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(ii)

FORMAT

The journal is published three times per year. Articles are welcome from students of anthropology and from people in other disciplines. It is preferred that the main emphasis should be on analytical discussion rather than on plain description. Papers should be as short as is necessary to get the point over. As a general rule they should not exceed 5,000 words. They should follow the conventions for citations, notes and references used in the A.S.A. monographs. Comments will also be welcome. Communications should be addressed to the Journal Editors, Institute of Social Anthropology, 51 Banbury Road, Oxford.

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'Dan Sperber and the Anacondas'. An Ethnographic Comment on
Sperber's Theory of Symbolism

This paper has a double aim since it is both ethnographic and theoretical. On one level it is concerned with the interpretation of a particular myth motif - anaconda seduction - which is widespread throughout the whole of Amazonia. The analysis may have some limited general implications, but since I will be concentrating on the motif in one particular society this will not necessarily be the case. On a second level I will be conducting the analysis with reference to a recent and popular book on symbolism - 'Rethinking Symbolism' by Dan Sperber - in which we are offered a "prolegomenon to a general theory of symbolism." By following through the method outlined in that book, I hope to demonstrate that the theory is based on some false assumptions concerning the nature of symbolism itself, and that, since it is based on unsatisfactory premisses, its programmatic intentions are vitiated.

The Waiwai, a group of Carib speaking Indians who live in the watershed region of the Essequibo and Mapuera rivers on the borders of Guyana and Brazil, possess a detailed and intricately interwoven cosmology. Within this cosmology the anaconda, or water-boia, holds a particular position. The first Waiwai women are said to have been anaconda women, and the men regard themselves as being in a brother-in-law relationship to the snakes. The men make the statement unequivocally: "Okomo-yenna (anaconda people) are our poimo (brothers-in-law)." The question begged by such a statement is a perennial one for anthropologists: how do we make sense of such seemingly absurd assertions?

If we follow Sperber's advice, the first thing we must do is to decide whether or not the statement is symbolic, and we do this by ascertaining its literal falseness.

"I note then as symbolic all activity where the means put into play seem to me to be clearly disproportionate to the explicit end, whether this end be knowledge, communication or production - that is to say, all activity whose rationale escapes me. In short the criterion I use in the field is one of irrationality" (Sperber, 1975, 4).

Following this line we may say of the statement "Okomo-yenna are our poimo" that, since brothers-in-law generally live in Waiwai villages and not in the wild, and since, in any case, snakes cannot be men, or vice versa, it is literally false. But since the Waiwai ultimately extract meaning from it we have no alternative but to accept it as symbolic.

Having located the statement in a field which defines its minimal properties we must now decide how to analyse it. Sperber rejects at length a Freudian or Turnerian perspective and is led to the conclusion that of all the interpretations of symbolism so far expounded, ~~Levi-Strauss's structuralism proves to be the most satisfying.~~ He is critical of Levi-Strauss, but nevertheless accepts that a symbolic framework based on oppositions, homologues, inversions and the like is a useful and necessary device for laying bare symbolic structures.

So the next step will be to situate the symbolic statement in a wider context, and this requires some more detailed ethnography.

Anacondas make four major appearances in myths, but for the limited purposes of this paper we need only detail two of them.

The Creation Myth

Mawari, hero and first Waiwai, and his twin brother Washi were born of the union of a female tortoise and a male grasshopper. After the tortoise was killed by the jaguar people, an old jaguar woman taught the twins how to hunt, fish and grow cassava. Eventually, after growing enormous penises, they felt the desire for women.

Both brothers went down to their fish trap and there found an otter. They both had intercourse with the otter through its eye. The otter strongly reproached them for this, saying: "Why do you do this to me as if I were a woman? Go find yourselves women over there in the river." Mawari began to fish the river with an arrow, sticking it into the water five times. On the first four occasions he fished up feminine articles (a menstruation mat, red and yellow dyes, an apron, some beads and a cotton spindle). On the fifth attempt he drew up an anaconda woman and he took her to wife. He repeated the whole operation and gave the second woman to Washi.

Now that they had women the twins naturally wanted to have intercourse, but the women warned them of piranha fish which lived in their vaginas. Washi however could not contain himself and the piranha fish cut off his penis. Mawari managed to cure him, and Washi even grew a new penis, but it was of normal size. Mawari bathed his wife's vagina with strong-smelling fluids which caused the piranha fish to fall out so that he could safely have intercourse with her.

Washi had a number of children by his wife and he took his own daughter as an extra wife. Their progeny became the 'civilised Brazilians'. Mawari kept to his one wife, but all his children, save one son and one daughter who later married, died. His progeny eventually became all the Indians and Europeans. When Mawari's first daughter became emasi (had her first period) his wife told him to place her in a wayapa (seclusion hut) otherwise the okoimo-yenna would come to take her because they were poimo. (1)

This myth is clearly about the origin of marriage, and by implication the origin of the incest taboo. The twins are initially endowed with huge penises which they are particularly careless in using; sexually therefore they are both highly potent and incontinent. The otter, as the object of the twins' sexual attentions, is an appropriate choice since, given that women are eventually derived from water, it has a certain feminine valency. But being amphibious, it is also associated with land and is therefore cosmologically too close to the twins to

be wholly suitable. This cosmological proximity is reinforced by the copulation which takes place through the eye rather than the vagina; that is to say above rather than below. And we might also assume from its rebuke that, in spite of its feminine valency, the otter is male rather than female (cf. Levi-Strauss, 1973, 213). Thus we have three sets of oppositions: land and water, eye and vagina, and male and female, which can all be subsumed under the general cosmological opposition of above and below, the conjunction of which is the mediatory function of the otter.

This conjunction is ultimately creative because it gives the twins access to women who bear them children; but it has its dangers. The sexual incontinence of which both twins are at one stage guilty now gives way to a division. Mawari refrains from approaching his wife until he has taken steps to rid her vagina of piranha fish. Washi, on the other hand, cannot contain himself and suffers dire consequences. Still, he does regain his penis, albeit in diminished form. Thus Washi is a sexually incontinent man who loses sexual potency, whereas Mawari is sexually continent but retains his original sexual potential. The continence/incontinence contrast is further reinforced by the fact that Mawari remains monogamous, unlike Washi who takes his daughter as an extra wife. Mawari, though reluctant to let his daughter marry an anaconda man since he places her in a wayapa, does not indulge in sexual relations with her himself.

For the moment we will say no more regarding this myth. If it is symbolic, we cannot yet say to what it refers. So far we have simply followed Sperber's advice and elucidated some of the structure which inheres in the myth itself by reference to a series of oppositions. Sticking to the original task of understanding the symbolic role of the anaconda, it will now be necessary to refer to a second myth.

Okoiimo-Yenna

Once long ago the Waiwai village was deserted save for an old chacha (grandmother/old woman) and a girl secluded in a wayapa, which she was allowed to leave after a couple of months. The next day the chacha asked the girl to go to the river to fetch some water but warned her not to cast her eyes to the centre of the river. The girl disobeyed however. She looked at the river and immediately saw the whole of the anaconda people rise from the water.

Being scared, the girl ran back to the village and told the chacha what had happened. The chacha hurriedly hid the girl under a pot. The anaconda people arrived at the village and danced outside the house. The chacha tried unsuccessfully to dismiss them with burning pepper. Next she tried to convince them that it was her and not the young girl they had seen. The anaconda people were not fooled and continued dancing.

Meanwhile, an armadillo began to dig a tunnel up from the river to the house, which started to get damp from rising water. Two small fish and two frogs (2) came up the tunnel and discovered the girl under the pot, but the

chacha threw them on the fire to stop them gossiping. Eventually the anaconda people became resigned to the fact that the girl was not there. They went but left behind a series of male articles - feather and bead ornaments, arm bands and hair tubes. Leaving them on the roof of the house they said: "Here is something for poimo to look at when they return." The floor of the house continued to dampen and soon the whole house was flooded. The chacha tried to save its contents but only the anacondas' gifts survived intact. Later they all turned rotten, though the Waiwai never forgot how to use them.

