop. Freed from the difficulty of say-
ing of the material products of another culture (even before we
start to do anything more interesting with them) how they are and
are not 'art', it should be easier to treat them in their own terms.
This, if accepted, would not necessarily mean that the word 'art'
would disappear from anthropological discourse altogether; we should
still tend to refer to non-Western (and Western) material products
which approximate in one way or another what we in the West call art
as 'art' - it is just that we would not necessarily mean much by it.

Art, then, will be subsumed under 'Aesthetics' in a new aesthet-
ic anthropology or anthropology of aesthetics: 'art phenomena are
included in the broader and more universal category of aesthetic
phenomena' (ibid.). What exactly Maquet means by 'aesthetics' will,
I hope, emerge as this discussion progresses.

In some ways Maquet might seem to have moved away from this
position in *The Aesthetic Experience*, for here he is concerned
almost exclusively with art, indeed with the fine visual arts. He
does not, however, disown his earlier position. *The Aesthetic Ex-
perience* should, therefore, be seen as an attempt to discuss the
visual arts from the perspective of aesthetic anthropology. This
is a perfectly legitimate subject for enquiry, though perhaps a
somewhat surprising choice for an author whose earlier book seemed
to deprivilege the arts.

It is more understandable given the second, as I see it,
potentially valuable contribution of the *Introduction*, that is, the
notion of the aesthetic locus. Maquet argued that

> besides being widely expressed in countless objects, the
> visual aesthetic concern of a culture at a certain period
> of time is concentrated, as it were, in certain types of
> artefacts. It does not seem that a society maintains an
> equally intense aesthetic interest in all the things made
> within its borders. There are certain privileged fields
> where awareness and performance are higher, where expect-
> ations and efforts converge. The class or classes of
> objects that are localized in these areas of heightened
> aesthetic consciousness constitute the aesthetic locus of
> a culture (1979: 30).

This might seem obvious, but it does not seem to have been generally
recognized. By making the aesthetic locus (or loci) of a culture

the centre of our aesthetic analyses, we avoid the problem of look-
ing for 'art' or discussing whether what we are looking at is or is
not 'art'. For example, in studying the aesthetics of the cattle-
keeping peoples of the Southern Sudan and East Africa we might,
following the interests of the people themselves, concentrate on
cattle, and particularly song- and display-oxen, as one locus and,
perhaps, body decoration as another. The term 'aesthetic locus',
while not necessarily committing us to any particular theoretical
position, provides us with a shorthand way of referring to the
aesthetic importance of particular areas of life in other cultures.
In the West, 'art' is one such locus - though it might well be
argued that it is indeed *only* one such locus and that for the
majority of people art is really unimportant.

   The Aesthetic Experience is divided into three parts, with an
introductory chapter and an appendix. The three parts consider in
order 'Art in Human Experience', 'The Aesthetic Object as Symbolic'
and 'The Aesthetic Object as Cultural'. The first two-thirds of
the book deal with the human universal and only the last third with
the cultural. Maquet opens with some comments on anthropological
evidence, anthropology's holistic and cross-cultural approach, and
his own phenomenological view.

   The discussion of 'Art in Human Experience' begins with art in a
particular everyday reality, that of a contemporary city in the
West. Maquet analyzes what 'art' means to the inhabitants of
contemporary Los Angeles. This involves what art institutions of
various sorts do, and some as yet unidentified quality which makes
some objects 'really' art and others which lack it not 'really'
art. Maquet argues that this quality is the aesthetic quality and
that the aesthetic quality has to do with form. The aesthetic
experience, then, is the experience of form, but this is not the
simple matter it might appear to be. The aesthetic experience
involves 'attentive, nonanalytical and disinterested vision' and is
of the order of meditation and contemplation. It involves the con-
templative mode of consciousness as opposed to the active, cognitive
and affective modes. This mode is perhaps rooted in neurophysio-
logical reality (the right side of the brain) and is universal.
Aesthetic experience is universal. Art is not.

   In Part II, Maquet argues for aesthetic forms having meaning.
These meanings have nothing to do with representation or what the
forms may refer to - meaning is exclusively in the forms. He refers
to the meanings of aesthetic forms as symbolic meanings, that is,
they participate in what they signify. High quality resides in
design, expressivity in the congruence of form and meaning, and
beauty in the excellence of design. Meanings are cross-cultural
and universal. Maquet rejects the model of art as communication
in favour of art as communion: it is not that the artist has a
message to communicate to us, rather we share in the artist's
experience as expressed in the symbolic meaning of the work, which
we apprehend intuitively.

   In Part III, Maquet discusses the cultural component in aesthetic
objects. This, of course, has nothing to do with their meanings,
for these are cross-cultural and universal, but rather with the
influences that other parts of the society have on aesthetic forms

and vice versa. He outlines his own (independently invented) model
of cultural materialism. Societal cultures have three levels, the
productive, the societal and the ideational, and are divided verti-
cally into segments, the aesthetic segment being one of these. Bet-
ween the levels are processes of exclusion and conduction (that is,
the limiting and favouring of potentialities) and between the seg-
ments there are correspondences. Examples of these processes and
correspondences are given. In an appendix Maquet briefly discusses
some quantitative approaches to art within anthropology and reminds
us at the very end that he is a phenomenologist.

I hope that Maquet's procedure is not more confusing in my
presentation of it than it is in itself.

A Critique

It might be wondered how all this hangs together. The simple
answer is that it does not, except in so far as it is all contained
within the pages of a single volume and is presented by a single
author in an admirably clear and lucid style. The 'phenomenology'
is superfluous, only being mentioned at the outset with a 'reminder'
of it at the end. Maquet claims on the last page 'that the phenom-
enological perspective stated at the beginning of the book, though
not mentioned again, was not lost' (p. 251). The only sense in
which this might be true is that Maquet was perhaps continually
aware of it while writing the book - it certainly makes no differ-
ence to his argument and may happily be ignored by the reader.

Phenomenology and cultural materialism are not obvious bed-
fellows. Of course, being a phenomenologist, Maquet only takes
cultural materialism 'as a guiding principle. It is not a philo-
sophic position concerning the ultimate nature of the world; it is
simply a useful theory in research and in the construction of
reality' (p. 198). The only justification Maquet offers for his
adoption of cultural materialism is that he, and some others, have
found it useful. It is, therefore, presumably sufficient of an
argument against it that I, and some different others - for example,
Bowman in his (1980) review of Maquet's *Introduction* - have not.

Cultural materialism, with its 'levels', 'segments', 'processes'
and so on, gives a spuriously scientific quality to anthropological
understanding of social reality; it turns what is often at best
common sense into scientific-seeming hypotheses of superficial
profundity though actual banality. Maquet does not present a
comprehensive and coherent account of aesthetic phenomena in a
single 'societal culture'. Rather, he discusses a number of dis-
connected examples of exclusion, conduction and correspondence. An
example of 'exclusion' is the fact that 'the absence of stone-
cutting techniques for hard stone has prevented the development of
larger scale three-dimensional forms in the forests and savannahs
of sub-Saharan Africa' (p. 193). As for conduction, the cylindrical
timber available to African wood-carvers is said to be conducive to
elongated vertical shapes. These sorts of examples are no more than

common sense. In his BBC talk on 'Aesthetics', Leach (1956: 26)
pointed out that 'people who live in tropical deserts are not like-
ly to be expert wood carvers but they may have an elaborate aesthet-
ic of sand drawing'.[7] I should be surprised if when making this
statement Leach regarded himself as a cultural materialist - or
that he even thought he needed to talk of levels, segments and so
on to make the point.

Examples of correspondence have rather more weight to them, for
example, the correspondence between 'mythical time' conceptions and
shallow-relief wood-carving in some West African cultures, and bet-
ween 'historical time' conceptions and deep-relief carving in some
others (pp. 232-5).[8] But such correspondences are what all anthro-
pologists seek in their studies - they have nothing particularly
to do with cultural materialism, with its emphasis on a causal
productive system.

A more extraordinary part of the book, however, is that dealing
with what Maquet claims are the symbolic meanings of aesthetic
forms. As with his exposition of cultural materialism, we are
treated to an explication of his own particular terminology, this
time of signification - 'referents', 'indicators', 'images' and
'symbols'. We are only concerned with 'symbols' here. They are
defined as 'signs standing for their signifieds by participation';
symbols and their signifieds share connaturality, so that 'undulat-
ing lines engraved on a slab of stone symbolize flowing water as
wavelike patterns appear both in streams and on the stone' (p. 94).
It is in such a way that visual forms are symbols. Perhaps the
best example of what Maquet means can be found in Fagg's well-known
and oft-repeated discussion of the symbolism of exponential curves
and spirals in African art as symbolizing growth and life.[9]

We can best proceed by looking at one of Maquet's examples of

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[7] In this context it is perhaps worth noting that although Leach's
talk was entitled 'Aesthetics', it was in fact about art rather
than aesthetics as such. In this case, as so often, 'aesthetics'
has been used to mean no more than 'talk about art'.

[8] These correspondences were identified by the French poet and
student of African art, Jean Laude (1971 [1966]).

[9] Maquet discusses this (pp. 105-8) in connection with the volutes
on Napoleon's tomb. He well knows that the point was first made by
Fagg in his studies of African art - it is a point which Fagg has
discussed many times (e.g. 1973). In the body of Maquet's text we
are referred to a note to which we turn expecting to find a refer-
ence to Fagg. Instead we are referred to another publication by
Maquet himself. The unsuspecting reader may be led to believe that
this interesting idea about spirals and curves was thought up by
Maquet himself. The fact that in the work of Maquet's to which we
are referred there is a proper reference to Fagg does not excuse
the present omission. This is a particular case of Maquet's gener-
al failure to engage with the anthropological literature.

aesthetic meaning. He discusses Picasso's *Guernica* as follows:

> The configuration of forms...has such expressivity. Angular
> contours, grey monochromatism, three-part composition centred
> in an upward triangle, and lighter shapes on the darker area
> of the ground forcefully convey meaning perceived by this be-
> holder: war is cruel and absurd (p. 128).

Are we really meant to accept this? Is Maquet really saying that
even if he knew nothing about the subject-matter of *Guernica* -
about Spanish history and culture, about Picasso - he would still
apprehend the meaning 'war is cruel and absurd' from the aesthetic
forms alone? And the implication seems to be that any painting (or
visual experience) exhibiting 'angular contours, grey monochromatism,
three-part composition centred in an upward triangle, and lighter
shapes on the darker area of the ground' would convey the same
meaning. Worse still, he insists that such meanings are not
culture-specific but are cross-cultural and universal, and can
therefore be apprehended by anyone from any culture.
    Such aesthetic meanings are not confined to works of art. Natural
phenomena also have such universal meanings in their aesthetic
forms. Even a momentary scene such as a street after an air raid
has an aesthetic meaning. Maquet describes such a scene he witnes-
sed and says: 'everything I saw meant the absurdity and cruelty of
war' (p. 138). Of course, but it did so because it was a result of
the cruelty and absurdity of war, not because, as he claims, of the
particular organization and patterning of light, broken glass and
(dead) bodies. The same scene could have been produced by a peace-
time catastrophe - a gas-main exploding, for example. Would it then
have had the same meaning? The street might have been the head-
quarters of the Gestapo and the dead bodies those of Nazi torturers.
Would it then have meant 'the absurdity and cruelty of war'?
    A few pages later Maquet remarks of African sculpture exhibited
in the West in the early years of this century that it 'has made
some of the basic values of traditional Black Africa appreciated
and respected in the industrialized West' (p. 144). He does not
mean, as one might expect and *might* agree for argument's sake, that
along with the sculpture came informed knowledge of the socio-
cultural background in which the objects were produced, and of
African moral and ethical systems. No, he means that African values
can be apprehended directly by anyone who looks at African sculpture.
He writes: 'a traditional African carving symbolizing sex or death,
joy or fear, friendship or hierarchy may be directly apprehended by
non-African beholders as standing for these ideas' (p. 176). This
will come as quite a surprise to those Africanist anthropologists
and art historians who struggle to gain sufficient knowledge of the
socio-cultural context in which African sculptures are produced in
order to allow approximately valid apprehensions. There are numer-
ous examples of misapprehensions in the literature on African art
which one could cite. One example must suffice.
    In a recent publication of the New York Center for African Art,
William Rubin, Director of the Painting and Sculpture Department of
the New York Museum of Modern Art, discusses his response to a

particularly fine Makonde helmet-mask beautifully illustrated on
the page opposite that from which these remarks are taken. He says
(1987: 52) that it 'is one of the few truly frightening and alien
pieces of art I've ever seen', and goes on: 'it expresses something
about the inherent violence of the human mind'. He locates this
'meaning' in 'the expression of the face and the shape of the head,
and this is reinforced by the scarifications'. And he comments of
the mask's mouth: 'That mouth is something else! It's almost like
an animal mouth.' I am not able to say what precise meaning this
particular mask had for the Makonde who made it, wore it and watch-
ed it perform. What I can say is that the sort of scarification it
depicts and the sharpened teeth of the mouth are in fact part of the
normal appearance of any adult Makonde. Sharpened teeth did not
make them look like animals, and facial scarification certainly has
nothing to do with 'the inherent violence of the human mind' -
rather, it is how ordinary human beings, i.e. Makonde, appear. I
would defy anyone to remain so sure of their first response to such
a mask once they are given even such minimal information about the
culture in which it was produced. Anthropologists know, or should
know, better than anyone the degree to which knowledge of the
socio-cultural background is essential for understanding any art
form.

　　Maquet claims that aesthetic forms have meanings which 'are
clearly in the forms' (p. 156). He recognizes that different
individuals may attribute different meanings to an object but
maintains that these are not projections - they are *all* in the
forms. There seems to me to be an important point here, but it is
not the one Maquet makes.

　　He is constrained by his practice of referring to aesthetic
quality as residing in objects and by starting his analysis with
objects. The objects are, in my view, not themselves aesthetic -
aesthetics resides in the minds of the beholders. It is in this
sense only that objects can be said to have meanings which are
clearly in the forms, for the forms are those the viewer sees. He
or she sees them as there and responds accordingly: so Rubin sees
'violence' where a Makonde sees a fairly naturalistic representation
of a fellow Makonde. No one can regard an object without bringing
to bear the culturally determined aspects of his perception. No
matter how long or deep the contemplation, one sees the object
through cultural eyes. The explication of the differences between
different cultures' ways of seeing should, I suggest, be the primary
task of the anthropology of aesthetics. This is not a new idea.
Mauss (1947: 72) warned the enquirer into aesthetic phenomena:
'Dans cette enquête plus encore dans toute autre, l'observateur
européen se méfiera de ses impressions personnelles. Le total de
la forme doit être analysé par l'indigène avec sons sens visuel.'[10]

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[10] 'In this enquiry more than in any other, the European observer
should mistrust his personal impressions. The total form must be
analyzed by the native with his visual sense' (my translation). I
am grateful to Anthony Shelton for drawing my attention to Mauss's
discussion of aesthetics in the *Manuel* from which this quote comes.

No amount of looking alone will enable one to see an object in the
way a member of another culture does: talk, experience and study
go some way towards achieving this.   Looking alone does little. To
make what is now a familiar reference, no amount of looking will
enable one to appreciate the fifteenth-century Florentine merchants'
way of seeing paintings of the period - Baxandall's account (1974
[1972]; cf. Geertz 1976) goes some way towards enabling us to do
so.   Forge (1970: 286) touches on this point in one of his papers
on the art of the Abelam:

> What do the Abelam see? Quite obviously there can be no
> absolute answer to this question: it is impossible to see
> through the eyes of another man, let alone perceive with
> his brain. Yet if we are to consider the place of art in
> any society...we must beware of assuming that they see what
> we see and vice versa.