The most striking thing about this myth is that many of its structural elements are the reverse of those in the creation myth. In the first place we have a village occupied solely by women. And secondly the anaconda people who rise from the river are all male. Thus land is associated with the female, and the river with the male. Using the above/below distinction we thus find that above: female; below: male; land; water. Another contrast to which the myth calls our attention is that between a young girl who menstruates and an old woman who is presumably passed her menopause. The anaconda people are interested only in the young girl and reject the chacha outright. Other salient 'mythemes' we might point out are: 1) the young girl suffers visual incontinence; 2) the armadillo effects a conjunction of the two cosmological levels; 3) this conjunction is ultimately destructive; and 4) the anaconda people leave behind a series of impermanent male articles. These all represent further inversions. In the first myth the otter's eye is the passive recipient of human sexual attentions, whereas in the second myth the girl's eyes are the active agents which bring about non-human sexual attentions. In the first myth the twins take a series of feminine articles from the anaconda people, whereas in the second myth the Waiwai are offered a series of male non-articles (because they turn rotten) by the anaconda people.

Here we should pause to catch our breath, since we can play the structuralist's game for a long while yet. Although the 'structures' we have uncovered so far are by no means exhaustive, I think we have done enough to establish an outline of the transformational relationship between the two myths. Where do we proceed from here? Were we to take a Levi-Straussian position we might simply say that: "... if it is now asked to what final meaning these mutually significant meanings are referring the only reply ... is that they signify the mind that evolves by making use of the world of which it is a part" (Levi-Strauss, 1970, 341). Sperber finds this unsatisfactory. We should point out why.

First and foremost Sperber objects fundamentally to the ideas that symbols can be said to signify anything at all, since, he maintains, to say that symbols mean is to mask those features which are constitutive of them. Words are said to be linked through a conceptual mechanism to those areas of knowledge which he calls encyclopaedic and semantic; encyclopaedic knowledge being about the world (e.g. 'The anaconda is a snake with yellow and black markings.'),

and semantic knowledge being about categories (e.g. 'The anaconda is an animal.'). The conceptual mechanism is seen as that which links signifier and signified to give the word or statement its sense or meaning. But in symbolic representations:

"The symbolic signifier, freed from the signified, is no longer a real signifier except by a dubious metaphor whose only merit is to avoid the nature of symbolism, not to resolve it" (Sperber, 1975, 52).

Thus in order to make sense of the statement "Okoimo-Yenna are our pomo" we must first of all realise that, since the statement is symbolic, its reference is at least twice removed from its utterance, and if we want to uncover its reference we have to undertake two quite distinct mental operations. In the first place we have to discern a "focalisation on the underlying condition responsible for the initial defect and (an) evocation in a field of memory delimited by focalisation" (ibid. 123). Thereafter the conceptual mechanism can be said to interpret the statement. But the 'focalisation' and the 'evocation' are prior to the interpretation. Thus a symbolic utterance cannot be said to mean anything in and of itself.

The best way of understanding what Sperber means by 'focalisation' and 'evocation' is to follow through his method with reference to the material at hand. Our two myths are symbolic statements and they are in a transformational relationship. But as yet we have given them no ultimate meaning. In them men have married anacondas, anacondas have walked into Waiwai villages and anacondas have given men gifts. In terms of common-sense such accounts of events are defective. What are the conditions responsible for these defects? Any statement can be said to be a focalisation of attention, but symbolic statements, because they are referred to the encyclopaedi' and rejected, are focalisations which are secondarily referred to another store of knowledge in the passive memory. From this second referral, the individual tests the information in the statement against all the information in the passive memory until he arrives at something which will give the initial statement relevance. This is the process of 'evocation' and the information which is recalled by it represents conceptual knowledge which can be processed by a code which will give it meaning. What sort of knowledge or information which a Waiwai man might possess would count as suitable for giving relevance to our mythical statements within a field of evocation? Since the myths deal explicitly with themes concerning access to women, we could search for information in the conditions of kinship and marriage which apply to Waiwai society.

The Waiwai are fairly typical of Guianese Indians in that their kinship exhibits: "... a lack of emphasis on descent, importance of residence in ordering relationships, bilateral cross-cousin marriage and a tendency towards matrilocality" (Riviere, 1969, b, 162). On bilateral cross-cousin marriage first. Waiwai kinship terminology classifies all female parallel cousins with sisters, and all parallel aunts and uncles with parents. Maternal uncles are classified with fathers-in-law and paternal aunts with mothers-in-law (Fock, 1963, 185-193). Logically then, cross-cousins are actual or potential spouses and this category is known as wayamnu (literally 'my tortoise'

and meaning 'allowed sexual partner'). Ideally therefore marriage is with ETA or MD. It will be remembered that in the creation myth Mawari placed his daughter in a wayapa in order to stop the anaconda people from taking her. Yet according to normal practice the relationship of the girl to anaconda men would be that of FZD. Thus the anaconda men's claim on Waiwai women as portrayed in both myths, and an initiation ritual which all girls who are emasi must go through, is ostensibly a fair one. Yet the Waiwai clearly regard it as dangerous.

Residence rules go some way in explaining this peculiarity. Ideally the Waiwai village is stamped by three sets of relationships known as eta, epeka and awale (ibid. 194-202). Each village is said to consist of an epeka group made up of several individual etas, where etas are individual families and the epeka group an agglomeration of such families related by sibblingship. The village is therefore seen as an extended family group and this does conform to the actual grouping in most Waiwai villages, though they all exhibit this tendency to some degree. Village identity and consanguinity are therefore strongly confounded, though in many cases kinship ties, in terms of actual consanguinity, are clearly fictitious. When a stranger comes to a Waiwai village, and his kinship status is unknown he will normally be declared epeka. This will release him from sexual obligations (since all non-epeka are potential affines) and give him mere economic ones.

Village identity and kinship can therefore be said to operate by the same paradigm, and the epeka itself forms an ideal group of co-operating kin. Sentimentally and economically there are very close ties between siblings, parents and children. Brothers, sons and fathers will willingly share their duties to the family such as hunting, fishing and field-clearing. Sisters, mothers and daughters share their work both in the fields and at home. Indeed the epeka would be a neatly self-contained unit were it not for one thing - the incest taboo - which means that a man must seek a wife outside his epeka.

In most cases, because of the strong epeka identity of any particular village, a man will have to take a marriage partner from another village. If the matrilocal rule is followed this means that he must leave his epeka and live in another village where his relationship to the core of villagers will not be epeka but awale (in-law) and, more specifically, he will be in a mutual relationship of poimo to his wife's brothers. Matrilocality is therefore usually a tremendous wrench for a Waiwai man, and he will do everything in his power to avoid it. One way of doing this is marriage with the ZD, but although the ZD category can be interpreted as being wayamnu, this does not represent an ideal, and this technique of staying within one's own village and natal group has not been systematically exploited as it has been by some neighbouring tribes such as the Trio (Riviere, 1969 a).

The resentment of matrilocality is only heightened by the fact that the husband has to undertake a form of brideservice known as washma. Washma means that a man's father-in-law or brothers-in-law can request him to perform a number of tasks such as field clearing,

hunting or fishing. Such tasks are always undertaken grudgingly and the request is always made through the interlocution of the man's wife who mediates the potentially strained relationship. Ideally matrilocality and washma are lifelong requirements, though they are avoided in a number of ways, the best of which is for a man to let his sister marry his wife's brother. In this way the rights of the two men cancel each other out. But this is seldom possible and the best a man can normally hope for is a favourable negotiation prior to marriage.

Marriage is always preceded by a ceremonial dialogue between the fathers or brothers of the intending spouses, the function of which is to decide the value of the woman who is to be married. In this it is similar to the ceremonial dialogue which is conducted during ordinary trade enterprises (Fock, 1963, 217). The man's father will normally press the case that the woman is not worth a great deal and that brideservice should be waived. In return the woman's father will press for lifelong washma obligations. The resultant decision will primarily concern the length of time washma will have to be served, and this agreement is conventionally binding.

There is of course no direct reciprocity in the trading of women in this way, and though it may be fair to regard an individual marriage as part of a general exchange which guarantees the wife-givers a woman in return at some later date, this does not provide immediate compensation for the loss of the services of a sister or daughter. In so far as exchange is direct this seems to involve a payment of bridgservice for sexual and domestic access. Matrilocality, from one point of view, is a way of keeping your women at home and at the same time incurring extra services from ^{their} ~~husbands~~. However if this is carried to its logical conclusion, any gains from matrilocality are cancelled out by the fact that one's own marriage involves similar duties to one's in-laws. This is why the negotiation of brideservice is so crucial in Waiwai marriage, for it is every man's hope that he will gain a wife but avoid washma. Or to put it another way, one aims to take a woman from the 'outside' without losing the services of one's own female kin, so that taken as a whole an epeka group would aim at maximising its women.