Aesthetics, we can agree with Maquet, is about form (including,
of course, colour), but what constitutes form in one culture may not
do so in another. Or to put it more accurately, perhaps, which
forms are preferred, valued, elaborated and developed varies from
culture to culture. Before we do anything else in our aesthetic
anthropology we should attempt to explicate how the people we study
see the world, which forms they prefer, seek out, elaborate and
develop.
   By presenting the way *he* sees the world as a contribution to
aesthetic anthropology, Maquet undermines the anthropological
enterprise. The way Maquet sees the world is of no greater, nor
lesser value, anthropologically speaking, than the way anyone else
does. It is in revealing the cultural bias in the way different
people see the world that anthropology has much to offer - to philo-
sophers,   art historians, art critics and artists. Maquet takes
the way he sees the world for granted and short-circuits the
anthropological effort. The open nature of our contemporary
aesthetic attitude, where we accept as valuable the material
products of other cultures, perhaps underlies Maquet's approach
here. But we should not be fooled by our attitude of openness to
foreign works into thinking that we appreciate the forms - let
alone the meanings - that their producers and original consumers
see in them.
   It is not until page 169 of the 251 pages of *The Aesthetic
Experience* that 'the cultural component' in the analysis of the
aesthetic experience is introduced. For the first two-thirds we
are concerned with the human, that is, the universal component.
Anthropology does sometimes concern itself with the universal -
anthropologists sometimes like to discuss what they know, or what
they think they know, about universal human characteristics. In
doing so, however, they may, to their great advantage over most
other disciplines, seek the universal through their knowledge and
experience of others,   thus avoiding as well as they can the
dangers of ethnocentrism. Maquet takes another course. His dis-
cussion throughout the volume deals almost exclusively with the
art forms of the West and the high civilizations of the East. He

concentrates on Western art and on twentieth-century modern art in particular. He bases his discussion of art in the reality of Western urban life, particularly that of Los Angeles, where he lives. He bases his account of the aesthetic experience in himself: Maquet, resident of Los Angeles, inhabitant of an urban community in a twentieth-century Western nation-state. If the universal exists, it can be found anywhere, but it does help to look beyond your own doorstep. That, rather than this 'Maquetcentrism', is surely the point of anthropology, and of being an anthropologist.

The presuppositions, attitudes and pretensions of twentieth-century man (I use the word advisedly) are made the sounding-board of the universal man and woman. Maquet looks into his own experience to find the universal. Not only, therefore, does he effectively underplay the cultural - that is, the very aspect of art and aesthetics which anthropologists are best equipped to study - he also bases his account of the universal, not on an informed knowledge of other expressions of aesthetic experience, but on his own 'intuition', a concept he seems to regard as unproblematic. The fact that 'intuitions' may be culture-bound does not seem to have occurred to him.

It may be that as human beings we react to certain perceived forms in certain predictable ways. But these forms and our reactions to them are likely to be so general as to tell us little about the meaning of such complex things as works of art.[11] As anthropologists, we are struck by the variety of aesthetic experience and aesthetic expression and the seemingly endless variety of aesthetic forms. We can come to have some understanding of other people's experience of aesthetic forms and some appreciation of them, but this is as a result of experience, discussion and study - not by mere 'intuition'. We can discover little about an art form merely by looking at it.

I remarked earlier that Maquet's dismissal, in the *Introduction*, of the anthropology of art as a valid enterprise was a valuable conribution to the anthropological study of aesthetic phenomena. Having considered the major part of Maquet's *The Aesthetic Experience*, two questions occur. What are the grounds for claiming the aesthetic quality as universal? And why, if Maquet believes this, does he devote *The Aesthetic Experience* to a consideration of the visual arts?

The price we pay for following Maquet's arguments for distinguishing art from aesthetics is that we have to adopt his model of

[11] Even the at times ethnocentric Rudolf Arnheim, who has done much to identify universals in perception and response, stressed the importance of subject-matter; see, for example, his discussion of Cézanne's *Mme Cézanne in a Yellow Chair* (1974 [1954]: 37-41). One might expect an anthropologist to pay at least as much attention as Arnheim to such cultural matters.

four modes of consciousness, with one of these modes defining the
aesthetic experience. Flores Fratto rightly claims (1978: 130-1)
that this is to introduce false and unnecessary distinctions. Con-
templation is a human potential, and we do sometimes, even often,
look at the world (and art) in an attentive, non-analytical, dis-
interested way. But this is only one of the potential ways we have
of looking at the world. Its importance varies from culture to cul-
ture, as Maquet's own discussion of Eastern meditative traditions
makes clear (pp. 51-8). Indeed, Maquet recognizes that the 'con-
templative mode of consciousness' is not so 'noticeable' in the
West. (This might make us wonder, when the contemplative is so
rare, why the West has produced so much art of high aesthetic
quality.) We might, however, ask for some evidence that the
potentiality is actualized elsewhere (Crowther 1987: 375). It is
for Maquet, however, frequent even in everyday life:

> Each time we become aware of the visual quality of a dress
> or a tree, a billboard or a way to walk, the sky at sundown
> or the lights of a city, there is an aesthetic repose of a
> few seconds or a few minutes. During these fleeting encounters
> with things as good to look at, the contemplative mode dominates
> our consciousness (p. 56).

While such moments might seem very different from 'an engrossing
experience of art' (p. 31), they are on a continuum with such an
experience, Maquet argues.
    But recognizing that humans experience things as good to look at
is not obviously a reason for delimiting a field of anthropology to
be concerned with good-to-look-at qualities and experiences. We do
not divide up anthropology by reference to modes of consciousness
(though one can imagine an argument which linked the active mode to
politics and economics, the cognitive mode to religion and philos-
ophy, the affective to kinship and the contemplative to aesthetics).
All areas of socio-cultural life involve acting, thinking, emotion
and contemplation. To divide the study of social life according to
these modes (even if they *could* be shown to be grounded in neuro-
physiological fact and not just analytically distinguishable) would
be to impose a false picture unrelated to our actual experience.
Artists operate in all four modes; so too do viewers. Making one
mode essential is to distort reality. It may well be that residents
of Los Angeles regard aesthetic, that is formal, qualities as
essential to art, but I should be surprised if they do not regard
active skill, rational thought and emotion as essential components
also - and even if they did not, this would only tell us something
about the way residents of Los Angeles regard art and aesthetics,
not necessarily anything about how anthropologists should study
them.
    Moreover, even our experience of natural phenomena such as sun-
sets is not purely aesthetic. We do not appreciate sunsets for
their visual form alone. Associations of romance, the cyclical
nature of time, ends and beginnings, and so on, are also involved.
And these are not the *meaning* of the sunset - they would not neces-
sarily occur to people from other cultures (though some of them

might); they are Western associations which influence our seeing of
the sunset in the same way that our knowledge of art history,
Spanish history, the life and work of Picasso, etc., affect our
experience of *Guernica*.

Concentration on form is essential. It has been undervalued in
anthropological studies of art and aesthetics. Whole works have
been devoted to the artistic products of other cultures without any
discussion of form. But unless we discover what is recognized as
form in another culture we will not even be seeing - though we will
be perceiving - the same objects.

I found it difficult at first to understand why Maquet should dis-
miss the anthropology of art as a valid enterprise in one book,
only to devote a whole other book to looking at the visual arts.
But I think it is now clear why. He removed art from its true loc-
ation in social and political activity, only to re-present it in
its supposed 'essence' - the aesthetic quality - as the highest
form of symbolic expression above and beyond the mundane world of
economics, politics and religion. In *The Aesthetic Experience* he
has, as it were, reprivileged art by making it the epitome of
aesthetic activity and the source of the greatest aesthetic experi-
ence.

As well as privileging art, Maquet, in quite an extraordinary
way, privileges his own views. He signally fails to engage with
the anthropological literature, even where, as in the case of
Fagg's ideas (see note 9, above), he directly draws on other
people's work. He makes some reference to the writings of philo-
sophers and critics where their pronouncements suit his purpose,
but scant reference to the anthropological literature. This pro-
cedure is supposedly justified in this case by the use of the in-
definite article in the book's sub-title: *An Anthropologist Looks
at the Visual Arts*. But his claim that 'situating [his] system in
relation to other [anthropological] perspectives of interpretation
is not necessary. It would even be somewhat presumptuous' (p. xi)
is either disingenuous or a cop-out or both. Fifteen years after
he first developed his basic argument in the *Introduction*, he can
hardly claim that his ideas are still too tentative to engage in
debate with other anthropologists. Phillips comments in his review
(1986) that 'if there is genuine discourse in the world of aesthetic
anthropology Maquet does not demonstrate it'. It would be wrong to
exaggerate the extent of the discourse that does exist, but Maquet
should surely be expected to promote such debate as there is, if
not in *The Aesthetic Experience*, perhaps, at least elsewhere. Ig-
noring other people's work is not helpful.

His procedure is instead to call on everyday reality, intuition,
the 'experts' (i.e. philosophers and critics) without ever subject-
ing his ideas to the sort of critical thought which engagement with
the literature helps the academic writer to achieve. By not engag-
ing in such a debate with other anthropologists Maquet may give
(unintentionally, perhaps) the impression that his is the voice of
aesthetic anthropology. I hope that specialists in other disciplines

and general readers of *The Aesthetic Experience* will take very
seriously the indefinite article of the book's title.

Maquet has presented his ideas. He admits, on the opening page
of *The Aesthetic Experience*, to not knowing what the rest of anth-
ropology will make of them.

JEREMY COOTE

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IMAGE-STYLE ANALYSIS: THE 'PICTWORK'

Introduction

What has satellite technology got to do with anthropology? Unsus-
pecting anthropologists may be forgiven for thinking that their
endeavours are located at a safe distance from the fast-moving
developments of space-age science. This is not, however, the case.
    Ample opportunities are currently being presented by computer
science which offer anthropologists, ethnologists and art histori-
ans scope for extending their researches into what were previously
unachievable areas. Quantitative image-style analysis is one such
area. This is a new field which has only been made possible be-
cause of an already developed technological base and such applica-
tions as satellite remote-sensing and digital image-processing.
    The remote-sensing and image-processing applications with
which we are nowadays most familiar appear in magazines and books
as the satellite pictures which illustrate aspects of the earth's,
and other planets', surfaces, and as the meteorological satellite
pictures associated with televised weather forecasts. For those
unacquainted with the scientific terminology, it should perhaps be
stated at the outset that remote sensing refers both to the equip-
ment - sensing devices and cameras - and to the techniques which
are used to obtain information about surfaces at a distance. This
is usually thought to mean from a sensor on a space platform or
aircraft; however, even an ordinary hand-held camera being used to
photograph a person, wall or object is, in effect, an instance of
remote sensing.
    The complementary technology aligned with remote sensing is
digital image-processing. Here, the remotely-sensed image data,
which were recorded digitally on to computer-readable tape are fed
into image-processing machines where they can be displayed as

images upon a monitor screen. These screened images can then be subjected to a wide range of processor measurement and analysis techniques which deliver information of a quantitative kind. Many new and useful applications have already stemmed from the adroit adaptation of this technology, including medical imaging, forensic fingerprint recognition, signature recognition, factory robotics and industrial quality-control visual systems.

I am currently carrying out technical research upon flat artworks, or pictures, at the Image Processing Centre of the Computer Teaching Centre of the University of Oxford. The conceptual homebase of my research is within social anthropology, and for two closely related reasons: first, image-style analysis is to be conceived of as cross-cultural and comparative in terms of the visual material to be analyzed; and secondly, the field of social anthropology provides those sources of intimate knowledge about diverse cultures which must prove essential at the stage of interpretation of stylistic features and their meanings.

Initially, the technical research required my getting to grips physically with image-processing equipment (the Gemstone Canpus image-processing system) in order to study and assess the uses and techniques of image analysis within the geographical and earth sciences. This survey of existing machinery, methods and software left me assured of the merits of using image processing science for the task of image-style analysis.

Now, in conjunction with my colleague, the statistician Qazi Mazhar Ali of the University of Oxford's Department of Statistics, I am making progress in the programming and testing of specialized image-analysis techniques. These are exclusively measurement-based techniques which relate to a selected and defined number of features common to pictures. The techniques allow for the formal aspects of image styles to be modelled mathematically. What this capability means in practice is that it becomes possible to represent, or plot, the shape of an artist's style from image-processed measurements of artworks; to plot progressively movement or stasis within a style; and to determine theoretically measured distance between styles themselves.

However, before it can be thought worthwhile to embark upon expositions of either image-style analysis or style-modelling techniques, it is necessary to know first, what sorts of visual material there are; and secondly, what sort or sorts we intend to earmark for style analysis. The purpose of this report is to focus on these two prerequisite requirements.

1. *Objects and Surfaces*

Traditionally, we are disposed to consider things as objects, rather than as shapes which just happen to maintain particular types of surface characteristics. It is hard at first to adapt to looking at objects simply as surface types, when it is so much our inclination to conceive of them as solid bodies bearing our

symbolic hierarchies of value and association. Think only of an
apple. Nevertheless, for the practical purposes of image-style
analysis of art works, there are no objects as such, only variously
contrived material surfaces. These surfaces may conceivably be of
any kind of appearance - shiny, dull, rough, smooth, regular, dis-
torted, coloured, toned, transparent and so forth - or any combina-
tion of such appearances. The 'skin only' approach to these is
determined by the fact that the information required for style
analysis is spectral and spatial surface information.

Optical systems and detectors are required to record images of
the electromagnetic radiation which is reflected from art-work sur-
faces. This imitates in principle the procedure whereby satellite
instrumentations record images of the electromagnetic radiation
reflected or emitted from the earth's surface (Curran 1985: 100).
As yet, procedures and conditions for the sensing and recording of
art-work surface information are arbitrary and experimental. Com-
prehensive standards remain to be devised. Even so, it is already
possible to state that the surface sensing of art works for data
relating to style will be confined largely to the visible spectrum,
a likely exception being reserved, however, for the feature of
texture, which may well require resort to another surface-sensing
strategy. Sub-surface sensing techniques, namely X-ray images of
art works, will not be active aspects of the image-style analysis
package.

Altogether, surfaces of art works accessible to vision or to
surface-sensing apparatus will be assessed with image-processing
equipment for features which are tonal, chromatic, spatial and
textural. For the remainder of this report, however, I will con-
centrate, albeit in broad terms, upon the features of texture. It
is, quite simply, the most fundamental aspect of all material sur-
faces, and the feature which I take to be the corner-stone for
setting up an image-processing science which can be put to the
style analysis of art works and artefacts.

We must remember always that the so-called textural 'surfaces'
which we are considering in this image-processing context, are dis-
crete (digital) data of instrumentally-sensed physical surfaces.

2. *The Anthropurgic Surface*

This report is concerned with preparing the ground of essential
definitions, classes and categories which refer to very particular
types of surfaces, and most especially to enable the operation of
sensing and image-processing science for research upon these sur-
faces. The surfaces in question I term 'anthropurgic', which is
used here to mean 'wrought or acted upon by man' (*OED*). If, as is
the case, the intention is to consider for analysis only material
surfaces which have been marked or made by virtue of human act,
this immediately excludes from our sphere the systematic study of
naturally occurring surfaces (by these I mean rock surfaces, tree
bark, leaves etc.). We are left, then, to contemplate

systematically the domains of artefact and art-work surfaces.

Traditional distinctions between art work and artefact, art and craft, are unnecessary for style analysis. Any such distinctions can be set aside as matters for post-analysis discussion. In the meantime, I shall label both art works and artefacts, or the visible man-effected things which these erstwhile terms represented, as anthropurgic visual material.

From this starting-point (see Figure 1), we are free to proceed to regulate any material designated for style analysis along lines which refer always to surface characteristics.

3. *Texture: Macro-, Meso- and Micro-Textures*

It quickly becomes apparent to an observer of material surfaces, that surfaces themselves vary hugely in scale, texture and spatial organization. Satellite remote-sensing science has begun the task of dealing with the textural aspect of surfaces using an approach based on tone measurement of images (Haralick *et al.* 1973; Weska *et al.* 1976; Haralick 1979). In terms of size, terrain and geographical texture, analysis may safely be positioned within a macro-texture range of considerations and measurements - one which is able to fit the Himalayas if necessary.

Reflecting the human scale, anthropurgic visual material, by contrast, demonstrates a relatively modest range of textural proportions, despite the extremes of pyramids and modern sky-scrapers. This material can be designated a meso-texture range.

By considering also the possibilities of micro-texture surface-analysis applications by image processor for microscopic surfaces and membranes, it becomes apparent that a comprehensive set of strategies will eventually accrue for measuring textural properties across all three of the above-mentioned ranges. However, the actual techniques employed for coping with each of the different magnitudes of texture may in due course vary.

4. *Surface-Texture Classes*

It seems to be more or less a demand of the technological structure of sensing and image-processing science that one focuses upon problems of analysis in a global fashion. This is so too for putting into context the textural properties of anthropurgic visual material; for if these properties are to be measured by the technology, we may argue that they must also fit into a general logic of that whole technology. Examination of anthropurgic visual material from the textural aspect will undoubtedly make a contribution to the greater body of image-processing knowledge as regards the meso-range of surface textures.

To accommodate the range of surface textures to be found with

Figure 1. Pictwork Image-Processing Categories, with Typical Examples of Category Surfaces

THE
IMAGE-
PROCESSING
CATEGORIES

SOME TYPICAL EXAMPLES WITHIN
PICTWORK SURFACE CATEGORIES

ANTHRO-
PURGIC
VISUAL
MATERIAL

CLASS 1 - FLAT, APPLIED PIGMENTED-SURFACE MATERIAL

CLASS 2 - FLAT, INDENTED-SURFACE MATERIAL.

CLASS 3 - RELIEF SCULPTURE

CLASS 4 - 3-DIMENSIONAL, FREE-STANDING SCULPTURE

DEFINED AS 'PICTWORK'

A
B
C
D

PICTWORK, CATEGORY A

Manner: Manual

Mode: Polychromatic only

- polychrome oil-paintings
- water-colours

PICTWORK, CATEGORY B

Manner: Manual

Mode: Monochromatic only

sub-category (i) wide-toned
- pencil drawings
- ink and sepia paintings
sub-category (ii) narrow-toned
- calligraphy
- handwritten scripts
- fingerprints

PICTWORK, CATEGORY C

('pseudo-pictwork'):

Manner: Mechanical

Mode: Combined (Monochromatic or Polychromatic)

- postcard illustrations
- screen-prints
- etchings
- photographs

PICTWORK, CATEGORY D

('hybrid pictwork'):

Manner: Manual and Mechanical

Mode: Combined (Monochromatic or Polychromatic)

- some collage types
- batik decoration
- hand-tinted photographs

anthropurgic visual material I have created, at least for the pre-
sent, four separate surface-texture classes. This has not been
decided merely randomly. It is clear that the 'manner' of surface
execution, registered in texture, is a critical stylistic factor
and feature. An individual maker's subtlety of textural perform-
ance requires to be registered within the measurement parameters of
the appropriate class to which his work example fits. Each of
these texturally organized classes is, in effect, a specialized
channel structured to marshal material collocated within similar
extremes of texture - a channel for directing this material towards
further prepared categories of analysis which are governed by pre-
cise, repeatable decision rules (Curran 1985: 243).

   Here we can call upon a helpful analogy, by imagining the
fractionating tower as it is used in the petroleum industry to
separate grades of oil. In our case, each class is separated from
the next by degrees of textural surface development. A smooth-
painted wall surface, for example, demonstrates a much smaller
degree of surface-texture development than does, say, a deeply
carved frieze along a building. Thus, each class is effectively
designed to handle a general grade of texture. It would otherwise
be too cumbersome to handle the complementary measurement data of
surfaces, or to devise coherent database systems, without this
initial streamlining into classes.

   Conveniently, it happens that this system of separate surface-
texture classes allows the element of aesthetic judgement to be
excluded from the style-analysis process, as material is launched
into the processing system entirely upon its measurable merits.
The lines of demarcation, or thresholds, to be drawn between these
classes as yet remain to be quantified. It is enough in this
report to outline them in principle.

4.1 <u>Visual Material, Textural Class 1: Pictwork</u> (Figure 2)

This is the class into which we would normally expect paintings,
drawings, and other flat types of pictures (including photographic
prints and picture reproductions) to be marshalled.

   The word 'pictwork' has been purposely coined to refer to de-
fined types of flat-image surfaces which are anthropurgic. The
word 'pictwork' was derived in order that any culturally rooted
'Is it art or is it craft?' arguments might for purposes of analy-
sis be jettisoned. In short, a decision was made to ensure that
any kind of flat material presented for image-processed style analy-
sis could be treated in an identical fashion according to set sys-
tematic procedures. Thus, with all materials processed, the in-
formation sought would be purely formal/stylistic.

   The class containing pictwork, or flat surface, material con-
stitutes my own chosen area of interest and research. However, as
this report itself demonstrates, in order to achieve a point from
which to be able to define one's object of study, it frequently
happens that a stage for   positioning and defining the object is
a first requirement. A pictwork is to be positioned and defined in
relation to the three visual-material classes which I describe below.

   The pictwork class is notable as one in which textures have
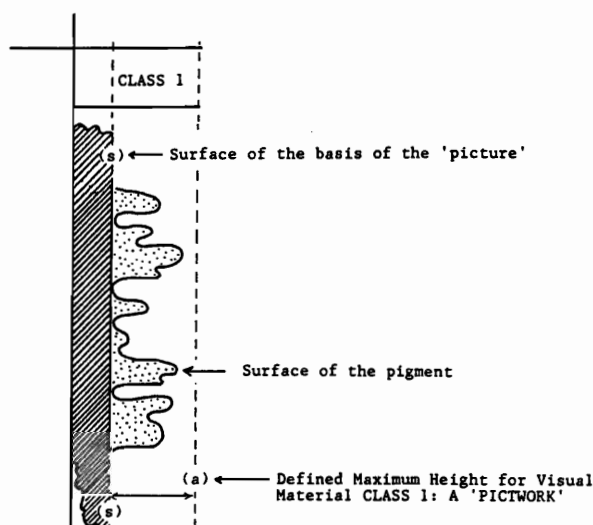
*Figure 2.   Anthropurgic Visual Material, Class 1: Flat,
            Applied-Pigmented Surface Material. A Pictwork.*

been physically applied to flat surfaces. It is visual material
with an artificial, applied surface texture which has average
textural elevations not exceeding the physically defined maximum
(a), measured from (s) which is the lowest point of elevation.
For example, in Figure 2 a section is shown through a piece of
visual material, say, a 'painting'. The shaded part is the basis
(a wall, panel or canvas etc.), The dotted part is the added
material of the 'painting', such as pigment. This has a surface
of varying height above the surface of the basis (s). The pigment
does reach a defined maximum height (a), and so the 'painting' is
defined as a pictwork class 1.

One detail ought perhaps to be clarified. In the world of
actual anthropurgic surfaces, absolute flatness does not often
occur. Nor is a pictwork surface required to be absolutely flat
for defining purposes. The word 'flat' needs, therefore, to be
interpreted broadly in this context, to mean surfaces with overall
presentations which are 'flatish' or planiform. Notwithstanding,
as this research develops, a concept which introduces a theoretic-
ally 'true flat' surface is eventually to be employed as a style
measurement parameter.

4.2 Visual Material, Textural Class 2: Indented-Surface (Figure 3)

Woven surfaces, mosaics, inlay, scored rock, or other incised sur-
faces - these, and many other types including 'intrinsic' moulded
surfaces, will be accounted for in those image-processing categor-
ies which are planned for this class. Unfortunately, space limit-
ations here preclude any developed outline of these categories.
(Only categories associated with class 1 pictwork surfaces can be
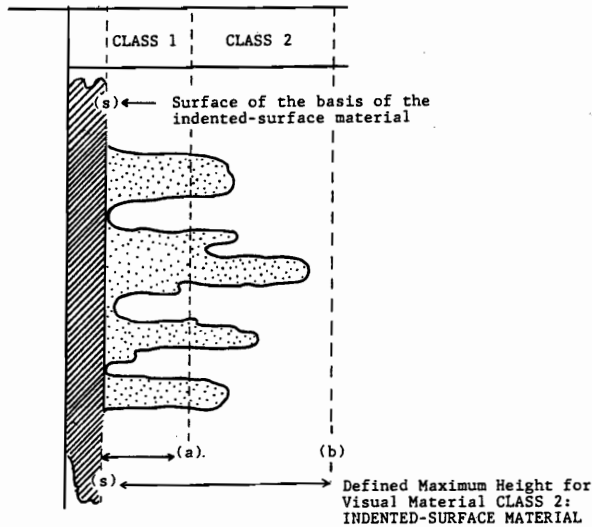
*Figure 3. Anthropurgic Visual Material, Class 2:
Flat, Indented-Surface Material.*

considered at any length in this report.)

'Intrinsic' means coherent; that is, made-up of ready-pre-
pared, conglomerated or modular materials. Such materials may be
variously fitted together, say, as with a loom, or by individually
positioned tessera; or may be poured as with plaster, molten metal
etc.

Class 2 indented-surface material is primarily a class for
intrinsic surfaces as just described, in contrast to pictwork class
1 material which has applied surface pigmented at most to the
relatively shallow thickness of (a). If, however, applied pig-
mented surfaces exceed the class 1 boundary definition of (a), then
even pigmented works become defined as class 2 surface material.
Paint achieves, so to speak, an intrinsic degree of thickness.
Importantly, any wholly intrinsic material such as rock, bronze,
glass, woven-stuff and wood is always to be defined as class 2
material from any elevation from (s) to a defined maximum under
(b).

4.3 Visual Material, Textural Class 3: Relief Sculpture (Figure 4)

Within this class we find surface elevations from basis (s) to any
height above and including (b). An open-ended maximum of (c) is
required to contend with large-scale examples of the class, such
as the colossal Mount Rushmore memorial in the United States of
America. (Note that definition levels (a) and (b) are retained in
this figure, as was (a) in Figure 3. When fixed, these levels
will continue to be used as pegs for internal measurement
calculations.)

CLASS 1 | CLASS 2 | CLASS 3

Relief Sculpture

Defined Maximum Height for
Visual Material CLASS 3:
RELIEF SCULPTURE

(a) (b) (c)
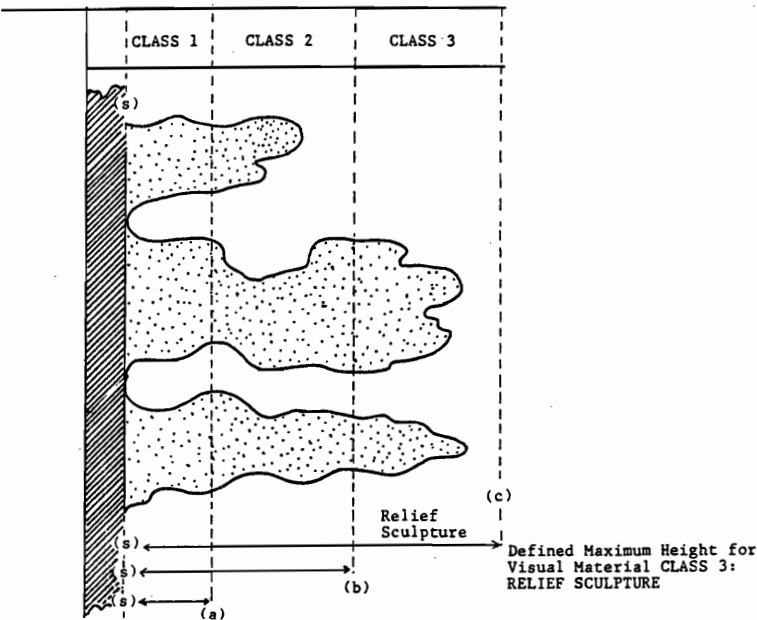
*Figure 4.　Anthropurgic Visual Material, Class 3:
Relief Sculpture*

*Figure 5.　Anthropurgic Visual Material, Class 4:
Three-Dimensional, Free-Standing Sculpture*

CLASS 4

nearest point
on the sculpture

(d)

surface of a reference object,
such as a wall of a gallery, or
the outside of a building or a
landmark

4.4 Visual Material, Textural Class 4: Sculpture (Figure 5)

This material is free-of-the-'reference'-surface, free-standing and three-dimensional. It is at a distance from any selected 'reference' surface (s). Point (d) is reached through space and thus indicates a separate surface. Point (d) is in fact any point upon an example of free-standing visual material.

If a straight line is traced from along the surface of a piece of sculpture at any chosen angle, then that line must join up again with itself at the original point (d) (except in the special case of a Mobius band, when it will join after 2 x 360 degrees). This stipulation confirms that we are dealing with an object in the round.

The image-processing categories which will be associated with this textural class will also include developed categories for stone, wood, bone, metal and ceramic artefacts. Within this class, scope exists for developing a category to cope with the stylistic analysis of exterior-face architecture.

5. *Mixed Forms*

Mixed forms of the four classes also occur. There are painted reliefs and sculptures, and also bejewelled, dressed or otherwise materially encrusted pictwork surfaces. However, as I intend with the remainder of this report to deal with just one class of visual material, namely the pictwork, I shall avoid this general topic. Within the terms of the class 1 pictwork texture definition, certain mixed aspects of pictworks themselves appear, and I will show how they will be considered for image processing.

6. *Four Pictwork Categories*

As I have already remarked, each of the textural classes outlined above will spawn categories. These categories will be designed to make image-processing exploration into style a highly systematic operation.

In Figure 1 we follow a sequence where a flat surfaced type of anthropurgic visual material is defined as a member of textural class 1, a 'pictwork'. Four categories of pictworks are then displayed, and some typical examples of surfaces within each category are indicated. These categories exist to enable compatible surface types to be searched by computers for even the most sensitively tuned style information. A uniform one-category system could never cope with the different kinds of pictwork surfaces, and enable important style-feature transformations to be measured. Each surface effected by a medium, say oil-paint or water-colour, therefore, possesses measurement-parameter requirements dictated by that medium.

Figure 6.   Combined View of Textural Classes

4.4 Visual Material, Textural Class 4: Sculpture (Figure 5)

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Figure 6.   Combined View of Textural Classes

The categories exist mainly for the appropriate tuning of parameters; that is, for example, to allow subtle measurement of both the relatively cumbersome brushstrokes applied to a surface by an artist, and, as sensitively, the especially smooth mechanically-pigmented and coated surfaces of photographs (Gonzales and Wintz 1987: 55).

The arrangement of precedence which I have given the four categories is another concern. The categories have been so arranged to give manual polychrome surfaces first place in the schema. This is an arbitrary decision to give the most formally replete of the wholly manual categories a certain pride of place. It does not affect the fact that in whichever order these categories are ranged, they remain only as working categories.

The four pictwork categories which I list below, each with a short description, are categories of manner and mode. The possible manners of a pictwork surface are: first, the trace of a direct human act, e.g., of pigment placed by hand upon a surface; secondly, the trace of a mechanical or indirect pigmentation to a surface; and thirdly, a trace of combined direct human and indirect mechanical pigmentation to a surface. Henceforth, I will keep to a terminology of three manners, following the above sequence: they will be called *manual*, *mechanical* and *combined*. The possible modes of a pictwork are: first, a surface, by whichever pigment, restricted to a monochromatic (tonal) presentation; or, secondly, a surface, by whatever pigment, of polychromatic presentation. Henceforth, also the terminology will recognize two modes, *monochrome* and *polychrome*.

6.1 Pictwork, Category A (Manner: Manual; Mode: Polychrome)

This is defined as a category for surfaces which have been manually wrought (i.e., 'worked into shape or condition' (*OED*)) in any pigment polychromatically.

Pigments are 'colouring substances' (Levy 1961: 87). Polychrome means many colours or hues; here, however, I define polychrome to mean that there can be a barest minimum of two applied pigment colours or hues on a surface (excluding white, which is to be disregarded as a colour), upward to an unspecified number of hues. A hue is another word for a colour; or, better, it is a colour's family name - red, green, blue, brown etc. I align this term's usage to that of the commonly recognized Munsell colour measurement system. Some typical kinds of pictwork category A surfaces would be oil paintings, water-colour paintings, paintings on bark, tempera paintings, and multi-coloured pastel and/or crayon drawings.