All this information regarding washma, marriage and epeka loyalty is part of every Waiwai man's 'encyclopaedia' - it is knowledge of the world as it actually is. Clearly a search in the passive memory will evoke all or some of these facts of life and give the statements concerning anacondas as brothers-in-law a relevance. In the creation myth we find that maximising his women was something that Mawari was very good at, and his relationship with the anaconda people is conspicuous in its absence of reciprocity. In the first place his marriage to an anaconda woman was not matrilocal but patrilocal and there were no washma duties undertaken for his poimo. Furthermore, Mawari denies okoimo-yenna access to his daughter in spite of the fact that she is wayamnu to them. In this Mawari is a true hero since he achieves what every Waiwai man himself dreams of doing. Or in structuralist terms, we might say that the myth is an inversion of the sociological facts of life since on one level we have marriages that are patrilocal and based on non-reciprocity,

and on the other level we have marriages that are matrilocal and based on exchange.

We can also note another sociological inversion that is pertinent to the myths - the series of attitudes connected with menstruation. When a man marries, the only extra services he receives from his wife which could not have been obtained from a sister are sexual. But when a woman is menstruating sexual intercourse is temporarily taboo. The other side of the coin to the relaxation of sexual ties is the danger of the woman being drawn more comprehensively back to her male kin, a danger that is doubly apparent to a Waiwai man because of the rule of matrilocality. Menstruation is therefore associated with what we might call 'social incest'. Yet in myth we find that although menstruation still represents a danger of women being abducted by brothers-in-law, the women in question are not wives but daughters; not affines but kin. Thus in myth we have a situation where menstruating daughters (kin) are in danger of being abducted by poimo for sexual purposes, and sociologically, a situation where menstruating wives (affines) are in danger of being abducted by poimo for social purposes. This is a particularly artful inversion because it confounds 'social incest' with sexual incest by associating ~~the~~ thanacondas with a lust for menstruating women. (3)

Summing up the information which would give the myths relevance we can say: 1) Men desire taking women from the 'outside'. 2) Men do not wish to lose the services of their female kin. 3) There is a great resentment of brothers-in-law and their ability to dictate partially a man's way of life. 4) Menstruation, because it temporarily relaxes sexual connection, contributes more than a little to this resentment. Little wonder then that we find that our two myths are related to one another by inversion since one represents a conjunction of the 'inside' with the 'outside' which all men desire, and the other a conjunction which they all fear.

We could say more about the relationship between myth and 'reality' if we had more space, but it is clear that Sperber's method seems to have stood us in good stead since we have, at least partially, given the myths a relevance which they did not obviously possess on first encounter. But if we retrace our steps we can see that this usefulness may have been more illusory than real. We can question in the first instance our initial criterion for establishing the symbolic - irrationality.

Irrationality is an idea that is glossed very superficially by Sperber, but it is easy to see its fundamental importance for his whole exposition because it is that which determines whether a statement will be interpretable conceptually through active memory, or symbolically through passive memory. We need not indulge in a long-winded analysis to show how the conditions of knowledge in any particular society are dependent on the nature of the beliefs of that society and the way in which they are articulated. They have been well enough known since Evans-Pritchard (1937). For present purposes we need only note the following. According to the ethnography, I have no reason to suppose that the Waiwai do not regard their myths as both historically true and logically possible. In

fact the contrary is the case. It so happens that the Waiwai regard themselves as living in a world where animals, in their spiritual forms, are constantly interfering in the human social world. Among other things they are said to consume children, and cause and cure sickness (Fock, 1963, 14-37). No Waiwai man would deny that an anaconda was a danger to a menstruating woman. Everything he knows of his environment tells him that the danger is real.

The fact that irrationality is an observer's, and not a native's criterion has interesting implications for the thesis that symbols are not semantic. If we take Sperber's line that symbols are removed from their conceptual implications, it is indeed possible to posit a series of mental operations whereby a symbolic statement undergoes a double referral, the first being met with a rejection from active memory. This is a partial model of the mind; it is supposed to have universal application, and yet the Waiwai do not apply the criterion necessary to put the mental operations in progress. At the same time Waiwai myths are symbolic discourse 'par excellence'.

But perhaps this is being less than fair to Sperber. After all we have already established that his notion of evocation has proved fruitful in delimiting other fields of relevance for Waiwai myths. Could the process be unconscious? This is possible of course but one of its implications, if true, is that symbolism is basically an individual mode of experience. And indeed, Sperber is quite explicit on this count.

"Symbolism is, in a large part, individual, which is doubly incomprehensible from the semiological point of view. Firstly a system of communication works only to the extent that the underlying code is essentially the same for all; secondly a code exhaustively defines all its messages. Symbolism, which is a non-semiological cognitive system, is not subject to these restrictions" (Sperber, 1975, 87).

For any particular symbolic statement the individual is more or less free to search at random in his passive memory for knowledge which will give it relevance. This freedom naturally follows from the freeing of the conventional rules which link signifier and signified in normal, non-symbolic statements. How then do we account for the fact that cultural symbolism leads to a shared orientation among the members of a single society such as we have outlined for the Waiwai? Sperber's reply is that myths, because they are a collection of several symbolic statements strung together, limit the range of possible evocations which will take place in individual minds.

"The more numerous are the beliefs, rituals etc., which are taken into account the more the evocational field is determinate, the more restricted is the range of possible evocations, and the more the members of a single culture are led to similar evocations" (ibid. 137).

But this is merely sleight of hand. 'Similar evocations', being shared, now have the same status as non-symbolic invocations made from active memory. If it is eventually granted that symbols can

possess common associations then there is no reason to suppose that those associations will not enter into public knowledge, and if so, be no different from encyclopaedic knowledge about the world. It becomes increasingly difficult to see how symbolism can be both individual and shared at the same time. Once the symbolic evocations become shared they become available as elements in a communication structure which has a defined code. In short, once symbolic knowledge becomes public knowledge there is no need to posit any mechanism of rejection and secondary referral to passive memory in order to give it relevance.

But the question of evocation remains genuinely interesting for all that, for it certainly seems to be the case that some kinds of statements, such as those found in myth, do have extraordinary evocative power. Even if we do not accept a psychologistic account of evocation, we still need to account for the fact that the myths which we have analysed in this paper encapsulate so much other information. If we look at Sperber's tripartite division of knowledge - semantic, encyclopaedic and symbolic (ibid. 91) - there is an implicit argument that semantic and encyclopaedic knowledge can be regarded as meaningful, whereas symbolic knowledge, because it is ultimately parasitic on the other two, cannot. Semantic and encyclopaedic knowledge, because they consist of statements which pair signifier and signified, are conceptual, whereas symbolic knowledge does not use this pairing and is therefore merely cognitive. But the signified/signifier pairing is not the only thing we can say about meaning. Another salient point about meaning is that it is ultimately grounded in norms, conventions and social rules; or to put it in Wittgensteinian terms, the meaning of a word is identified with its use or uses in a language game (1953). If we accept this relatively uncontentious assertion it has unfortunate consequences for Sperber's whole theory.

For the word okoimo we can see that it has a number of possible uses. We find that it can be used in statements about brothers-in-law, menstruating women, wives and the river, to name but a few. We need have no criteria for judging their meaningfulness other than the fact that the Waiwai use them. Similar lists could be drawn up for such words as emasi and poimo. One of the major conclusions of 'philosophical investigations' which has been put to such devastating effect in recent anthropology (cf. Needham, 1972 and 1974) is that in a search for a theory of meaning it is a mistake to presume that any particular word will have a singular meaning. Rather it will have one or more uses.

But this is precisely the error which we have committed throughout this whole analysis since our irrationality criterion initially allowed us to designate a particular use of the word okoimo as meaningless. Sperber's argument is that statements are 'true' when they are semantically coherent or in correspondence with the world 'as it is', and that by implication only such statements are meaningful - an argument which falls squarely on the side of a positivist interpretation of meaning. But our problem is to locate a statement such as "Okoimo-yenna are our poimo" in the Waiwai 'language-game', not to see whether it violates universal rules of truth.