6.2 Pictwork, Category B (Manner: Manual; Mode: Monochrome)

This is defined as a category for surfaces which have been manually wrought in any pigment, monochromatically. Monochrome, as the word suggests, means having only one colour. Many people readily associate the word with black-and-white images; this is due possibly to a familiarity with black-and-white television, photography, or vintage cinema. In the pictwork context, however, the dictionary

sense stands: monochrome pictworks may be of any hue as long as the tints, or light-to-dark degrees of that hue, are all offspring of an original parent hue.

As a general rule for all categories of pictwork, the natural colour, or colours, of raw surfaces (e.g., paper, cave wall, bark, hide, canvas) will be disregarded as elements to be considered in defining categories. Categories will be defined only in respect of a surface's positive reportage of its having been physically added to with pigment hue. Positive additions are called *active elements*. In other words, we are defining categories as pigment-positive surfaces. *Passive elements*, such as natural or unperturbed surface areas associated with original images are, however, to be considered as authentic aspects of style from a statistical point of view. Image-processing computers excel at the separation of these elements into measured amounts, and it is of importance to know just what areal amounts, if any, makers tend to leave untouched in their works. A purposefully primed or tinted canvas would, for example, be an active element, whereas a raw canvas, or a manufactured sheet of drawing paper, of any tint, would qualify as a passive element.

Pictwork category B is for convenience sub-divided into two sub-categories. Sub-category (i) contains monochrome surfaces which display a relatively wide tonal (dark-to-light) spread. Examples of typical pictwork category B(i) surfaces would be grisaille (or monochrome) oil paintings, water-colour paintings, tempera paintings, and so forth, plus tonally graduated drawings. Tonal gradations of drawings would be resultant marks from physical substances including chalk, pencil, silverpoint, sanquine, charcoal, ink etc. Sub-category (ii) contains monochrome surfaces which display a relatively narrow tonal spread. Examples of typical pictwork category B(ii) surfaces would be solid-coloured wholly untoned drawings and paintings; pictograms, hand-written letter characters (calligraphy), alpha-numerical characters, and scripts; human finger, hand, and any direct body-surface prints.

6.3 Pictwork, Category C (The 'Pseudo-Pictwork')

(Manner: Mechanical; Mode: Combined - Monochromatic or Polychromatic)

This is defined as a category for surfaces which have been mechanically produced in any pigment, monochromatically or polychromatically.

To understand what is meant as 'mechanically produced' in a pictwork context, it is necessary to consider the following idea. Manually wrought, as it pertains to pictwork categories A and B above, implies the possibility of a most fully expressed action between the pictwork surface and the executant (artist). With a paint-dipped finger, a loaded brush, a charcoal stick, pencil etc., an executant marks a surface whilst being at the same time fully connected to the characteristics (steady or unsteady as may be) of the body's motor system. The traces left upon a surface will, therefore, in terms of texture, most fully represent the physiologically instigated 'touch' of the executant. Mechanically produced pictwork surfaces, on the other hand, are texturally

delivered by an assortment of possible contrivances - at varying distances, so to speak, from an executant's possible fully expressed action. Airbrush-technique work and computer graphics emerging from a printer, are just two examples of degrees of distancing from direct manual control. There are, of course, many borderline cases between manual or mechanical dominance, which will demand some general ground-rules for processing analysis.

Category C exists, first, to recognize the fact that there are pictwork surface types which are distanced from the category A and B types which account for direct human expressed action, texturally registered. And secondly, very practically, this main category exists to register the ranges of distinctive textural, tonal and spectral effects which are achievable by means of mechanical contrivances. I should stress that the noun 'contrivance' is not used in any pejorative sense; rather, it reflects a revived obsolete sense of the verb 'contrive', which is 'to bring about by ingenuity or skill into a place, position or form' (*OED*); in this case, a thing called a pictwork surface. The setting into place, position or form, of the pictwork surface is accomplished by the 'steadying' means of the contrivance - which is an instrument, or procedure, designed to effect humanly instructed action upon a surface, rather than humanly expressed action. This is the prime distinction.

Examples of typical kinds of pictwork category C surfaces are magazine, book and postcard illustrations; advertising posters, serigraphs (screen prints), lithographs, lino-cuts, wood-block prints, etchings, engravings, aquatints, mezzotints; photographs, daguerrotypes; and also printed text and number systems. A photo-reproduction or print of an original category A pictwork surface, say Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, would thus be termed a pictwork category C, mechanical, polychrome surface. Because category C is the place for photo-reproductions of original category A pictworks, such as the one mentioned, I have termed category C the 'pseudo-pictwork' category. Keeping in mind the idea of a mechanical copy of an original being a 'pseudo' version of the original, will make category C's position in the scheme more readily memorable.

6.4 Pictwork, Category D (The 'Hybrid Pictwork')

(Manner: Manual and Mechanical; Mode: Combined - Monochromatic or Polychromatic)

This is defined as a category for integral surfaces which combine, to any degree or extent, both manually wrought and mechanically produced pigment textures, *i.e.* textures achieved with any pigment, monochromatically or polychromatically.

When a picture is painted or drawing drawn and its author decides subsequently to stick a photograph, or possibly a patch of fancy wallpaper on to the original masterpiece's surface, then a hybrid form of pictwork is created. Likewise, if someone takes a colour photograph of the *Mona Lisa* and - either drawing or painting - adds a moustache, then again a pictwork category D is created. This category especially reflects what we find happening on a world-wide basis where manually wrought and mechanically produced surfaces

are juxtaposed and variously combined to fulfil all manner of needs and objectives, from cultural to commercial. To enable this category to be remembered in the scheme more easily, I have termed it the 'hybrid pictwork' category: this, of course, implies two varieties producing a new combined version.

Examples of typical kinds of pictwork category D surfaces are hand-tinted photographs, hand-tinted mechanically originated prints and engravings; batik fabric decoration, where patterns are drawn on a surface manually and are then dye-coloured mechanically; and some types of collage work.

Let me illustrate some distinctions using this last example. A collage is a picture or visual arrangement made up partially or entirely of pieces of pasted-on paper, material, photographs, illustrations, textured and figured material (O'Dwyer and Le Mage 1950: 32). Thus, a collage arrangement made up from pieces of original painting surfaces would still remain a pictwork, category A surface, assuming, that is, that it keeps within the defined textural threshold; as a collage arrangement made up entirely of mechanically produced pigment surfaces would remain a pictwork category C (pseudo-pictwork) surface. Only when proportions of manual and mechanical surfaces are found on a common surface do we have an actual pictwork category D (hybrid pictwork) surface. If a collage-type of arrangement happens to exceed the pictwork textural definition by having, perhaps, large textural additions affixed to its surface, such as pieces of wood or 'found objects', then, another textural class is entered, and the work must be analyzed using that other class's criteria.

7. *Summary*

In this report I have outlined four texturally based classes for what is generally termed anthropurgic visual material. Each class has its own categories which are designed to relate to the requirements of image-processing technology, for the express purpose of enabling image-style analysis procedures to be developed. These intended procedures are all to be related to instrumentally sensed material surfaces, to texture, tone, colour and spatial features, rather than to any other attributes or qualities possessed by objects.

I have discussed here only one set of categories, those which fall within a single class designated by the overall term 'pictwork'. It is this class and its categories to which my researches are directed. Discussion of the texture-based pictwork concept has been a prerequisite step to making understandable the conceptual foundation of technical papers on image-processing analysis which I hope to publish in due course. I hazard that useful progress in the field of artistic image-style analysis will require the availability of some such categories as these. Only with the aid of

these, or very similar, categories can a statistical approach to the actual physical surfaces which are distinct and measurable aspects of image styles be made to work.

PETER STRONG

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OXFORD RESEARCH IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ABSTRACTS OF THESES IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
FOR WHICH HIGHER DEGREES WERE AWARDED
BY THE UNIVERSITY QF OXFORD IN 1988

1. Krystyna CECH

The Social and Religious Identity of the Tibetan Bonpos, with
Special Reference to a North-West Himalayan Settlement. D.Phil.
(D/84910/89)

This study is largely based on fieldwork carried out in the Tibetan
refugee settlement of Dolanji in the state of Himachel Pradesh,
north-west India. The Tibetans now resident outside Tibet, mostly
in India, number approximately 100,000. They were forced to seek
religious and political asylum after the Chinese takeover of Tibet
in 1959. The settlement of Dolanji was established in 1967. Its
inhabitants, unlike the majority of Tibetans who practise Buddhism,
are followers of the Bon Po religion and are known as Bonpos. The
total number of avowed Bonpos outside Tibet is in the region of
1000 and about half of them are settled in Dolanji.

The thesis examines how Bonpos make sense of their position in Tibetan society. Because they are refugees, the perspective is necessarily diachronic in order to take account of their position in Tibet before 1959 and their present position in India. Accordingly, the thesis is in two parts: Part One, based on interviews with first-generation refugees and Tibetan textual sources, examines aspects of the Bon tradition in Tibet, and Part Two, an ethnographic study of Dolanji, deals with the period of their exile in India.

Part One thus provides the wider historical and cultural background to the discussion in Part Two of Bonpo identification with religious, regional and national aims. An appraisal in Part One of how the Bonpos view the chronological development and geographical extent of their tradition helps to explain why the Buddhist majority was reluctant to recognize the Bonpo contribution to the Tibetan cultural and religious heritage. This hindered the reconstruction of the Bon tradition in India, a matter dealt with in Part Two. A survey of the lay Bonpo communities in Tibet and a description of the head Bonpo monastery there underlines the many similarities between Bon and Buddhism, and this helps to explain the sense of injustice felt by the Bonpos as a result of their exclusion from the main Tibetan tradition. The remainder of Part Two documents the Bonpo struggle for legitimacy and the situation in Dolanji today. It is seen how, as a community, the Bonpos have succeeded in achieving a high degree of cohesion while, at the same time, allowing for the free expression of their differences in social and religious background.

2. David CLEARY

An Anatomy of a Gold Rush: *Garimpagem* in the Brazilian Amazon. D.Phil.

In 1979 the price of gold on the international market soared, and this touched off a gold rush in all of the South American countries which are part of the Amazon basin. However, it was only in Brazil that the Amazon gold rush reached a level comparable to the great nineteenth-century gold rushes: hundreds of thousands of people in the Brazilian Amazon depend upon *garimpagem*, small-scale informal sector mining, for all or part of their livelihoods. They mine about 90% of Brazil's gold, worth over a billion dollars in 1986. This thesis is an examination of that gold rush, looking at its historical roots, its present structure, and its consequences and implications for Amazonian society, mining companies, and the Brazilian state.

Garimpagem in the Brazilian Amazon is seen as essentially an informal economic system, but one which in terms of scale, value of

product and level of investment can stand comparison with major
formal sector industries. The ethnographic core of the thesis,
based on fieldwork in *garimpos* - gold-mining camps - looks in
detail at technologies of gold-mining and social structure and
social relations in the gold rush. This is used as a basis for a
general examination of the implications and consequences of the
gold rush.

The conclusions arrived at are that the gold rush, contrary to
its image as the last resort of the desperate, is a valuable option
for the most disadvantaged sectors of Amazonian society, rural
smallholders and the urban poor. Unlike other Amazonian extractive
activities, the gold rush offers those who enter it considerable
freedom, autonomy and reasonable prospects of upward mobility, and
it can easily be combined with other occupations. While there are
reservations about the implications of the gold rush for the
Amazonian environment and Indian groups, the real victims of the
gold rush are mining companies, not *garimpeiros*.

3. Sara COHEN

Society and Culture in the Making of Rock Music in Merseyside.
D.Phil. (D84915/89)

In Merseyside alone there exist somewhere between one and two
thousand rock bands. Yet despite the large number of such bands,
the ubiquity of the musical styles they produce and the enormity
of the record industry that promotes such styles, the study of rock
music has been slow to emerge in Britain. The literature that is
available is particularly lacking in microsociological analysis and
omits analysis of·the grassroots of that industry - those countless,
as yet unknown bands struggling for success - and the actual process
of music-making by bands. Anthropological literature has rarely
analysed music or popular culture whilst both ethnomusicology and
musicology have tended to avoid forms of popular culture such as
rock.

This thesis is about the interrelationships between art and
society. More specifically, it attempts to explore the relation-
ship between creativity and commerce through description and
analysis of the processes of musical production, promotion and per-
formance by rock bands in Liverpool, and to examine the way in
which this relationship was conceptualized through the music-making
of two particular bands focused upon for analytical and presenta-
tional purposes. In doing so it considers the ways in which both
bands were affected by the commercial environment within which they
operated, as well as by the socio-economic nature of Liverpool it-
self, and demonstrates the way in which both perceived commerce and
women to be a threat to their creativity and solidarity and indeed
their very existence. It argues that in response to this, those

bands expressed notions of purity and impurity in the production, performance and marketing of their music, emphasising in that distinction certain ideals such as those of masculinity, democracy, egalitarianism, honesty, naturalness and cleanliness.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first presents some background material on Liverpool and the rock music 'scene' within it, whilst the second introduces the two bands used as case-studies throughout the thesis and outlines what is involved with the organization and running of such bands. Chapter Three presents description and analysis of public performances by these bands in order to highlight one of the most important attractions and experiences that their music-making offered. Chapter Four examines the social factors involved with the band, while Chapter Five considers the bands' ambition to 'make it' and achieve success on a national level. Chapters Six and Seven focus upon the making of music itself and the band members' underlying aesthetics and conceptualization of music. Chapter Eight considers the relation of women to these bands and their music-making, and focuses upon tensions and contradictions within the band, whilst the conclusion discusses the nature of music-making and analyses the construction and meaning of the purity/impurity dichotomy highlighted and discussed throughout the previous chapters.

4.   Alexander DE WAAL

Understandings of Famine: The Case of Darfur, Sudan 1984-5. D.Phil.

This thesis is an attempt to revise our understanding of the nature of famine, by analysing the famine that struck Darfur, Sudan, during 1984-5. It is argued that the English notion of 'famine' is inappropriate. Since the Malthusian debate, mass starvation unto death has been a conceptual pre-requisite for the definition of 'famine'. This differs from concepts of 'famine' held by those who suffer them. These concepts spring from the experience of famines and an appreciation of how they relate to the normal workings of society. For Darfur, such an analysis involves looking at the operation of the ideals of community and livelihood, and constructing an oral history of famines. The understandings of drought and desertification are analysed. Local explanations for these phenomena are cast in a mixture of moral and empirical idioms. Communities have transformed themselves in the face of these threats. The famine of 1984-5 itself is analysed around the trinity of hunger, destitution and death. Famine victims were concerned primarily to retain the basis of their future livelihood, rather than to minimize the possibility of death. People were not spending available money on available grain; instead they underwent immense planned hardship in order to cultivate and preserve livestock. Even among the most destitute in a famine camp, the long-term aim of re-creat-

ing a functioning social order was followed. Patterns of mortality
are shown to be unrelated to socio-economic variables such as
wealth. Instead they were related to public-health factors, such
as access to clean water. Indigenous and official relief followed
several ideologies. Food aid was regarded as a bonus, and had a
marginal effect on preventing destitution, and probably no effect
on reducing mortality. Two peripheral areas of Darfur suffered
famines with important differences which only partly fit the over-
all pattern, thereby illustrating the limits of the explanatory
model.

5. Roger GOODMAN

A Study of the *Kikokushijo* Phenomenon: Returnee Schoolchildren in
Contemporary Japan. D.Phil. (D/85439/89)

This thesis is an examination of the way in which Japanese school-
children - who, because of one of their parents' work, spent some
time overseas - have been treated on their return to Japan. These
children are known in Japanese as *kikokushijo* or 'returnee children'
and they have been the subject of great interest during the last
decade. Part I of the thesis shows the many ways through which
this interest is expressed. Perhaps this is most significantly
shown through government investment in Japanese schools overseas,
in a system of reception schools (*ukeirekō*) for accepting the chil-
dren on their return to Japan, and a special quota system (*tokubet-
su waku*) for entry into many of the top high schools and universi-
ties in the country. The rationale behind these actions is that
the experience of *kikokushijo* in Japan is generally perceived as
'problematic'. In particular, they are thought to face both edu-
cational and cultural barriers on their return, and *ukeirekō* and
tokubetsu waku provide a system to 'help' overcome these barriers.
This thesis examines many of the assumptions behind these general
perceptions of *kikokushijo* experience, and compares the paradigm
they form with a genre of popular literature in Japan known as
Nihonjinron, or 'Theories of Japaneseness'. The major theme of
this paradigm is that it is inevitable that the *kikokushijo* will
have problems because of the 'special nature' of Japanese society,
which is historically and socially conditioned to be exclusivist
toward outside influences.
    Part II of the thesis is essentially a deconstruction of this
paradigm on several levels. It attacks the argument of historical
conditioning by showing how Japanese society has moved through
many different phases of xenophobia and xenophilia in its history.
It also shows how one particular attitude has never completely pre-
vailed in the society at any one time, and that there has always
been a range of options towards the outside world. It then moves
on to a microanalysis of one particular *ukeirekō* where fieldwork
was carried out and shows how, within this context too, there is a

plurality of views concerning the significance of *kikokushijo*. Moreover, the thesis suggests that the significance of *ukeirekô* can only be understood in the context of the general education system in Japan. Although the academic education they offer differs little from that of mainstream schools in Japan, through the use of special features (ceremonies, dress, language etc.), *ukeirekô* have become a significantly separate system and the returnees within them have been given a special status. In a broader comparative chapter, it is shown how this process has taken place throughout Japan, and shows also that the way returnees are treated in other societies may be an indicator of significant cultural processes. In the penultimate chapter, the significance of the way *kikokushijo* are perceived in Japan is examined in more detail, in particular in relation to an important shift in the national political rhetoric from modernization (*kindaika*) to internationalization (*kokusaika*). It is proposed that due to this political shift, and due to the powerful social position of the parents of *kikokushijo*, the latter may be becoming a new 'élite' in Japanese society. Among other implications of this study is the need for a fundamental rethinking of the definition of minority groups and marginality not only in Japan, but also in a wider context.

6.   Linda HITCHCOX

Vietnamese Refugees in Transit: Process and Change. D.Phil.

This study is largely based upon fieldwork carried out in the refugee camps in Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines. There are approximately 35,000 Vietnamese remaining in the camps of Southeast Asia. They were forced to seek asylum after Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, fell to the communist forces of North Vietnam in April 1975. The camps were established in response to agreements reached in the Geneva Convention, July 1979, whereby the countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia offered temporary protection to refugees until places of permanent resettlement could be found.

More than 600,000 Vietnamese have been resettled in other countries, particularly the United States, Canada, Australia and France. The majority of the refugees have stayed in camps for periods which range from a few months to several years, an experience which was observed to influence the way in which a refugee copes with resettlement. The study examines the processes of administration which redefine the Vietnamese as refugees and finds these definitions to be at variance with the Vietnamese interpretation of themselves as refugees. Because of the implications of this discrepancy, the Vietnamese experience increasing depression and anxiety, despite their involvement in a constant process of strategical manoeuvring and negotiation.

The camp episode is part of a process of change which in this study is explored through the stages of movement from Vietnam to departure to a country of final resettlement. In Chapters One and Two, an appraisal of the cultural and historical background of Vietnam helps to explain the reasons why some Vietnamese have become refugees and demonstrates that escape is achieved by an active process of choice and decision-making. This activity is contrasted first with the experiences of Vietnamese living under the camp institutions, and secondly, with the processes which attempt to re-orientate refugees to a cultural construction of their future country of permanent resettlement.

7.   Tamara KOHN

Seasonality and Identity in a Changing Hebridean Community. D.Phil. (*'Restricted' until 26th January 1994*)

This is a social anthropological study of a small Inner Hebridean island in Scotland, based on resident fieldwork carried out from 1984 to 1987. After an introduction to the physical, social, economic and political landscape of the community, the historical material is reviewed, which shows how many economic innovations of the past have entailed the local incorporation of newcomers into the island fabric. The descendants of some of these incomers have become established in a social and practical sense as 'islanders' today.
    Tourism is the latest manifestation of this process, and one which, like many other aspects of island life, has a marked seasonal dimension. In the winter, a sense of belonging is inextricably linked with shared residence status for island 'locals'. When winter turns to summer, the presence of a large contingent of regular summer visitors affects men's and women's public lives differently. This, it is argued, is due to the community's acceptance and constant incorporation of incomers and even seasonal visitors, and because of the nature of the different spaces which men and women inhabit for their public events.
    Thus identity not only changes through time, but the change of season provides different social and cultural landscapes for the expression of this identity. Visitors of all sorts are included in a continuum of belonging, which suggests that their relations with the host community need not remain static on an individual level, but may alter as some return year after year or move permanently to the island. The processes of seasonal and temporal change described are considered relevant for the study of other small rural communities.

8. Roland LITTLEWOOD

Pathology and Identity: The Genesis of a Millennial Community in
North-East Trinidad. D.Phil. (D/86572/89)

Whilst both psychiatry and comparative sociology have frequently
followed the popular denigration of religious innovation as patho-
logical, they have been reluctant to consider how a separately de-
fined domain of severe psychopathology may on occasion generate a
model for social organization and belief. The situations in which
this may occur are considered, together with the nature of such a
'pathomimesis'. Sabbatai Svi, the historical leader of a Jewish
millennial movement is, considered separately in an Appendix, whilst
the body of the thesis considers Mother Earth, the contemporary
founder of the Trinidadian Earth People.
    The personal history of Mother Earth is placed in the context of
Afro-Caribbean society. The development of her group and the local
response to it are outlined. Popular conceptualizations of sick-
ness and insanity occur within a framework provided by personal
identity with *respectable,* White middle-class values, or with their
complement, *reputation,* located most clearly in the working-class
Black male. Mother Earth's experiences are evaluated according to
the criteria of descriptive psychiatry, and sources for her teaching
are found in Shouter Baptism, the Shango cult and Ras Tafari. There
are parallels with radical Puritanism and the 'Counterculture',
particularly in relation to concepts of women and Nature, divine
leadership, nudity and antinomianism. Her teaching on generation
is related to certain West African themes but primarily to continu-
ing relations between the sexes in the Caribbean as refracted
through her own experience of childbirth and childbearing. The
intellectual innovations suggested by her cosmology and its inver-
sion of dominant values are considered, together with the recruit-
ment, organization and daily life of the Earth People in Hell
Valley.
    Individual experiences may be converted into a shared public
culture by the manipulation of a previously accepted symbolic set;
a simple inversion of dominant values in some area may enable a
more complex conceptualization to be obtained. In particular,
antinomian acts rooted in psychopathology may generate more univer-
sal dispensations out of systems of dual classification.

9. Julie MAKRIS

Agnatic Groups and Spiritual Kinship in a Cretan Village Community.
D.Phil. (*'Restricted' until 26th January 1994*)

This thesis is based on fieldwork carried out over a period of
twenty months in 1977-78 and 1979-80 in a village in south-western
Crete. It is the study of the social organization and religious
life of a community of shepherds and farmers. Emphasis is placed
on the values and institutions of kinship and godparenthood and
their bearing on the relation between religious beliefs and social
structure. Material gathered through participant observation was
supplemented with oral tradition, published sources, unpublished
manuscripts, local newspapers and administrative records, and
records of the Agricultural Bank of Greece.

The community's kinship structure, based on corporate groups of
agnatically related families, contrasts with ethnographic material
presented for Greece and Europe, and is shown to present concomit-
ant consequences in aspects of social life including factions, con-
flict and the bonds of marriage and spiritual kinship. The position
of women is awarded prominence throughout the thesis.

Recent changes in the economy are shown to have influenced
villagers' livelihood, marriage patterns and inheritance system,
all of which are in a state of transition. Demographic factors,
notably depopulation resulting from emigration overseas and migra-
tion to urban centres, are shown to have contributed to these
changes and to be creating new forms of co-operation between family
members and urban and rural areas.

The factors that account for the absence of patronage relations
that have often been reported with respect to spiritual kinship in
Greece and other parts of the world are discussed. The sanctions
created through baptismal sponsorship are analysed in relation to
marriage, and are shown to constitute an important element in social
control. While changes in certain aspects of spiritual kinship re-
flect general changes the community is undergoing, villagers' con-
tinuing observance of local baptismal rites, their choice of spon-
sors and devotion to local saints indicate the strong spiritual
basis of the relationship remains unchanged and that it continues
to provide a strong link to the village for those living outside it.

10. Karen MIDDLETON

Marriages and Funerals: Some Aspects of Karembola Political Symbol-
ism (South Madagascar). D.Phil. (D/77429/89)

The thesis is an enquiry into political symbolism among the Karem-
bola of southern Madagascar. It is based on twenty-two months'

(Nov. 1981 - Sept. 1983) anthropological fieldwork carried out in
the region between Menaranda and Manambovo rivers, south of Beloha.
Following a general ethnographic introduction, the first section
describes two political values: that of sacred efficacy (*asy*) and
that of honour (*heñatse*). These are shown to correspond to differ-
ent types of relationship: those which lie to the 'inside' and
those which lie to 'outside', and between persons of same or other
substance. Karembola values are predominantly agnatic, and, corres-
ponding to this, the political category *ondevo* (vassal, slave) is
represented as the condition of the uxorilocal male. This uxori-
locality is, however, often more symbolic than real, and in sections
two and three I show how it is created between groups through
marriages and funerals. Above all, Karembola society is based upon
an opposition between two types of marriage: father's brother's
daughter marriage, which is the ideal and represents marriage
to the inside or with same substance; and matrilateral cross-
cousin marriage, which is the ideal inverted or 'turned the other
way'. The first is associated with relationships of identity and
equality, and the second with those of hierarchy and difference.
The first chapter in section two shows how Karembola kinship term-
inology oscillates between these two ideas of marriage and
expresses the political values associated with each. The next ex-
plores the values of father's brother's daughter marriage more
closely, while the third chapter in this section examines how
matrilateral cross-cousin marriage interrelates groups in symbolic
asymmetry. A tension is shown to exist between the ideas that
wife-givers 'give life' to their wife-takers and that, in giving
the wife, they 'shame' and 'enslave' them. Wife-takers, in turn,
are of two kinds: those who maintain their autonomy with displays
of wealth and those who acknowledge their indebtedness in becoming
funerary priests. In the last section, the efficacy of the funer-
ary priest is shown to be a parody of the uxorilocal condition,
while being, nonetheless, essential to the maintenance of the
social order. The conclusion is that this is a society in which
the institutions of father's brother's daughter marriage and the
sister's son/wife-taker as funerary priest exist as structural
contraries.

11. Felix PADEL

British Rule and the Konds of Orissa: A Study of Tribal Adminis-
tration and its Legitimating Discourse. D.Phil.

The topic of this thesis is British imposition on a tribal people
of Eastern Central India known to anthropology as the Konds. The
basic purpose is to study the imposition of an administrative
system on a tribe, by contrast to studying 'social change' or
'reaction to conquest', in which the focus would be on the Konds.
I did not do fieldwork in the usual sense, and apart from a small

amount of travelling in Orissa, the main 'field' I researched
consists of the archives of the first thirty years of British
rule, as well as published texts.

As a prelude to studying the administration, Chapter II presents
a detailed historical account of these years (1835 to the 1860s):
the fighting and public executions that took place in two concen-
trated periods (1835-7, 1846-8), and the operations that British
administrators organized to abolish human sacrifice, infanticide
and feuding, in the process of which Konds were forced to accept
British rule.

The third chapter is a study of the administration in various
aspects: the conceptual opposition its members made between Kond
warfare and the war they were engaged in to enforce peace: the use
of punishments and rewards to divide the local population and gain
control over them; the intermediary position of non-tribal
Indians, the local élite as well as Indians in regular British
service; and the way they characterized harsh imposition of author-
ity in terms of Christian benevolence through the concepts of sac-
rifice and saving.

The fourth chapter is a detailed study of human sacrifice: what
it meant to Konds, and to the Hindu élite whom Konds recognized as
their rajas; but also, what it meant to the Britons who set about
stamping it out. The administrators' concepts of saving, sacri-
ficing, and punishment emerge as closely related to their imposing
of British rule on a tribal population.

Chapter V is a study of the Baptist missionaries who went to the
Konds after the Government officials had 'pacified' the Konds.
After a survey of the history of their Mission that extends up to
the period of greatest activity in the 1920s-1960s, we shall anal-
yse the way missionaries and Government officials complemented each
others' activities; missionaries' dualistic conceptual structure
and the key place of the concepts of sin and salvation; and the
authority system which they set up through schools as well as
churches of converts.

Chapter VI is a study of the purpose served for the administra-
tion by anthropological writings, from which we will turn towards
an anthropological study of some of the key values, concepts, and
ways of relating to people implicit in anthropology as it was
practised on the Konds and other Indian tribes in the late nine-
teenth century. Finally, we shall look at how present-day anthro-
pological writing about the Konds and neighbouring tribes relates
to the older British discourse, in particular, how its implicit
evolutionism serves to legitimate changes imposed by administrat-
ors.

12.   Manuchehr SANADJIAN

The Articulation of Luri Society and Economy with the Outside
World: A Growing Paradox in a South-Western Province of Iran.
D.Phil. (*'Restricted' until 1st January 1993*)

The *ilat* and *'ashayiri* groups, of whom the Lurs of Kuhgilueh are
generally regarded a part, are usally seen by outsiders as pastoral
nomads. However, this popular definition of the term tends to mask
their political significance, which varies over time. It is indeed
such significance that renders any such definition of these terms
very hazardous. Instead it is argued that the relationships of
these groups, both among themselves and with outsiders, can be
fruitfully understood when they are seen as occupying a changeable
position in the wider context backed by their fearsome image.
    The Luri *'ashayir*'s position has derived its strength from a
distance from the outside world which has bestowed on this position
permanent exclusion. The continued, distinct existence of the Luri
'ashayir has been geared, historically speaking, to their maintain-
ing a sufficient distance from the outside power with whom they
have otherwise tried to forge a corporate interest. Such a seces-
sion, constantly sought, from within a unity which has been persist-
ently forged, has generated a political dynamism which has relent-
lessly leant its weight on Luri social and economic life. To fort-
ify their negotiable position *vis-à-vis* the outside world, the Lurs
have found themselves compelled to reproduce their material exist-
ence sufficiently far from it in order to perpetuate their external
position. As an alien power they were able to wield some force in
the wider context.
    However, factors which contributed to this exclusion, a non-
fixed relationship with land as their means of production and low
geographical accessibility (geo-political distance), have become
eroded as the Lurs' participation in the wider context has
increased. They increasingly experience this weakness as their
historical image is presently propagated far more than in the past.
Hence the powerlessness of the young Lurs, who join outsiders in
challenging the authority of their traditional leaders, who could
materialize this image most immediately. The young Lurs' power-
lessness against the eroding political and economic forces can even
more strikingly be shown when they use a more economic means, wage-
labouring in the nearby cities, to maintain their increasingly less
viable situation.

13.   Steven Allen VERTOVEC

Hinduism and Social Change in Village Trinidad.   D.Phil.

Outside of India, Hinduism plays a central role in organizing and
orienting communities of Indian migrants and their descendants.
The study of Hinduism overseas must take account of a number of
factors which have affected this role, and which may even have
affected the nature of the religion itself.   These variables in-
clude the cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of the migrants,
their mode of migration, and the structural position, ethnic rela-
tions and government policies in the migrants' new context. Kinship
structures and the caste system are two Indian institutions which
have been radically modified by such variables.

An examination of change within Hinduism in Trinidad, historic-
ally and in recent years, can contribute to comparative studies of
Indian communities overseas, as well as to more general studies of
migration, ethnicity and religion.   Over 143,000 Indians came to
Trinidad between 1845 and 1917 as indentured labourers for colonial
plantations; since the original influx of migrants to the island,
Indians have come to number over 400,000 (or over 40% of the current
population, alongside people of African, European, Chinese and
racially mixed descent).   The practices of Indians in Trinidad have
been subject to various processes of change: a homogenization of
cultural and linguistic forms (from a diverse array of types from
across North India to a single, generalized corpus), an institut-
ionalization of social forms (whereby interpersonal networks were
forged and routinized, culminating in national organizations and a
major political party), and a consolidation of the community (such
that collective interests are advanced).