And what of evocation? This now becomes a question of how many different uses the word okoimo actually has in the language. Thus okoimo can be said to partake in a semantic field (cf. patching, 1975) along with several other words to which it will stand in relationships of opposition, contiguity and overlap. The more a particular word partakes in a wider or narrower field, the more or less it will connote other meanings; the more evocative power it will hold. This is why our initial structuralist analysis still proves illuminating (4): it allows us to sketch roughly some of the conceptual boundaries. Such fields will however be difficult to represent graphically because they will have something of the form of "elastic rubber sheeting" (Leach, 1961, 7). But we can certainly see how okoimo shares and participates in several mutually relevant conceptual spaces along with other terms such as pomo, roupo (menstruation) and incest.

Such sorts of conceptual analyses are of special interest when finally compared with Sperber's theory. They are located, not in psychological notions such as memory, but firmly in the social norms, rules and conventions which govern language use. And since symbols are undoubtedly collective representations this is where they presumably belong. Sperber is under the misapprehension that a criterion of irrationality can allow him to escape the interpretation of symbolism as a social fact. As for Homans and Schneider, so for Sperber:

"Whenever a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon we may be sure that the explanation is false" (Durkheim, in Needham, 1962, 126).

John Morton

Notes

1. This myth, and the one which follows, have been quickly summarised for the sake of space. This has inevitably resulted in a great loss of detail that would be only marginally relevant to the purposes of this paper. For full versions of the myths see Fock (1963, 38-53).
2. The term okoimo-yenna is generic and includes not only anacondas, but also fish and frogs.
3. There are a whole series of associations in Waiwai thought which corroborate this. Menstruation is connected with the moon, about whom there is an incest myth. There is also a ritual which was learned from the anaconda people and seems to be a re-enactment of the moon myth. See Fock (1963, 54-5 and 171-2). Also Yde (1965, 236).
4. It is quite possibly still illuminating from the psychological perspective too. Whereas ordinary language also presumably utilises oppositional logic, it does not seem to be as rigorously structured as myth. Levi-Strauss's analogy between myth and music is perhaps pertinent to this. Sperber is after all chiefly interested in memory,

and memorability is a quality which myth and music undoubtedly share. Indeed this may even hint at a reason for Sperber's pre-occupation with symbolism as individualistic. Music is, more or less, pure form and thus perhaps more than any other mode of communication open to individual interpretation. Mythologiques is a formal analysis of myth and this is why the myths used in that 'laboratory' appear to be so meaningless. We can only uncover the meaning of a myth by reintegrating form with content, a procedure which returns us to cultural particulars and not formal universals.

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Social Anthropology as Discourse

This paper is about a darkness; a profound darkness that lies beyond boundaries we are unable to cross, unable to define, and beyond which is silence, is death. We are unable to cross these boundaries (let us call them 'limits') except in death, for we live in the space defined by these limits; these same limits present obstacles at the extremities of our perception and experience. Or rather, there is a correlation between those limits and the experience of the space within those limits.

Such boundaries are not available for definition, as to define them would be to bring them within their own limits. Such boundaries must be left undefined if they are to limit; such limits are truly death, absence, silence. The space within, and defined by, these limits is characterised by life, presence, discourse, and it is to a consideration of this latter feature, viz discourse, that this paper will be addressed. Much effort will be expended to ensure that a fundamental distinction is recognised between discourse and that linguistic category language.

To the extent that linguists have seen in discourse a well-defined structure; have regarded discourse as a formal system for the transfer of a semantic content; in as much as linguists and philosophers have related sentences, utterances, speech acts, propositions, to some criteria of well-formedness or acceptability; more generally, to the extent that they have substituted an investigation of their own theoretical category language in place of an involvement with discourse, they have conspired to maintain those limits as thresholds of death, absence, silence. By making appeal to some external and arbitrary criteria of acceptability and light, they have invoked darkness and death as necessary correlates. More seriously, to the extent that others have made appeal to those procedures developed in linguistics for the study of language, for the investigation of other social phenomena, then they too should suffer the same indictment.

Let us suppose social anthropology.

Such a supposition is justified to the extent that social anthropology evidences itself. Social anthropology evidences itself in texts.

Let us suppose also that social anthropology is the study of texts. The texts which the social anthropologist studies are those general texts that represent the ever-shifting and necessarily internally productive interweavings of several constituent texts, each of which being dependent for its legitimacy and constituted only as the nexus of relations between texts. Social anthropology occupies precisely such a nexus. Perhaps the word 'text' conjures up the notion of a completed writing or an articulation that is finished; a 'dead stretch', or archive, available for study. As though by a detailed analysis it might be possible to trace connections between those constitutive texts and reconstitute the textual fabric which supports social and cultural life. It has commonly been imagined that the support and coherence of social action has been dependent on a fabric of regulations, a social structure, a code of procedure, rulings of acceptability, enjoying some inorganic authority situated variously above, or below, at least at some different level from

those events observed by the social anthropologist. It was as though the positivist and empirical sociology, dealing with the 'mechanical' relationships amongst events, had constituted a 'physics' of society; whilst social anthropology, with its repeated emphasis on conceptual 'models' and intellectual orientations underlying social actions, had presented a 'meta-physics'. Or better: is a grammar of social action; a programme determining the arrangement of those observed events at the 'level' of observation only, or does the significance of such events depend, partly or wholly, on some transformational history originating in some pre-conscious, atemporal, deep-structural, conceptual framework? It must surely be said that social anthropology is a metaphysics of social intercourse.

It is necessary only to recognise that Social Anthropology evidences itself as discourse, as statements recognisably social anthropological, which, in their materiality, constitute the text of Social Anthropology. Social Anthropology is nothing other than those material statements which are articulated in the discursive field of Social Anthropology. Social Anthropology fulfils no underlying and necessary prediction. It is absolutely text. No purpose would be served in undertaking an analysis of all those statements which together constitute this discursive field with a view to recovering essential and distinctive features, either in subject matter or in style of articulation; neither could appeal be made to some internal dynamic which drives this discourse along. As is the case in all discursive fields, it must be recognised that Social Anthropology does not constitute a discrete set of statements. Any attempt to so delineate Social Anthropology must then be seen as ill-founded.

Linguists and logicians with an interest in language, formal semanticists and grammarians, regard their recorded corpus of utterances ('performance' - Chomsky, 1965:4) as representing a sample of an infinite 'competence' (Chomsky, 1965:4), i.e. that set of utterances which might be 'generated' by the grammar of that natural language; as those propositions which might be compatible with the corpus; as those other sentences which might be regarded as true in relation to some external universe of interpretation or semantic structure. In each case it is by reference to some external framework that a plethora of potential sentences, propositions, or speech acts, might be predicted. From a small and finite corpus of examples linguists and logicians have attempted to construct that infinite set of sentences, propositions, or speech acts, which a competent native speaker would recognise as 'well-formed', 'correct', or 'grammatical'. In terms of such linguistic analysis it has been assumed that the sentences which comprise 'performance' imply, or carry with them, or indirectly refer to, that infinite set of sentences which is 'competence'; point to those possible, more immanent sentences which so far remain beneath the surface of material discourse.

The material sentences and speech acts have thus been regarded as external representatives of an interpretive structure which resides beneath material representation of language. Researchers who have undertaken to analyse a finite sample of this material performance have repeatedly, and in various fashions, attempted to reconstruct this hidden, or disguised, interpretive structure; have attempted to make possible the animation of the remainder of those statements which,

in that they each refer to that same interpretive structure, are compatible with that previously recorded performance. The linguist is concerned to provide for the materialisation of that plethora of sentences, propositions, speech acts, which might provide an exhaustive description of this interpretive structure; or rather, might allow for the realisation of that infinite set of immanent performances which populate a level beneath the surface of material discourse. A concept of linguistic 'levels' is implicit in all such linguistic analyses. Beneath the surface of materiality, and taken as residing alternately in the individual or a collective sub-conscious, is that plenitude of sentences (syntactically, or semantically, correct) or logically compatible propositions; that superabundance of well-formed structures. By promising such a set of possible sentences ('competence' - Chomsky) it has proved possible to trace a unity between those sentences which, in terms of such a presupposition have been chosen to enjoy a material existence; have broken through the threshold of materiality.

A major purpose of this paper is to suggest that the positing and subsequent exploration of linguistic structures, whether syntactic, semantic, or phonologically based, merely enables the description of a well-lighted terrain. By establishing truth, meaningfulness, well-formedness, as though a priori limits of acceptability, an a priori situated both in a different space and in a different time from those acceptable utterances or propositions or speech acts, it is as though the succession of acceptable utterances merely provided further illumination of that frame of reference previously defined by the limits of acceptability.