These aspects of change have influenced Hinduism since it was
introduced to Trinidad.   A congregational, casteless yet Brahman-
led religion prevails with many Christian-like forms.   In the 1970s,
a radical economic shift substantially modified village life, when
Trinidad experienced the benefits of an oil boom.   Yet rather than
spelling the secularization and demise of Hinduism - as some obser-
vers predicted - the boom served to stimulate Hinduism by facilit-
ating the creation of new forms of socio-religious activity and
organization.   Even with an economic collapse commencing in 1982,
a revitalized Hinduism has continued to flourish in villages of
Trinidad.

BOOK REVIEWS

This is a challenging book which provokes one into re-examining old assumptions. It argues for its position in the chain formed by Turner and Sperber by virtue of its use of the arguments of Brown and Levinson. When in 1978 the latter two produced a model of politeness phenomena as a 'universal of language use', they set a challenge to anthropology that has hitherto not been taken up. Most anthropological accounts and analyses are both too general at the level of conclusion and too distanced from the data on which they are based. This book sets out to use Brown and Levinson's work to help the understanding of symbolism.

Much of the book consists of Strecker's accounts of the arguments that he is either criticising or using. As such, it will make a good teaching book, but I am left wondering if so much space should have been devoted to the sympathetic repetition of Brown and Levinson's argument, especially in the year following the re-publication of their original paper. Be that as it may, Strecker gives fair and reasoned accounts of both Turner's and Sperber's analyses of symbolism. They are then criticised, Turner for not being able to explain why some groups lack exegeses of their rites and symbols (both Strecker and Sperber worked among such groups). Turner also leaves the actors ignorant of the 'positional' meaning of symbols, thus making their production mysterious. Most importantly, his analysis decomposes the multi-vocality into a super-position of univocal 'meanings'. Thus Turner does not present an analysis of multi-vocality *per se,* a telling criticism since multi-vocality is the cause, not the effect, of symbolism. The argument with Sperber can be summarized as a result of contrary emphases on the part of Sperber and Strecker: Sperber on the understanding ('processing') of symbols by the recipient, and Strecker on their production by the speaker. To this end Strecker quotes Magritte extensively to establish that symbols are not wholly devoid of meaning (as Sperber has it), and that meaning affects the 'degree' of symbolization, as in the variously powerful 'the lion is the king of the animals' and 'the lion is the Paul Brown of animals' (p. 37). He then tests Grice's notion of conversational implicature against Sperber by contrasting their explanations of irony. Strecker shows Grice's notion of irony to be more social and inter-personal than Sperber allows since 'only if one focuses on the sender first can one grasp the particular character of an ironic statement. It is he who, to use Grice's terminology, "exploits the cooperative principle" and

"forces the implicative" which may lead to the complicity between the interlocutors that Sperber has observed' (p. 50).

Strecker then spends 96 pages explaining Brown and Levinson's paper on politeness, which need not be summarized here. It suffices to remind readers that on the basis of three weak assumptions about people the authors derive a very detailed set of linguistic norms. Their assumptions are 1) that actors have 'face', which they try and maintain in the presence of FTA (face-threatening acts); 2) they can calculate (rationally) the effects of their actions and hence modify them in the light of expected outcomes, for example, reduce the effect of an FTA when they produce it; and 3) the actors have mutual knowledge of these assumptions. Strecker gives many interesting examples culled from Hamar ethnography. Finally, he points out a new 'super-strategy' (his term) previously not considered, which consists of the mixing of 'negative' and 'positive' politeness types in the same utterance or exchange of utterances. Having demonstrated its existence, he does not provide an account of when it is likely to be used. (It should be noted that one of the diagrams accompanying this discussion, Fig. 12, p. 160, has a row of numbers at the bottom which do not relate to the rest of the diagram.) Strecker then modifies Brown and Levinson's typology of the 'ethos' found in different societies: the different politeness strategies predominating in different societies relate to basic sociological structures.

Strecker's main extension of Brown and Levinson hinges on his observation - an insight breathtakingly obvious in retrospect and all the more valuable for that - that any account of politeness is *ipso facto* also one of rudeness. Hence the same strategies that Brown and Levinson describe to avoid FTAs can also be used to impose them - one simply reverses the calculation. The same theory can be applied to the analysis of domination and exploitation. We can now analyze the detailed linguistic realization of the everyday processes in which power and status are realized, maintained and disputed. Strecker cites Bourdieu approvingly, and can be seen as fleshing out the 'outline of a theory of practice'. Strecker's claim is that 'a successful [conversational] implication always involves an exploitation of the addressee by the speaker' (p. 204). It is here above all that I expected to find links being made to Bloch's work on political rhetoric. For although Strecker must agree with Bloch's claims of meaningless, the details of Merina politeness and political uses accord with Strecker's view.

However, in the final chapter, when we return to the analysis of the symbolism of ritual we are left with a theory of ritual which this reviewer finds inadequate. Ritual is now to be defined as a 'means of maintaining face in situations of high risk. Ritual is thus a device which helps people not to hurt each other at socially critical moments' (p. 204).

This I believe to be an unacceptable position, and in some respects one reminiscent of functionalism. Yet people do deliberately (intentionally) produce multi-vocal statements and their ritual equivalents with a view to the actor's face relative to their colleagues, and consequently Strecker escapes the criticism levelled at functionalism, that it explains things by their unin-

tended consequences. Yet to put 'face' at the centre of ritual is to problematicize many of the smaller, quicker, yet more frequent rites that predominate in everyday life. What Strecker has done is to have identified an important element in public and hence political rituals. In so far as the definition of portmanteau words is possible, we still cannot do better than Sperber's definition, in *Rethinking Symbolism,* of the symbolic as 'all activity where the means put into play seem to me to be clearly disproportionate to the explicit or implicit end'. Despite its manifest problems of privileging the anthropologist's say-so, it is honest about it and has the virtue of being usable! What is missing is the recognition that, although we may disagree, rituals are held to be causally effective and that is why they get done. This is far from adequate by itself, of course, but Strecker's account remains lop-sided until he acknowledges it. Turning from the consideration of symbolism as found in metaphors (polite and rude) to the symbolism found in rituals and 'ritual symbolism', we have to consider a different set of problems, which Strecker says he will tackle but never really confronts.

This is not to quarrel with any of Strecker's analysis *per se,* nor with the account of the symbolism in Hamar 'cattle-leaping' initiation. Rather, it is to make the somewhat pedestrian point that the 'artful positioning' that establishes symbols would not be the same if Strecker's approach were right about ritual. He quotes two examples of Hamar men 'symbolizing' their dominance of women: first (pp. 85-6), when men accompany women's activities with a string of commands to do just what they are doing: commands that are totally redundant; and secondly (pp. 205ff.), in the symbolization of a boy's leap over cattle. But the two occasions are very different, even in Strecker's terms, since the first example uses linguistic redundancy to implicate its 'message' and thereby uses 'politeness strategies'. The second example differs, in that these are not linguistic symbols and also in that indigenous explanations for the actions are given/giveable. The Hamar, like the Dorze (with whom Sperber worked) are silent when asked the sort of questions that prompted Muchona to exegesis. However, much of the art of asking for reasons (or answering the questions) lies in agreeing a delimitation of the field of enquiry. Thus the question 'what does X mean?' may go unanswered, and the question 'why do it?' may elicit the reply 'because the ancestors did it'. Even if persistent and consistent, such answers do not warrant the inference that the people in question do not have reasons for their actions and that those reasons cannot be stated. For the Hamar, it may be that for a son to marry he must leap over cattle. This may seem like a very small answer to a very big question but its importance lies, I feel, in allowing us at the same time to pursue the sort of linguistic enquiry to that depth that Strecker enjoins on us whilst keeping a clear perspective of the relative importance of the symbolism being deployed at different times by the actors involved. Strecker gives this sort of account (p. 212), but does not see that this sort of 'functionalism' upsets the stress he puts on 'symbolism' in ritual.

To conclude, this is a book that deserves to be widely read and

discussed. Not only is its subject-matter of the greatest interest but it is also well written, without a single footnote!

DAVID ZEITLYN

JAMES PEACOCK, *Rites of Modernization: Symbols and Social Aspects of Indonesian Proletarian Drama*, with a New Afterword (Foreword by Dell Hymes), Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1987 [1968]. xxi, 306pp., Tables, Figures, Illustrations, Plates, Appendixes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. £12.75.

Here is a book that has survived longer than its subject-matter. First published twenty years ago and now reissued in paperback, it describes a form of coarse proletarian drama in the Javanese indus-trial city of Surabaya just at the moment when the Indonesian Communist Party was at its strongest and the tensions caused by Sukarno's Guided Democracy in Indonesian politics were becoming most tightly strung. Based on fieldwork in the fateful period 1962-3 and published in 1968, after the Communist uprising and widespread massacres of 1965, it is in some ways comparable to that set of modern ethnographic studies in Portuguese Timor in the late 1960s and early 1970s which were, however, published after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975. At times, ethnographic work can unexpectedly provide a window to historic events far more momentous than the intended object of the study, giving a view which otherwise would have vanished at a stroke and have been unrecoverable by conven-tional historic means.

The form of drama in question is called *ludruk*, and at the time of the study actors and spectators were all poor and all involved in Communist organizations. Some troupes were explicitly affiliat-ed with Party organizations, and the content of performances was often Marxist in character, without inevitably voicing Communist propaganda. *Ludruk* forms may be traceable as far back as the thirteenth-century Javanese empire of Majapahit, but eyewitness accounts of performances begin in 1822. During the 1930s it was used to express nationalist aspirations. During World War II the Japanese pressed it into the service of the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'. Following the war, when the nationalists were fighting the Dutch in defence of their new Republic of Indonesia, *ludruk* troupes travelled with Indonesian armed groups. During the troubles of 1965 an estimated half-a-million people were killed, many by the army and many, though not all, Communists. Several of the actors of Peacock's acquaintance were killed or imprisoned, and all the *ludruk* troupes were disbanded. New troupes were formed under

military control, and where *ludruk* once gave expression to nation-
alism and communism, it now speaks for the capitalist, development
ideology of the army. *Ludruk* groups were always short-lived and
the content of the performances always shiftingly responsive to the
political situation and to popular concerns. To expect permanence
and to regret transformations in and of themselves would be to mis-
conceive this ephemeral art form.

Perhaps what is really permanent is the space occupied by a
rowdy, earthy, sexually provocative, forward-looking kind of per-
formance which exploits themes of Javanese culture, while contrast-
ing itself with the refined, courtly, serene, high art of Javanese
shadow plays. In the early 1960s, *ludruk* retained as dominant ele-
ments the clown and the female impersonator. Relative to clowns,
the transvestites situate themselves in clothing, manner and perfor-
mance as *alus*, in the Javanese distinction of *alus* (refined, serene)
versus *kasar* (coarse). Clowns are *kasar*. Another salient distinc-
tion in modern Indonesian culture is *kuno* (old-fashioned, tradition-
al) versus *maju* (progressive, modern). Here the clown is old-fash-
ioned and concerned mostly with only local themes and events,
whereas the transvestite is pro-modern and concentrates on national
matters. This uneasy tension between the two sets of contrasts is
compounded by the fact that the transvestite, indeed everything
about *ludruk*, is still highly coarse in comparison with the Javanese
art forms that are usually the subject of Western scholarly
attention.

Here is the point which most ·nearly explains the interest of
this book and most justifies its re-publication. Peacock has made
a study of something which is not just transient, but which is in
fact a kind of anti-value of Javanese culture. It is an anti-value
which is nevertheless very much a part of Javanese life and which
has other expressions. Implicitly he shows the incompleteness of
work which begins and ends with those values which the Javanese
prefer to put on public view. Peacock argues two themes. The
first is that *ludruk* is a rite and takes its place in the spectrum
of other Javanese rites, such as the *slamatan*, and the other is
that the rite is about modernization. The analogy is with van
Gennep's rites of passage. What it is intended to do is to teach
the poor how to make the transition from the traditional to the
modern. At least that is what Peacock thinks it was doing when he
was studying it, and in a significantly altered way that is probab-
ly still what it is expected to achieve. The inspirations of the
book show a curious blend of the social science influences of the
1960s: Needham and Geertz, Lévi-Strauss and Kenneth Burke, Gluckman
and Marion Levy. Peacock notes that in the period between first
publication and reissue, *ludruk* has moved from Marxist to bourgeois
values, while in some parts of social science the shift has been in
the opposite direction. A book that stands up this well after such
transformations in history and intellectual fashion repays author
and reader alike.

R.H. BARNES

JEAN-CLAUDE GALEY (ed.), *L'Espace du Temple I: Espaces, Itinéraires, Méditations* and *L'Espace du Temple II: Les Sanctuaires dans le Royaume* (Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de la Asie du Sud, Collection Puruṣārtha nos. 8 and 10). Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales 1985/1986. 202pp./192pp., Maps, Figures. No prices given.

Despite its two-volume format, this is essentially a single collection of essays on the Hindu temple consisting of eleven contributions (five of them in English) plus two forewords and a useful bibliographic essay. Two of the eleven essays are primarily text-based, and the rest have considerable ethnographic content. Three relate to Tamilnad, one each to Sri Lanka and Rajasthan, the rest to the Himalaya. A contribution on Puri apparently failed to materialize.

The dominant tone derives from the structuralism of Dumont and Biardeau, with Hocart and Paul Mus in the background. This tradition provides the basis here and there for critical comments on certain writers, mainly in America, who have studied south Indian temples from the viewpoint of transactionalism and political economy. As for the spatial aspect, the emphasis is mainly on mandalas, the symbolism of the centre, circumambulation, and macrocosm-microcosm correspondences. I was slightly sorry to find so little reference to the phenomenon whereby the sacred geography of a tract of territory reflects the projection on to it of the dispersed or magnified body of a supernatural being.

In accordance with Dumontian tradition, territory itself is on the whole subordinated to the ideology and social relations which give it meaning and value. Thus the analyses chiefly concern the relationships between king, deity or deities, and priests, sometimes bringing in 'outsiders' such as ascetics, Harijans and tribals, or representatives of the modern state. In the last analysis, this subordination of the territorial dimension is perhaps one of the general lessons of anthropology - the essence of a society lies more in its people than in its land; but the point needs to be nuanced for different contexts.

Even if a unitary problematic hardly emerges, the striking parallels between the northern and southern extremities of the subcontinent fully justify treating Hindu India as a single field of study. As is understandable in the context of *Puruṣārtha*, the work does not look outside the subcontinent; and no doubt it will be some time before serious comparisons can be undertaken with medieval Europe or with East and Southeast Asia. Meanwhile there is much here to use and enjoy. At the risk of arbitrariness, I would particularly recommend Marie-Louise Reiniche's comparison of four different temples in Tamilnad.

· N.J. ALLEN

R.S. MANN, *The Ladakhi: A Study in Ethnography and Change*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1986. vii, 178pp., Bibliography, Tables, No price given.

This book concerns Ladakh, an area situated between Kashmir and Chinese Central Asia and Tibet in the dry, high-altitude areas of the northern Himalaya. Politically, the erstwhile kingdom of Ladakh has been part of India since the nineteenth century, and it is now a strategic border region between India and China. The polity and peoples of Ladakh have always had close economic and political links with Kashmir and the region is now a district of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. But culturally it is an area of its own, with close similarities to northern Tibet in ecology, religion, economy, language and social structure, as well as ethnically.

This ethnography of Ladakh by R.S. Mann, an Indian anthropologist, is based on fieldwork done in 1970-1 in collaboration with T.K. Gosh. Four villages in different areas, or rather different provinces, of Ladakh were surveyed, and this material has been expanded to provide a general ethnography of Ladakh on the grounds of the close resemblance in habitat, social structure, economy and religion. Anthropological monographs on Ladakh are few, and the existing literature is by no means sufficient to cover the area, so Mann's book is a valuable contribution, though it is not the only detailed anthropological study, despite the author's claim. It is divided into eleven chapters, starting with an introduction, 'Ecological and Historical Perspective', which provides a general framework. Seven chapters deal with social structure in general, covering ethnic composition and social stratification, family and lineage structure, the status of women, marriage, other rites of passage such as death and birth, and patterns of local socio-political control. A short chapter summarizes the economy and a longer one deals with Ladakhi religion in general, with the religious, political and social structure of Lamaism, including its belief system, forms of worship and pantheon, and with other related subjects. Only the religious system has been taken up, and no local variations have been referred to. Thus the relationship of the general religious system to its local variations and to other local belief systems is neither raised, nor scrutinized critically.