A savage consequence of such methodological assumptions has been the subjection and enslavement of several generations of linguists to the search for and providing account of the 'meaning' of utterances; the 'meaning' being that fraction of the extra-linguistic structure or framework which that utterance was said to illuminate. When faced with problems of non-correspondence and irregularity several researchers were led to appeal to such notions as 'context' and 'situation' as necessary qualifications. To the extent that they are based upon criteria external to the material utterance, proposition, speech act, all such semantic theories and theories of meaning must be regarded as theories of reference; in as much as only 'acceptable' utterances are said to refer, so is language characterised as that procedure which renders possible a description of that well-lighted terrain; to the extent that our theoretical constructions operate as criteria of acceptability, be they generative procedures such as grammars, or referential frameworks such as semantic structure or universe of interpretation, they demonstrate a sociological presupposition of the 'norm'; implicit in such procedures is a category of 'standard practice' with its corresponding category of 'deviance'.

Thus there is a danger that our theoretical constructions might operate as no more than criteria of acceptability; that they will assume a status as guarantors of truth, meaningfulness, well-formedness; a field of reference which, being outside of historical time, is in danger of becoming established as a priori. Nor will it be sufficient for us to demonstrate that particular theoretical constructions are to be situated in history; that their emergence and articulation both correspond to and are synonymous with a particular historical instance;

that the irruption of such a perspective is not to be equated with the arbitrary workings of a creative subject, or genius; that successive or 'revolutionary' theoretical generalisations are not the works of visionaries or those who lived 'before their time'.

The genius has been taken as that individual who animates the empty forms of language; pointing to, or indicating, a field of meanings, a semantic structure, a conceptual framework, a cognitive system, leaving lesser mortals to make it explicit through words. In rejecting such a notion Foucault implicitly abandons those philosophical themes in which discourse (wrongly assumed to be synonymous with language) is seen as an activity performed by individuals, be it writing or reading; a system of exchange, in which discourse (language) is no more than a set of signs at the disposal of the signifier (cf. Levi-Strauss, 1945).

The significance of a statement does not depend upon any referent external to that statement. This implies that we forsake those epistemological categories and linguistic or philosophical unities, once regarded as a priori, but which are now seen as no more than temporary methodological aids. It is precisely these apparently age-old categories that must be questioned; those pre-formed syntheses that must be suspended. Upon suspending those groupings, which we were in danger of regarding as God-given, it becomes necessary to consider in terms of which other criteria more clearly defined unities might be established. Having dismissed the category 'language' as presenting an unnecessary theoretical obstacle, our work is no longer to be regarded, nor referred to, as linguistic.

Such linguistic analyses as we shall review offer no account of the emergence of a particular sentence, proposition, etc., at its particular instance; no effort is made to provide account of why any particular structure is materialised at a particular instance, rather than any other. In fact, for such linguistic analysis such an account would be unnecessary. A rational unity is proposed amongst sentences in terms of their origin, implying that with any linguistic performance a whole set of connections at the level of pre-material immanence; an echo reverberates between the 'not-yet-said'; a resonance reactivates a whole syntactic, semantic, and logical competence.

By always referring language to a framework outside of (or underlying) discourse, philosophers of language and structuralist-generative linguists have denied significance to the materiality of sentences, utterances, etc.; in considering only those linguistic categories which together comprise their theoretical construct, 'language', they have regarded linguistic events merely as thought clad in signs and made visible by words. In accepting such an account one is faced with the problem of determining the origin of successive frameworks of reference; of accounting for the indisputable fact that enunciative formulations undergo historical change.

Any discursive formation is no more than that set of statements which have been articulated and so define those formations. A discursive formation is defined as that series of statements which constitute it. Such a proposition amounts to a suspension of all references and appeals to unities and continuities established on

the basis of either an external, formal criterion, or a prior classification of subject matter. It must be noted that the acceptance of any such prior classification was tantamount to condemning discourse (as was the category of language) to an eternal role of impotent commentary; a demand that we should regard discourse (language) as but a passive medium by the use of which man is able to articulate his experiences of the philosophical category of the given; a denial of the capacity of discourse to produce objects and concepts; more generally, that we undertake an analysis of the theoretical category language, for which procedure common sense provides an adequate principle of verification (pace A.J. Ayer), rather than to involve ourselves in a generative discourse.

The significance of a material statement is not to be assessed in its own right, as a discrete event. Whereas by making reference to some extra-linguistic authority an isolated sentence might be classified as grammatically-correct, a single proposition as logically true or false, a statement gains its significance in terms of its position, vis a vis other contemporary statements; in relation to those other statements which together comprise a discursive formation. The unity amongst those statements which constitute a discursive formation is not founded upon a common reference to some extra-linguistic framework. A discursive framework is no more than those statements which constitute it.

Although in terms of such an epistemology, or rather non-epistemology, there are no longer grounds for claiming an undisturbed continuity of development in a discursive field (neither by reference to some external and necessary framework or procedure, nor by tracing tenuous logical implications between successive statements), yet the never-stable network of relations which constitute a discursive formation, necessitates a degree of systematisation. The significance of such a proposition is that although it is possible to use the terminology of system, yet it is an open system. It is now possible to argue against those structuralist writers, who, following in the phenomenologist framework, propose a unity amongst natural phenomena corresponding to an essential structuring principle in the human intellect which investigates nature; it becomes possible to criticise those other writers who have proclaimed a necessary structure in the development of history.

But having argued in favour of suspending all those external frames of reference in accordance with which a sentence, or utterance, might be judged acceptable, meaningful, well-formed; notions by appeal to which unities or continuities might be posited between linguistic structures separated across space or through time; not allowing ourselves the convenience and reassurance of an a priori rationality situated either in the enquiring subject or the object of his enquiry, several severe limitations might still be noted on the production of statements. Having suspended such external criteria for unities and continuities, yet there are no grounds for regarding each material performance as a discrete event, totally unrelated to all other either preceding or successive verbal events. How then might it be possible to provide account of such a degree of regularity?

Having suspended all reference to both rational external and anthropologicistic functions and limitations on the production of

statements, it would appear that man has available an infinite potential for producing statements; that it is man's 'natural' inclination to let this potential be realised; to allow this discourse to spread out in every conceivable direction, in search of the limits of discursive possibility. It would imply that, beyond the limitations on the production of statements, there is some expansive, limitless field of discourse which has been repressed and kept silent, which might be restored to speech when these limitations are abolished.

To hold such an opinion would be to accept the 'existence' of an 'unthought' or an 'unsaid' being made available for materialisation through articulation; would be to revert back to the position from which discourse (then language) was seen as consisting only of signs for objects, concepts, or whatever; would be to revert back to that position from which we have struggled so hard to escape, viz that philosophical standpoint from which words and statements were seen only as several disguises for concealing a reality that resided elsewhere; a philosophy founded on the central principle of the 'founding subject' as the originator of the several epistemological frameworks, semantic structures, cognitive systems. Outside of all time all he need do is indicate a field of meanings and let others make it explicit through words. In such a philosophical framework, language was seen simply as an activity performed by individuals - reading, writing, exchange; was regarded as a set of signs at the disposal of the signifier; a means of articulating that which was first of all thought; a function of impotent commentary on a theoretical 'given'.

But surely, you might say, simply to have a philosophy of language which denies discourse the power you say it has, is not, in itself, sufficient to emasculate such discourse. To refuse to accept that the mule will kick is hardly sufficient evidence when the opposite proves to be the case. It is true. One is right to protest. Such philosophical limitations might pose problems for analysis; might raise obstacles to successful exegesis, yet would not deny material discourse its capacity to produce. Two points are raised here: firstly, and in fear of flogging a horse that has been dead for the past several pages; by consistently referring sentences and propositions to some kind of system situated at a different 'level' to that of the material sentences, etc., philosophers of language have been unable to consider the possibility of the materiality of statements being productive. Secondly, and closely related to the first point; upon surveying the research undertaken in the field of linguistics or in the philosophy of language, we note that there has been a continual emphasis on searching 'underneath', or 'behind', the materiality of language, in search of some principle of organisation; on referring the material elements, be they morphemes, words, or classificatory particles, to some 'reality' outside of language. Such analytical techniques reflect a more general philosophical thematic, concomitant with an all-pervasive 'will to knowledge', or rather, 'will to truth'. (Foucault, 1971). The restrictions and limitations on the production of discourse arise primarily as a result of this 'will to truth' having been institutionalised.

It must be noted that each statement must be recognised as a discrete event; can be distinguished from all other statements either

in terms of its material composition, or the site of its articulation in time and space. yet there are conditions under which such statements might be said to be repeatable. These conditions correspond to those categories which we have taken such trouble to reject; categories of grammaticality, meaningfulness, logicality. In terms of such categories sentences, utterances, etc. may be classified as well-formed or ill-formed, true or false, acceptable or unacceptable. Now institutions are founded upon and maintain, produce, in fact are nothing more than, a collection of sentences, propositions, etc. which together articulate a field of reference external to those sentences and propositions, etc. precisely in terms of such a referential criterion institutions are able to decide on the significance of 'novel' sentences, propositions, and the like, and thus pass judgement as to the 'acceptability' of the same. Institutions are responsible for the division of the total field of discourse into disciplines, subject areas; by mistakenly substituting language for discourse institutions have assumed for themselves an authority to exclude those sentences and propositions, or rather statements, which, in terms of their self-defining frame of reference, are ill-formed or insignificant, improper or meaningless. Authority is indeed vested in institutions.

There is a temptation which must be resisted. It might appear that the limitations and restrictions to which reference has been made are constraints directed against the individual; are insidious limitations on the creative capacity of the philosophical subject; present some form of epistemological obstacle, maintained by the 'establishment', and which only the genius can overcome. It may be comforting to imagine that, were such obstacles removed, each individual would be able to materialise such rich notions that remain as yet unsaid. Such romanticism has no place in this work. The limitations which have been outlined are limitations and restrictions on the potentiality of the discourse, not on some ill-defined and frankly speculative notion of 'creative subject'.

Suspending any search for a truth value, or a meaning, hidden within the text; no longer analysing what is said in search of 'what is said'; regarding each statement not merely as the arbitrary projection from a field of the initially thought through the threshold of materiality, there are no grounds for claiming that material statements (written or spoken) conceal or disguise the intentions of a creative subject. Hence all appeals to a unity or continuity amongst statements based upon the presupposition of the rational workings of the human intellect, or a logic of the pre-conscious, might also be suspended.

The site of such a unity is not, however, presupposed. Such a unity might be founded on the use of words or propositions; based on appeal to syntactic, semantic, or phonological structures, or on the ratiocinations of formal logic. Where such an appeal is not altogether satisfactory then there is a further appeal to hidden unities. It must be borne in mind that the presupposition of such a unity is a procedural obligation for the historian of ideas, as it is also for the idealist philosopher and linguistic analyst. A principle of cohesion must be found, at any level from the most obvious and banal to the most ill-founded and tenuous. Such speculative unities might be founded on logical non-contradictions beneath the syntactic and semantic ambiguities, or through analogy and symbolism by means of

an imaginary thematic. In such fashion have these researchers attempted to establish rational unities amongst sentences, propositions, and speech acts, both through time and across discipline boundaries.

A claim is being made that our discourse articulates beyond the limits of any structuralism; that the categories of discursive formation, system of formation, etc. are not susceptible to structural analyses, and that attention must now be focused upon the raw fact of the statements' materiality, rather than on the elucidation of some hidden frame of reference. Rather than constructing, on the basis of recorded data, some form of generative system which might produce a larger corpus compatible with that already examined, it is recommended that attention be shifted to a consideration of the instance, or circumstances, under which one particular statement appears rather than any other.

It must be emphasized that there is to be no interpretation of the texts. Recorded statements are no longer to be seen as providing evidence either for objects of the 'real' world (however this qualifier might be understood), or the intentions of an author. Nor are they to be regarded as data for the construction of a history. It has been mentioned how several restrictions operate on the production of statements; how the tendency of discursive elements to expatiate throughout the whole field of discourse in general is controlled by institutions and authorities of discourse, in addition to more general philosophical presuppositions and themes.

Some might experience an immediate temptation to begin the construction of a 'new' history based on a consideration of such limitations as might be evinced by those recorded statements, found in books, official records, novels, and philosophical treatises; in short, upon a consideration of the archives. Does not the question spring to mind; would it not be possible to trace a history of those constantly shifting limitations on the truth of our human subjectivity which has, for all time, struggled for free-expression? In this interpretation of the text the material statements are once more regarded as the mere surface of the true; that hidden beneath this mantle is a profound and eternal truth that need only to be hinted at to be immediately recognised. It is precisely these speculative and ideational temptations which must be resisted.

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On an Aspect of 'The Raw and The Cooked'

In his 'Overture' Levi-Strauss communicates an insight about artistic languages. "Two articulated mechanisms," he writes, "mesh to form a third, which combines the properties of both." (20) I would like to try to show how in his analysis of music Levi-Strauss loses sight of this insight, and how this loss may have led him to miss the total significance of the structures he has so unerringly and imaginatively revealed in his analysis of mythology, upon which the structure of music is imposed ingeniously, but, in my opinion, misleadingly.

Why did musical language take so long to develop? Why did the Greeks have Homer but no Beethoven? Greek music is now remembered only for the harmonic discoveries of Pythagoras. Let us look into this. The pythagorean philosophical system was a binary system; it involved raising to philosophical status a list of opposites such as Limit/Unlimited, One/Many, and Male/Female to name but three of the most important. Such binarism is evident in Aristotle's key formulation of the Law of the Excluded Middle, which may help to illustrate what I mean by philosophical status. Let us suppose, in Hegelian terminology, a thesis, in this case a note played on a length of string, and an antithesis, another note played on a different length of that same string.

octave		ratio 12 2:1	The numbers represent the positions of the bridge for each interval on the pythagorean monochord. For instance, in the first example the octave interval is produced by doubling the length of string permitted to sound, hence the ratio 2:1. For convenience the line representing the string has been divided into twelve equal segments.
fifth		3:2	
fourth		4:3	
tone		9:8	

Intuitively, the synthesis should be another musical note, another signifier in the same language. But pythagoras synthesises the contrasts by reference to a mathematical relationship. This was the fatal step, as I shall argue. The Medieval and Renaissance composers on the other hand had a different way of conceptualising music. They believed that the basic harmonic unit was a group of three notes, the triad. Once divergence had been established by the formulation of two distinct musical signs, a third was demanded for the purpose of resolution, and the third sign was now musical and not mathematical.

Thus music at last formalised a metaphorical mechanism equivalent to that which had been operating in poetry. The mathematical basis was still embedded in the determination of this third note, but concealed enough to allow the evolution of the well-tempered scale which departs from the pythagorean harmonic system. It is significant that the intervals of the modern triad, namely the major and minor third, were not admitted by the pythagoreans; their mathematical relationships were not simple enough for the linear model that the pythagoreans used. In the well-tempered scale where all the semitones are approximately equal, the third is perhaps less of a perfect consonance to the ear than the fifth or the fourth or the octave. When these latter intervals are allowed to be in perfect harmonic relationship, as they were in medieval times, the difference between them and the thirds is marked enough in terms of consonance for the thirds to have been regarded as dischords even as late as the thirteenth century. This is partly because the third at that time was not calculated by its harmonic ratio, 5:4 in the case of the major third for instance, but rather defined in terms of tones and semitones. Thus in a scale which had not been tempered, the ditone would produce the ratio 81:64 instead of 80:64. However, as the New Oxford History of Music puts it, "It is obvious that the reluctance of theorists to admit thirds ... as consonances was due to the fact that they did not fit into the acoustic theory they had inherited from the Greeks." When the medieval composers finally started using sound rather than ratio as the mediator between two different notes, they were freed from the constraint on thirds. But the well-tempered scale, in attempting to equalise the steps between the octave, to some extent distorts the intervals from their acoustic harmonies. In this sense music has become like poetry, because just as a metaphorical link like 'run' will never provide a completely illuminating relation of dog to stream or stream to engine, so a third note that is not expressing the exact harmonic relation of its predecessors by its frequency will never be a complete resolution; if it were then music as a language would be doomed. Because of the ease of resolution, it would fail to carry enough discreteness to code the variety of human emotion. Such a system would remain at the level of simple melody-and-song, as indeed happened with the Greeks. It could never become a language in the sense that the music of Bach and Mozart and Beethoven and Mahler is a language.