The last chapter analyses culture change - a basic topic of the book according to its sub-title - only summarily if systematically in a rather brief nine pages, though there are some references *pari passu* to the past and to recent changes. The author basically assumes a timeless status quo, a strong continuity in social structure and institutions conditioned by ecological factors and religion. This continuity can be presupposed for 1970, but a more detailed analysis of continuity would have strengthened his point, especially in view of the substantial changes he mentions having been brought about by the growing economic and political integration with Jammu and Kashmir and the closure of the Chinese border.

Mann covers many subjects in his book, and a great number of interesting and new facts are given. This is especially true for the treatment of supra-familial social structure, the *phasphun*, a sort of religious association of mutual aid, being of particular interest. In general, Mann's comprehensive statements on social institutions, their structure and function give a fair idea of the structures and principles of Ladakhi social organization. Relations between husbands and wives and the status of women are described in great detail, and the continuing prevalence of polyandry is pointed out. Unfortunately, no further details on the kinship system are given, and there is no analysis of the kinship terminology. The sections on birth and death rituals and ceremonies are ethnographically particularly rich and detailed, as is the chapter on socio-political control. The theoretical nexus of the book is, according to the author, his analysis of the interrelationship of ecology, social structure, economy and religion, though how far this interdependence has been brought out the reader will have to judge for himself.

Overall, the book is definitely a major contribution to Ladakhi ethnography for the detailed material on Ladakhi social life it presents. But none the less some critical remarks must be made with regard to the author's methodological and analytical frame of reference. Mann is highly indebted to the Indian sociology of the 1950s and early 1960s, and more recent trends of analysis in Indian anthropology and sociology are negelected altogether. As stated, the kinship system is not adequately dealt with, and the analysis of the family structure and marriage is rather stereotyped, and uninfluenced by any more modern approach. However, another point seems to be more critical. Ladakh, like Tibet, has no doubt been culturally influenced by India over the ages, and the critical scrutiny of the presence of Indian institutions like the caste system forms a valid and valuable exercise. But to analyse social stratification only, and to do so uncritically in terms of the criteria of caste, taking no account of possible alternative criteria and without questioning the validity of the approach, raises methodological doubts. This leads directly to the problem of Indian ethnocentrism, which substantially affects the analysis more than once by seeing Ladakhi society in terms of pan-Indian norms rather than in terms of its own. Unortunately, these methodological defects weaken an otherwise informed book which the student of Ladakhi society is bound to want to read.

KLAUS HESSE

KLAUS SEELAND (ed.), *Recent Research on Nepal: Proceedings of a Conference held at the Universität Konstanz, 27-30th March 1984* (Schriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum, Band 3), Munich etc.: Weltforum Verlag 1986. 220pp., Bibliography, Plates, Diagrams, Maps, Figures, Tables. DM 59.

DETLEF KANTOWSKY (ed.), *Recent Research on Max Weber's Studies of Hinduism: Papers Submitted to a Conference held in New Delhi, 1984* (Scriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum, Band 4), Munich etc.: Weltforum Verlag 1986. 223pp., Appendixes. DM 59.

The two books under review are both collections of papers from conferences held in March 1984, and published as Volumes 3 and 4 of a new German series devoted to Asian studies. One was an essentially Franco-German conference, held in Constance; the other was Indo-German, organized by Germans and held in Delhi in an attempt to introduce Indian scholars to the 'true' Max Weber.

The first book, *Recent Research in Nepal*, will be an essential addition to all libraries covering Nepal, not least because one-third of the book is taken up with a bibliography of publications on Nepal published between 1975 and 1983. This includes items in English, French and German, as well as a substantial number in Nepali and some in Newari.

Four of the conference papers are unambiguously anthropological. Véronique Bouillier contributes a short paper on child ascetics, the greater part of which is in fact an analysis of the caste-initiation ceremony of *vratabandha*. Anne de Sales describes a group of Kham Magar dances, and the myth and ritual associated with their dance. Gérard Toffin gives a clear and convincing analysis of the effects of monetization on shared labour groups among the Tamang. Joanna Czarnecka writes on hypergamy in ritual and marriage among Brahman-Chetris of Nuwakot district.

Marc Barani, an architect, contributes a paper on the residen-tial unit in the Newar town of Kirtipur. The paper by Jean Fezas is on inheritance in Nepalese law codes of 1854 and after. There is a very interesting discussion of the relation of canonical Sanskrit law codes to the actual process of Nepalese law, in which - on paper, at least - widows had more rights than Hindu orthodoxy prescribed. Ulrike Müller provides a useful paper on what can be learned from cadastral maps about different patterns of landholding.

These seven articles - four anthropological, one architectural, one textual and one geographical - are all valuable additions to scholarship on Nepal. The authors, if they have axes to grind, keep them well hidden, betraying no concern to affect the way Nepal develops. This is less true of the remaining articles. Two are very similar in approach: Perdita Pohle on Manang and Rudi Baumgartner on the Rolwaling Valley both summarize the geographical position of their chosen area and describe how tourism has begun to affect the local economy. Both assume that there are traditional ways of living within the local ecology which are endangered by development and should, if possible, be preserved. Klaus Seeland writes a more ambitious article on 'Sacred Worldview and Ecology',

asking what view the Nepalese have of their environment. His answer assumes a 'traditional homeostatic community' and he concludes, unconvincingly to my mind, that 'ecological preservation cannot be a survival strategy', because first, it is a transgression of dharma, secondly, it is not a traditional pattern of reaction to changing conditions of living, and thirdly, it exceeds the normal working capacity of the peasant. I doubt this. If Nepalese peasants do not preserve the environment, it is not for ideological reasons - whatever they may be induced to say on religious matters, they are highly pragmatic and resourceful in fact - but because the institutional means for collective action are absent. They are as aware as anyone of the problem.

The other volume under review, *Recent Research on Max Weber's Studies of Hinduism*, has somewhat more coherence. It contains twelve papers, four by Indians and eight by Germans. Three of the latter are by the editor, Detlef Kantowsky - republished from *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (1982 and 1984) and from the *European Journal of Sociology* (1985). Since they hang together, it is useful to have them within the covers of one book. Simplifying somewhat, Kantowsky makes three points: that the Gerth and Martindale translation of Weber's *The Religion of India* is abominable, even by the usual low standards of Weber translations; that Weber has been incorrectly understood in a Parsonian way, both because of Gerth and Martindale's brief preface, and because of a conference in Delhi sponsored by the Ford Foundation in 1966 (the present conference and book are supposed to combat the pernicious effects of that earlier conference); and that modern capitalism is a retrograde step (Indian intellectuals' adoption of its values in the name of development is to be regretted). Kantowsky emphasizes Weber's doubts about Western development, and tries to make him consistent with Gandhi and 'the world view of a rural Hindu'. Hence he attempts to demonstrate the error of the development-oriented interpretations of Weber which have been favoured by Indian intellectuals.

Another paper, that by Walter Sprondel, also attempts to put Weber's 'Protestant Ethnic thesis' in context, and warns against interpreting it as a 'how-to' manual of development. Ironically, three of the four Indian contributions - and still more the titles of Indian papers from the conference not included in the book but listed in it - bear witness to the fact that Weber is indeed understood in India in just the way that Kantowsky and Sprondel inveigh against. Weber was not saying that Protestantism causes a capitalist spirit always and everywhere, but that it was a necessary element of a combination of factors which together brought about the first, unplanned appearance of industrial capitalism in Europe. He claimed nothing about later deliberate and imitative industrial development. It is surely unsociological of Kantowsky himself to ascribe this widespread mistaken interpretation of Weber to a conference held in Delhi in 1966: it springs naturally from the deepest concerns of Indian intellectuals.

Puthusseril's paper on charisma certainly ignores the lessons Kantowsky and Sprondel are concerned to teach. Aurora's paper looks for an equivalent to Protestantism in the traditional world-

view of trading (Vaishya) castes: consistent with Weber's approach, he concludes that while there were parallels, their asceticism was contextualized (confined to old age) in such a way as to preclude the development of a rational, 'this-worldly' asceticism (he persists with the unEnglish and confusing 'inner-worldly' for 'this-worldly'). Chaturvedi Badrinath attacks Weber (unfairly in my view) for not seeing that Hinduism was not a single religion. M.S.A. Rao is the only Indian contributor to put aside the pseudo-Weberian debate about whether Hinduism retards development. He uses the concepts of Weber's sociology of religion to analyze modern religiously expressed protest by low castes in Kerala.

Of the remaining papers, Johannes Laping contributes a brief piece on the way other-worldly doctrines were adapted in a pragmatic way in traditional India. Jakob Rösel's essay has a long and helpful analysis of Weber's concept of the patrimonial state, posing a long list of questions to the specialist who would seek to apply this concept to India.

Especially interesting for anthropologists are two articles by Dieter Conrad and Hermann Kulke. Conrad analyzes Weber's ideas about dharma, showing how Weber exaggerated the relativism implicit in the fact that each caste and station has its own dharma, and overlooked the very real tension between the universal duty of non-violence and a Kshatriya's dharma to fight. In a fascinating analysis Conrad shows how Weber's conception of Hinduism influenced and was influenced by, his analysis of the ideological options facing Western civilization. According to Conrad, Weber coined the German concept of *Eigengesetzlichkeit*: 'the characteristic of developing according to its own laws [and unaffected by outside influences]'. This applies to spheres of life (ethics, law, the economy), and was a crucial element in Weber's theory of rationalization. It is different from 'autonomy', which implies only the absence of outside interference and says nothing about internal development. Weber's concept is now written into German law and is part of current German usage. If Conrad is right, it has its origins in Weber's understanding of the Sanskrit *svadharma* ('own dharma').

Kulke's paper analyzes Weber on Hinduization and shows how Weber's sources were probably Lyall and Risley. Weber achieved a higher level of conceptual clarity than they by distinguishing intensive Hinduization (what is now called Sanskritization, Rajputization or Kshatryaization) from extensive Hinduization (the absorption and proselytizing of peripheral tribes brought about by the desire of tribal big men for legitimation or, occasionally, by the activities of Hindu sects). Kulke also shows how Weber's analysis of Hinduization has had the greatest influence not on Indian studies, but on Southeast Asian studies, though the work of Van Leur.

The Schriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum is to be congratulated on bringing out these volumes in English, a language that will make them accessible, if they can get hold of them, to readers in South Asia.

DAVID GELLNER

PIERRE BOURDIEU, *Homo Academicus*, Oxford: Polity Press 1988. xxvi, 225pp., Appendixes, Notes, Indexes. £25.00.

The recent wave of reflexive writing in anthropology has all too often been grounded in a unitary conception of the subject - the self as opposed to the other - or a concentration on a unitary conception of our society or 'world', as, for example, in Geertz's *Works and Lives*. Pierre Bourdieu's study of the French academic world up to 1968 gives a more detailed and intricate view of the field within which anthropology is produced and some of the conflicts and processes of that field. It is a study that is, as with much of Bourdieu's work, pervaded by a sense of irony, as sociological techniques are themselves turned upon the academic world of sociology.

In this era of epistemological crisis, the most interesting aspects of this book for any anthropologist are, perhaps, the epistemological and methodological problems with which Bourdieu grapples in the introductory chapters. In many ways the problems inherent in producing a book concerning a society and a social field in which one is positioned from the outset are opposite to those of a study in which one of the main problems is the initial acquisition of even the barest outlines of ordinary everyday knowledge. Bourdieu sets himself against subjectivist epistemological positions and claims a scientific position for his sociology of academia. He wishes to distance himself from mere academic gossip, and to do so claims a break with inside experience and then a reconstitution of the knowledge attained by this break. He attempts this break by taking 'the common criteria and classifications and ...the struggles of which they are both ends and means...explicitly as [his] object' and by constructing 'a finished, finite set of properties' that function as variables and through which he constructs 'epistemic individuals', who are defined solely in terms of those criteria. Nevertheless, he seems to see his objectivity as fated from the·outset in 'what is, after all, never more than a form of autobiography', and he does not claim a pure form objectivity but merely an attempt to step along the path to what he calls 'the *focus imaginarius*, spoken of by Kant...from which the perfected system could be discovered but which a properly scientific intention can only posit as an ideal...of a practice which can only hope to approach ever closer to it in so far as it has renounced all hope of reaching it immediately'.

From the abstracted 'objective' properties of the field, Bourdieu proceeds to draw a picture of that field and the space of the various disciplines in which he sees various oppositions at work. First is that between academic power, that is, 'control of the instruments of reproduction of the professorial body - the board of examiners for the aggregation, the University Consultative Committee', and scientific power, displayed through the direction of a research team, or prestige, measured in publication in a paperback series, publication abroad, and links with the media. Second is that between older and younger professors defined according to their 'institutionalized signs of prestige'. And third is

that between, on the one side social and economic capital - type of education, mention in *Who's Who*, the social directory, fashionable place of residence, extra-academic earnings - and scientific capital. This last opposition is concomitant with what Bourdieu, following Kant, terms the conflict of the faculties, that is, between those geared to reproduce and be subject to the social order - law, medicine etc. - and those 'free of all social discipline and limitations' - the sciences.

Much of *Homo Academicus* is devoted to the processes of change in French academia prior to the events of 1968. Bourdieu attempts to explain 1968 largely in terms of the internal dynamics of the education system. He sees 1968 as the result of a coincidence of crises within different fields in which different actors in different but homologous social situations identified with each other. He deals with the conditions of May 1968 as resulting particularly from the increase in student numbers, the devaluation of educational capital (of academic diplomas) consequent upon the greater number of students admitted and from the recruitment of large numbers of subordinate teachers who were badly integrated into the universities. These conditions encouraged 'maladjusted dispositions' (elevated expectations). These crises were most marked in the new disciplines, in sociology above all.

Perhaps the central problems of *Homo Academicus* are the areas with which it does not deal. These omissions result from Bourdieu's epistemological practice. Elsewhere, most notably in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, he presents his epistemological position as a kind of Hegelian synthesis of phenomenological and objectivist (above all, structuralist) positions. However, *Homo Academicus* does not derive itself from a preliminary phenomenology of the academic field nor, with the exception of the postscript (an analysis of the language of school reports), does it take the classifications and criteria of academia as its object. Instead, subjective or phenomenological statements are replaced by a set of objective criteria, such as number of citations, place of residence etc.; problems of varying academic social classifications and hierarchies of prestige are pushed aside by the utilization of the objective set of criteria rather than solved synthetically. This, as Bourdieu notes, does tend to make the study rather grey. Furthermore, it ensures that he can only deal with the social situation of academic discourse, divorced from that discourse itself. There are not even any pointers to the links between academic discourse and its social situation; the effect of changing academic formations on changes in academic discourse is hardly dealt with at all. Consequently, Bourdieu's analytic concepts often seem somewhat under-used, or capable of explaining far more. For example, the concept of habitus (of structured and structuring dispositions) is introduced to explain the fact that recruitment to academia continued to follow similar principles during the expansion of the higher education system, which could equally well be explained in terms of choice models, whilst what might be termed the academic ethos or ethoses, areas that the concept of habitus might be particularly useful in explaining, are hardly dealt with at all. Furthermore, any study based in the phenomenonology of academia, however much it would

later provide a synthesis of the varying phenomenological positions, would probably ensure a greater stress on the positions of the academic fields in the wider social universe. The lack of stress on these relations is particularly noticeable in the way in which Bourdieu deals with the background to the events of 1968. That 1968 provides a full stop to this study ensures that the effects of recent higher education contraction are not dealt with at all.

Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* provides an interesting outline of a necessarily reflexive sociology of education. But epistemologically it raises as many problems as it purports to solve.

TONY FREE

VICTOR PERERA and ROBERT D. BRUCE, *The Last Lords of Palenque: The Lacandon Mayas of the Mexican Rain Forest*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press 1985 [1982]. 317pp., Annotated Bibliography, Plates. £8.50.