I am aware that the above requires a certain amount of qualification. Greek music was never wholly restricted to pythagorean theory. The system of Aristoxenus, for instance, reveals a variety and complexity of intervals which for melodic potential has no modern rival. Musicologists would say that the principle difference between ancient and modern music is the complete lack of evidence for simultaneous harmony in the former. To compensate for this the Greeks carried the subtleties of melodic differentiation to their limits. But it is undoubtedly the case that most Greek music we are told about was an accompaniment to words. It is likely that the words themselves provided a structure on which variation could centre in an otherwise rather vague and ill-defined system such as the Aristoxenian, appearing as it does devoid of the fundamental rigidity and economy necessary for creating a code with a high generative, but also a high transformational capacity i.e. with swift and almost universal accessibility. I do not want to suggest that melodic subtlety cannot produce discreteness, but that its

discreteness becomes incomprehensible if it is not linked to the structured discreteness of another code, that of language. Melodic subtlety cannot substitute for simultaneous harmony in a purely musical code which is to have the capacity for generating a Beethoven symphony. Similarly it would be hard for simultaneous harmony to arise in a system that was very developed melodically, in the sense of using quarter-tones etc., because of the concomitant lack of basic harmonic sound. A return to the pythagorean simplicity at the start of the middle ages was necessary for the discovery of simultaneous or synchronous harmony. Again, while metaphor and harmony link two ideas in one synchronous event, melody can only link ideas in the diachronous manner. A purely melodic line sufficient to code for the amount of information stored in a classical symphony would be very long indeed, even if it used quarter-tones to produce increased variety among its intervals. Such length in a code as abstract as that of music runs the risk of confusion, of the audience forgetting the thread of the argument.

Now what led me to doubt that Levi-Strauss had fully applied the insight he later develops on continuity and discreteness to his analysis of music in his 'Overture' was his brush with serial composition. It is obvious that Levi-Strauss has little time for serial music, and this is perhaps why he has failed to give it his usual acuity of attention. I will start by outlining the process of composition in a post-serial work as expounded by the composer Peter Maxwell Davies in a lecture at the Dartington Summer School of Music this year, in the belief that post-serialism can throw more light on serialism than can an approach from classical idioms. In composing 'Ave Maris Stella' Davies began with a nine-note plainsong melody which he proceeded to transform by using what he called a magic square. The intricacies of the mathematical mechanism need not concern us; the inevitable charge of arbitrariness must be dealt with however. Let us return to Levi-Strauss; his argument against the validity of the serial language is that it is not related to the physiological basis of its listeners, or not related closely enough.

"Music operates according to two grids. One is physiological - that is, natural; its existence arises from the fact that music exploits organic rhythms and thus gives relevance to phenomena of discontinuity that would otherwise remain latent and submerged, as it were, in time. The other grid is cultural; it consists of a scale of musical sounds of which the number of intervals vary from culture to culture. The system of intervals provides music with an initial level of articulation, which is a function not of the relative heights of the notes (which result from the perceptible properties of each sound) but of the hierarchial relations among them on the scale.." (16)

It can be seen here how Levi-Strauss, in talking about organic rhythms without presenting any cultural rhythmic counterpart, has blurred the whole issue. The fact that the early medieval composers had a ternary rhythmic system, while our own classical system is binary, illustrates the platitude that rhythm is as culturally determined as intervals. The (in Levi-Strauss' terminology) natural counterpart to cultural intervals must be the intervals which are a function of the relative

heights of the notes. Similarly, a musical rhythm is the cultural counterpart of a physiological rhythm, as Levi-Strauss fails to imply later when he says:

"The musical emotion springs precisely from the fact that at each moment the composer withholds or adds more or less than the listener anticipates on the basis of a pattern that he thinks he can guess, but that he is incapable of wholly divining because of his subjection to a dual periodicity; that of his respiratory system, which is determined by his individual nature, and that of the scale, which is determined by training." (17)

He is committing what I term the Pythagorean sin, he is applying a different language to create a relationship between two discrete entities in an initial language, thereby undermining the whole validity of that initial language. In fact classical music in both its intervallic and rhythmic aspects functions on a triadic system as outlined above. There are two signifying parts; the expected, which is determined by the structure, and the unexpected, which is represented by departures from the structure. Neither of these is natural; thus neither of the two grids which Levi-Strauss regards as prerequisites for the musical language is natural; they are, in the words of the insight I quoted at the beginning, "Two articulated mechanisms mesh(ed) to form a third, which combines the properties of both." What are these two articulated mechanisms in music? I have called them the expected and unexpected, but this is only their underlying structure. When Mozart writes a sonata in A minor, he establishes at the outset of the work a set of seven notes out of a possible twelve - these are his expected notes. When he also writes in common time, that is four beats to a bar, when he could have chosen two, three or five etc., once more he is delineating an unexpected, this time of rhythm. The antithesis to these delineations is not the natural, organic rhythms of each individual, or the natural harmonic relationships of the notes, but quite simply any venture outside the key or the rhythm initially delineated, on condition that the venture does not move outside the total set of the system. The total set of the system is represented in the case of classical music by tonality, and the laws of rhythmic regularity which accompany it. The third articulated mechanism stipulated by Levi-Strauss is of course the exposition of the whole piece.

A passage from Schoenberg's writings on music in 'Style and Idea' may serve to illustrate this:

"Every tone which is added to a beginning tone makes the meaning of that tone doubtful. If for instance G follows after C, the ear may not be sure whether this expresses C major or G major or even F major or E minor; and the addition of other tones may or may not clarify this problem. In this manner there is produced a state of unrest or imbalance which grows throughout most of the piece, and is enforced further by similar functions of rhythm. The method by which balance is restored seems to me the real idea of composition."

That is to say music resolves itself, it does not directly resolve or mediate between the natural and the cultural. Does this contradict the whole import of 'The Raw and the Cooked'? Not at all.

To go back now to Maxwell Davies and the composition of 'Ave Maris Stella'. It will be remembered that Levi-Strauss argues that serial music is not closely enough related to the physiological. This may be so, but I cannot see what relevance this could have to his argument. If he makes musical language the antithetical grid to natural rhythms and sounds why should he wish them to be close together? It seems to me that he has lost himself, and retreated to a more intuitive point of view that in fact does not follow logically from his previous reasoning. Now Maxwell Davies expressly declares that he is writing music with a tonal background. Likewise, Hans Keller in a recent article in the 'New Statesman' has pointed out how this applies to the majority of the so-called 'atonal' composers. The problem that the serialists encountered when they attempted to extend tonality to include all twelve notes and every rhythm of the classical system as the initially expected was that they were left without any unexpected at all; in fact they were in the mire of continuity which Wagner's chromaticism had hinted at. They ran the risk of each piece signifying exactly the same thing, and thereby nothing at all. It was in answer to this that Schoenberg came up with the solution of the note row as a means for establishing discreteness. And, lo and behold, he discovered that this solution was in reality based on traditional harmony. What distinguishes one note row from another is not a difference in notes, in the way that a difference in notes is the distinguishing feature between say C major and F sharp major, but a difference in the harmonic relationships of the notes themselves. There were always twelve notes in a row, and they were always the same notes, but each different note-row implied a different approach to tonal harmony. And in Webern's triads we find the significant reduction of harmony back to its initial conception as three notes, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, but a synthesis which is itself the statement of another thesis in any language worth its salt. Schoenberg, the founding father of serialism, puts it like this:

"I have stated in my *Harmonielehre* that the emphasis given to a tone by a premature repetition is capable of heightening it to the rank of a tonic ... It seemed in the first stages immensely important to avoid a similarity with tonality. Through the necessity of using besides the Basic set its Retrograde, Inversion, and Retrograde Inversion the repetition of tones will occur more often than expected. But every tone appears always in the neighbourhood of two other tones in an unchanging combination which produces an intimate relationship most similar to the relationship of a third and a fifth to its root."

In serial music, in a sense what was unexpected in classical tonality became the set of the expected, and what had been expected became at first, as Schoenberg implies was necessary in a language struggling to establish itself as a new code, the unacceptable, but very quickly merely the unexpected. Maxwell Davies uses the magic square not as an arbitrary definition of what is to be the expected, but as a means toward establishing and maintaining what unexpected paths he wishes to explore. The expected is the whole tonal and rhythmic compass now, including the old classical subsets of this. Thus it has become the function of the modern composer not to make clear what is expected but what is unexpected. This may be a harder task, but it is slowly growing more evident that the unexpected must lie in the approach to a harmony, that is to a group of three notes, a block which it was the function of classical music to establish, and which like the components of Levi-Strauss' myths, can now be used as a support in another edifice.