Here we are given an evocative account of the first author's initiation into and subsequent experiences in the Lacandon Maya community of Naha. Working under the guidance of the more experienced anthropologist Robert Bruce, who has dedicated his life to the study of these people, Victor Perera is quickly able to familiarize himself with their history and culture, while at the same time maintaining a certain objectivity.

Perera recognizes the unique psychological outlook of the Lacandon Maya, who appear to be the last cultural inheritors of the great Maya civilization. It is their innate dignity and bearing, and their consciousness of being the *hach winik* or 'true people', which makes them able to converse on a level with anyone. This quality of self-assurance, described by Robert Bruce in his Introduction, is referred to as 'poise'. He attributes this 'poise' to the Lacandons' awareness of their place and role in accordance with a philosophy which defines every entity in terms of its relation to others in a harmonious and well-balanced universe. Bruce contrasts this with the tenets of Western science, which describe the world in terms of dynamic and utilitarian values. This is evident even in the form of language, where nouns combine with verbal actions to cause effects on objects. He suggests that occidentals seek to control the universe, whereas Maya prefer to seek their proper place within it.

The clash of occidental and Maya cultures presages the downfall of the latter, but in so far as this book provides a case-study of a worldwide problem, it could equally well indicate the demise of the former. Perera quotes Old Chank'in, the mentor and moral leader of Naha, who reminds us that the roots of all living things are tied together. This book, therefore, discusses one of the great

dilemmas of our age, the destruction of non-Western cultures and the simultaneous ecological damage to this planet that so often results from the expansion of economic and technological interests.

Perera's descriptions of his personal experiences during his stay in Naha are both poignant and moving. He makes no attempt to romanticize the Lacondon. Instead he shows how, once individuals from the community are exposed to occidental values, they tend to succumb to the same temptations and dishonesties which are commonplace in a materially oriented society. As the author comes to terms with his anger at the hopelessness of the situation, he realizes that the blame cannot be attributed to a single group of people. Government officials, loggers, missionaries and particular Lacandones have all played their part, and ultimately we all contribute to the forces of change. Paradoxically, it is the Lacandones themselves who most clearly understand the passing of their age, as it fulfils the ancient Maya prophecy of the death of their world. Old Chank'in's teaching, however, attests to the personal accountability of us all and does not excuse any who contribute to the destruction of the creation of Hachakyum ('Our True Lord').

CAROLINE KARSLAKE DE TALAVERA

WALDO R. WEDEL, *Central Plains Prehistory: Holocene Environment and Culture Change in the Republican River Basin*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1986. xviii, 222pp., Plates, Figures, Tables, Appendixes, Notes, Bibliography, Index, Maps. £34.50.

The grasslands of the central American plains show few trees and little relief and have often been regarded by travellers as empty spaces to be traversed as quickly as possible. Some say that here one can look further and see less than anywhere else on earth. Anthropological theory has complemented this impression with a doctrine that the area was uninhabitable until the Spanish introduced the horse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The peopling of the plains was recent and took place not long before the coming of White men.

In fact, the North American Great Plains, at whose heart the central plains or Republican River Basin lie, have been inhabited by humans for 10,000 or even 20,000 years. The oldest, radiocarbon dated evidence relates to the Clovis mammoth hunters of *c.* 11500-11000 BP and the Folsom bison-hunters of *c.* 10500-10000 BP. The human record in the Republican River Basin spans the entire period of demonstrated presence on the Plains, and Wedel surveys the long-term relationships between humans and nature over approximately 15,000 to 18,000 years from the waning of the Pleistocene to now.

Ten thousand years before Europeans found the Plains supporting vast herds of bison, natural wildlife included mammoths, camels, native horses, ground sloths, and large species of bison, all now extinct. When these animals died out or were destroyed, men shifted to new ways of life and new animal forms. Wedel traces the climatological, geological, floral and faunal transformations which provide the backgound to the archaeological studies that are the main evidential basis for the book. After the Early Big Game Hunters came the Archaic Foragers, the Plains Woodland Hunters and Gatherers, and then the Early and Late Village Indians. The sequence is rounded off with the Indian clearances of the nineteenth century. White men, with the special environmental strains their way of life entails, had arrived.

The book can comfortably be read straight through, or dipped into as a reference work. It is plainly authoritative and of considerable use to anyone concerned with Plains Indian life. Wedel's many-stranded scholarship seems to have achieved its aim of seeing to it that the link between man and long-extinct animals, and with it the antiquity of human occupation of the Plains, be taken seriously and acknowledged.

R.H. BARNES

FRED B. KNIFFEN, HIRAM F. GREGORY and GEORGE A. STOKES, *The Historic Indian Tribes of Lousiana from 1542 to the Present*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana University Press 1987. xvi, 314pp., Index, Bibliography, Maps, Plates, Figures. £23.70.

Although until 1971 Louisiana had only one federally acknowledged Indian tribal group, it now holds claim to the third largest native American population in the eastern United States. Figures are misleading, partly because unorganized and offically unrecognized Indian groups in the past avoided identifying themselves as such in response to racist attitudes in the White community, and partly because racially mixed individuals and groups have alternative identifications to choose from. Recently, shifting attitudes and policies have provided incentives for groups to strive for official status. There are at present three federally recognized tribes and a total of five recognized by the state, plus many scattered mixed-blood and full-blood families. The current population of 16,000, compared with 490 in 1950, represents a growth out of proportion to probable real demographic change.

Louisiana Indians have been called 'the invisible people', both because of their retiring ways and because they have never figured in the national imagination as prominently as have the tribes of the western plains or the north-eastern woodlands. Most dress, work and talk like the people around them. Nevertheless, there are

still three viable languages in use, Alabama, Choctaw and Koasati.
On the other hand, Louisiana Indians play a major role in preserv-
ing European languages other than English in this multilingual
state. The Spanish-Nahuatl dialect of Texas and north-western
Louisiana is still spoken conversationally. More striking is the
fact that the large Houma population, whose language is virtually
lost, today retains the most conservative of Louisiana French.
This book is probably best taken as a contribution to the history
and sociology of Louisiana, rather than just a compilation of sparse
and scattered references to obscure or forgotten ethnic fragments.

R.H. BARNES

DON E. DUMOND, *The Eskimos and Aleuts*, London: Thames and Hudson
1987 [1977]. 159pp., Bibliography. Index, Plates, Illustration,
Diagrams, Maps. £6.95.

A professor of anthropology at the University of Oregon, who has
carried out excavations in Alaska, the author focuses attention
on Alaska's south-west where, as he stresses, the majority of
Eskimo-Aleut, or 'Eskaleut', people live. Here is the centre of
gravity' of the Eskimos' 'population distribution and their pre-
historic identity' (p. 7). While the ancestors of the Inuit mig-
rated to the Arctic, the numerous Yup'ik and Pacific Eskimos, like
the Aleuts, remained here.
    He demonstrates that these people derive from a single stock,
and gives dates for the splitting of their major groups. The
primary evidence is technological. Of eight chapters, prehistoric
material cultures are analyzed in six. In the other two, effect-
ively the introduction and conclusions, linguistic and physical
anthropological evidence are incorporated.
    The first tradition he identifies is the 'Paleo-Arctic', from
about 8000 BC. Since the date is older than evidence for American
Indian cultures in Alaska, and at the same time younger than such
evidence elsewhere in America, the author reaches the conclusion
that the ancestors of the 'mass of American Indians' migrated from
Asia through Alaska earlier by at least two millennia than the
occurrence of the Paleo-Arctic tradition, thus leaving Alaska to
the bearers of this tradition, the ancestors of the modern Aleuts
and Eskimos (p. 155).
    The conclusion is useful, as it indicates that the shared 'Esk-
aleut' ancestry did not displace other people. Modern native
Alaskans can, therefore, counter any social Darwinian presupposi-
tion that might be put forward against them to the effect that the
course of universal history naturally involves invasion and

displacement. By tracing their roots deep into prehistory and
citing work like this, they may reply that theirs did not.

                         S.A. MOUSALIMAS

GEOFFREY M. WHITE and LAMONT LINDSTROM (eds.), *The Pacific Theater:
Island Representations of World War II* [Pacific Islands Monograph
Series, no. 8], Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1989. xiv,
422pp., Indexes, Maps, Plates. No price given.

On 4th May 1942 the worried white inhabitants of Vila, the tiny
capital of Vanuatu, saw the horizon fill with a fleet of warships
and smaller vessels. Were they Japanese? Were they American? The
locals couldn't tell. As the first of the landing craft approached
a young French boy ran down to meet the troops. A GI jumped on to
the jetty, looked into the child's face, and said, 'Any girls here?
I wanna fuck'. And that was the first encounter between the occu-
pying forces and the residents of Vanuatu.
    If the interests of the recruits centred on illicit liquor
('torpedo juice'), unavailable women and entertaining ways to pass
the time, the interest of the Melanesians in these latest incomers
was both more complex and more varied. Throughout Micronesia and
Melanesia the effects of the war were usually dramatic, occasionally
profound and, in almost all cases, long-lasting. This book tries to
tell how islanders saw the conflict, exactly how they were taken up
in it, and how it influenced their later lives. Sixteen contribu-
tors who have worked on a glittering array of different islands
describe the war years and their continuing aftermath.
    For war stories make good stories, and tales about that time are
still told, and not just in cargo-cult communities. Narrating
these vivid tales of time spent with generous, extremely well-
equipped Americans to a younger audience is a rhetorically effect-
ive manner of expressing key moral problems and of delineating the
bounds of collective identity. This is a Pacific theatre, one of
war, and one on the whole well portrayed in this collection of
papers.

                         JEREMY MacCLANCY

JOHN C. CALDWELL, ALLAN G. HILL and VALERIE J. HULL (eds.), *Micro-Approaches to Demographic Research*, London and New York: Kegan Paul International 1988. xvi, 470pp., References, Tables, Figures. £30.

In the eyes of demographers, what most anthropologists do is 'micro-research', so the avoidance relationship between anthropologists and demographers should perhaps be overcome by the concept of 'micro-approaches' to demography. Despite the editors' claim 'that it fills the need for a textbook as to what might be done and how the researcher can begin in a very new sub-field', this volume, which contains twenty-seven papers from a conference held in Canberra in 1982, will in fact do little to remedy the situation. Its main virtue is its extensive bibliography. The papers present the results of research with far too little information about methodology to be helpful to a researcher beginning work in this new sub-field. Exceptions are a paper by Hull *et al.* with a methodological appendix and another by McCormack which presents interesting results about indigenous models of reproductive process and how these relate to the use of contraception.

Only one paper, that by Chapman, includes details of the question schedules used. Van de Walle includes transcripts of interviews in her discussion of problems of coding and comparing quantitative and qualitative research, but her conclusions about the use of language to make indirect answers are not new to anthropologists.

In the concluding papers, Srinivas and Caldwell make general pleas for micro-studies to complement the large-scale surveys which typify demographic research. There is clearly room for much fruitful co-operation between anthropologists and demographers. The concern of anthropologists with contextualization and the way that answers to questions may be radically different from what they seem to say, combined with the rigour of demographic calculation, should lead to interesting generalizations based on trustworthy data. Certainly this book provides some examples of such research, but the results are presented in part only, and the interested reader must go elsewhere to discover in any detail what micro-demographic research is like.

DAVID ZEITLYN

OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

OXFORD UNIVERSITY ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1988 - 1989

General interest in the Society showed a decline on the previous year with no meetings at all being organized in Michaelmas Term. However, certain students took advantage of the Society's lack of a general programme to organize their own events under its auspices. Sadly, Susan Erb resigned as Secretary at the start of Hilary Term and as yet no one has been found to take her place. The President would like to take this opportunity to thank Susan for all her hard work and effort.

In line with the President's own interests, all the meetings in Hilary and Trinity Terms were centred around film screenings. The majority of the films were selected by Debbie Des Jardins, and were chosen for their portrayal of societies in change or of minorities or disadvantaged groups. At each screening the film served as the starting-point for extended discussion.

Over the two terms we saw the following films: *Waiting for Harry* (Kim McKenzie); *N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman* (John Marshall); *War of the Gods* (Brian Moser / Disappearing World; anthropologists: Stephen Hugh-Jones, Christine High-Jones, Peter Silverwood-Cope); *Some Women of Marrakech* (Melissa Llewelyn-Davies / Disappearing World; anthropologist: Elizabeth Fernea); *The Basques of Santazi* (Leslie Woodhead / Disappearing World; anthropologist: Sandra Ott). There was also a joint presentation with Oxford Survival International Group of a film on medical pluralism in the Bolivian Andes. We were especially fortunate to have Sandra Ott present *The Basques of Santazi*, the personal presentation adding to our appreciation of the film. After every screening discussions followed - these ranged from consideration of the ethnography presented to the finer points of production goals and strategies.

MARCUS BANKS
President, 1988-1989

MOLAS: TEXTILES OF THE KUNA INDIANS

On descending the small flight of steps into the Pitt Rivers Museum
in Oxford, the visitor is currently greeted by a display of small-
scale panels which at first sight seem to be characterized by re-
peated patterns and jewel-like colours. These exquisite, more or
less rectangular panels which are seemingly so suited to hanging
under glass on gallery walls are, in fact, the appliquéd sections
of blouses made by the Kuna Indians of Panama and Colombia. *Mola*,
the exhibition informs us, is the Kuna word for 'cloth', and by ex-
tension it may also describe a blouse or its appliqué panel. The
exhibition shows complete mola blouses as well, and these are not
only beautiful objects, but part of everyday dress. Consequently,
they have to be both flexible and durable; many of the mola panels
on display show signs of having been washed frequently. Among the
complete blouses is one from the Chucanaque River of Panama de-
scribed as a two-layer, four-colour mola, which features counter-
changed red and blue motifs, both outlined with orange. The front
and the back of the blouse, therefore, are 'the same only differ-
ent', the swapping of colours from front to back serving to high-
light that the same basic repeated design is different, and invit-
ing a second look. As one's eyes linger on the individual panels,
the designs of geometric, human and animal motifs, with their
contrapuntal dashes and dots of colour set up rhythmic patterns
which reveal an evident delight for the exploitation of mirror and
rotational symmetry on the part of the women who invent and care-
fully execute these designs.
     The exhibition is unobtrusively informative, and we learn from
the observations of an English buccaneer ship's surgeon who visited
the area in the late seventeenth century that the Kuna peoples did
not ordinarily wear clothes, but that the women took a great de-
light in body painting using 'bright and lovely' hues of red,
yellow and blue. Sometime between Lional Walfer's observations of
1681 and the 1880s, the mola blouse evolved, probably inspired by
the designs once painted on the body and subsequently transferred
onto women's skirts.
     The mola panels are worn horizontally, with the central axis
of the design, about which the two halves are mirrored, correspond-
ing to an imaginary line down the centre of the human body, creat-
ing two bilateral halves. This type of symmetry is, of course,
very widespread in the art of the Americas, but also evident in the
mola designs is the use of rotational symmetry in motifs such as
the swastika, which was combined with a circle on the Kuna flag.
But take a closer look. Although the main design is unfolded in
mirror symmetry, the finer details often set up a slightly asym-
metric counterpoint to the main rhythm.
     Because most of the panels have been abstracted from their
context and displayed as flat pieces of work, the viewer can take
the time to appreciate the finer details of the design. However,
the exhibition also includes other aspects of the material culture
of the Kuna so we are offered a fuller picture of Kuna life. In

addition, the mola panels are used to introduce us to Kuna concepts.
The layered construction of the mola related to the belief that the
heavens and the nether world are made up of eight layers, inhabited
by good and evil spirits, and the molas may also contain pictorial
themes relating to girls' puberty rights, marriage and death.
Other pictorial themes include a bird catching a fish, and a mola
of two turtles, which evokes the story of how the turtle acquired
his coat.

I can thoroughly recommend this exhibition. It gives space
for the viewer to appreciate the mola panels, and the concise
written information is interspersed only after the visitor has had
time to make a visual response to the beauty of the panels on
display.

PENNY DRANSART

Molas: Textiles of the Kuna Indians is on show at the Pitt Rivers
Museum, Oxford until 21 April 1990.

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