To end with, let us take another look at the Greek world of Pythagoras and the idea of polarity. As G.E.R. Lloyd has pointed out in his book on the subject, the Pythagorean list of ten pairs of opposites bears a considerable resemblance to the pairs of opposites found among many primitive societies today. He cites, for instance Van de Kroef on the Amboyna and Needham on the Meru. Both these tribes have sets of opposites which contain the Pythagorean pairs, Left/Right and Male/Female. Lloyd also remarks that it is interesting that members of these societies often describe their own social organisation in terms of a simple dualist structure even when the reality is in fact more complex. Binarism is the simplest way of coding discreteness. But in the presocratic philosophers we encounter for the first time something that goes beyond it. Instead of using myths to mediate between two poles, as Levi-Strauss argues the South American Indians do, and as it could be argued Homer and Hesiod do, the presocratics began abstracting the mediating elements from their myths. When Thales maintained that everything was water, he was making, or at any rate representing for us, a breakthrough of immense significance. Water, remember, is one of the mediating elements Levi-Strauss abstracts from the Bororo 'Birdnesting' myths. If the mediating element can somehow be regarded as what is common to the two poles, then Aristotle's statement that Thales regarded water as the material principle sounds like an abstraction of that which everything material has in common. Again, when Heraclitus declared: "This world was not created by either god or man, but has always been and is and will be an everliving fire," "(kosmon tonde oute tis theon oute anthropōn epoiēsan, all' ēn aei kai esti kai estai pur aeizoon) we cannot help but remember that fire was the mediating element abstracted by Levi-Strauss from the Ge myths explaining its origin. We should also note that the Greek word *kosmos* did not come to be used like our English 'cosmos' until long after Heraclitus wrote. To him it meant 'world-order' with the emphasis on ordering. It is almost as if Heraclitus had anticipated Levi-Strauss, and that he, not the musician Richard Wagner, was the first structuralist. But in fact the crisis in thought which produced the self-consciousness we are heirs to in our attitude towards mythology had not yet come about, even though Heraclitus may have helped precipitate it. It was Parmenides who crystallised the problem pure and simple for all future generations of western thinkers. He is perhaps more approachable in this context through the paradoxes of his disciple Zeno. Zeno set

out to demonstrate the difficulties inherent in discreteness. If there is actual discreteness in time and space, then Achilles never catches the tortoise. This does not attempt to prove that it is impossible for Achilles to catch the tortoise, as some have suggested, but rather that to think in terms of discrete entities is in some way fostering illusion. Zeno was working from the basis of parmenides doctrine that everything is one and continuous (hen sunechen). It has been thought that the parmenidean Way of Truth, his claim that there can only be 'what is' (to eon), a single, homogeneous, unchanging sphere of being, is a primitive attempt at a logical world, an archaic Tractatus, or at any rate a philosophy of mind rather than of matter, and that his Way of Seeming with its fundamental opposition of Day and Night is inserted by way of condescension to the material world of the senses, even though he regarded this as illusory. Nothing in my opinion could be further from the truth. For parmenides, the binary world of opposites is derived from the way our perceptions order reality. In our actual experience, however, nothing conforms to the ideal types of polarities. The real material world is not sensed as composed of opposites, it is only ordered in this way, the pythagorean way, by our reflection upon what the senses give us. But the ordering of the world into discrete parts produces what Levi-Strauss in his analysis of the Bororo and related myths calls 'Negativised Being', and what parmenides some two and a half thousand years before him called (to me eon) of which the former is as good a translation as any. parmenides said, quite rightly, that there is no such thing as this 'Negativised Being', that the space around entities posited to maintain their terminological discreteness is an illusion fostered by terminology:

"For they made up their minds to name two forms of which they ought not to have named one - here is where they have erred - and judged them to be opposite in body and given them discrete signs." (morphas gar katethento duo gnōmas onamazein, tōm mian ou ohreōn estin - en hō peplanēmenoi eisin - t'antia d'ekrinanto demas kai sēmat' ethento choris ap' allēlōn).

By no stretch of the imagination is parmenides describing how the world appears, even to these heretics; he is describing how the world is ordered by them. Hence the use of 'gnōmas 'katethento', 'onamazein', ''ekrinanto', 'sēmat 'ethento', all words implying conscious structural imposition. It seems to me that parmenides was a fully-fledged structuralist, and I mean it in this sense: he understood that thought involved the use of codes, and was the first critic of those who mistook the code for what it codified. His description of reality may be full of fossils in which this mistake had been made, but at least he was able to perceive that what codes for reality in human culture is always less than what it codes for, and is always changing. In this sense it is perfectly legitimate to call reality saturated and unchanging. What the earlier Greek philosophers had done (and what Aristotle was to do later) was to identify single objects or materials, or small collections of these, with reality. The pythagoreans on the other hand identified with it an abstract entity, number. parmenides was the first to identify reality, (to eon) 'what is' with itself, and thus restore validity to the mythological and artistic ways of thought being encroached on by physical scientists who refused to believe there was anything in Homer's gods and goddesses.

I have discussed parmenides to what may seem irrelevant length because I think it not unreasonable to suggest that someone who had just emerged from the mythical way of thought was as intuitively clued-up as to its nature as Levi-Strauss himself (with after all the whole history of Western European thought to clear out of his path) and that parmenides in one way can enlighten us on why Levi-Strauss (as I hope to have shown) has made this puzzling musical misanalogy. If we let ourselves extrapolate along the lines suggested by the analysis of parmenides, mediation surely becomes a reminder of the reality for which we cannot code, the 'Negativised Being' our terminological structure generates, and which is in fact just like the rest of being. Every metaphor, every harmony, every myth is in fact a reminder that there is not a void between the two polarities, that they are merely two extremes of a continuum. Levi-Strauss' discussion of discreteness and continuity implies a realist viewpoint, a Kantian acknowledgement that human cultures cannot exactly know or express the reality they sense, yet that at the same time there must exist a reality independent of our structures for us to impose our structures upon. Thus it does not matter what the mediation consists in, since it cannot hope to be an accurate description of what actually obtains. The mediator is that part of the code which stirs us to realise that the code is only a code, and in doing so to approach reality more closely as a consequence. Hence the Hegelian synthesis. To hypothesise, as I think Levi-Strauss wishes to, that music, like cooking, mediates between nature and culture is ambiguous. By nature does he imply the reality of nature or our view of that reality, and by culture does he mean our view of our culture or the code of culture itself? By rights he should be referring to the inner pair of this chiasmus. But when he claims that the natural in the form of physiological rhythm and the cultural in the form of the arbitrary scale are both parts of the musical code I became suspicious. As I have argued above, physiological rhythms are coded for in music, they are not themselves the code. It is not altogether clear that he wishes us to regard the Raw as a cultural view of nature rather than nature itself; certainly his musical analogy casts doubt on his intentions.

Nevertheless, this is not on the most fundamental level a criticism. After all the myth of mythology, in its mythological role as mediator, is not expected to be an infallible representation of what is the case, but rather should serve as a reminder that discreteness in human thought is required to think rationally at all, that the contrary views this produces are the code and not what is being coded for. We should not be too surprised if the mediator itself contains fossils of what it is mediating, just as the briocheur's finished product, in 'The Savage Mind', is expected to contain hints that its parts have had and could have other functions. 'The Raw and the Cooked' contains implicit in it the ideas necessary to rectify the damage done by the musical analogy.

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The Impossibility of Solving the Highland Problem.

There is a sense of depression and fatalism about in the Highlands and Islands of north-west Scotland. The rate of unemployment is high; food and other essential goods are made more expensive than elsewhere by the high cost of transport; all the men seem to be old or alcoholic, or both; the Gaelic language is becoming extinct; and all the young men and women are leaving for the bright lights, for the attractions of the modern world. As a recent correspondent to the Stornoway Gazette wrote:

"Twentieth century circumstances have posed new problems for the crofting people in place of congestion and land hunger. Now sucked into the mainstream of British social and economic life, our fringe communities are gushing out life-blood at an alarming rate. The young folk are going, their credo inevitably equating 'getting on' with 'getting out' (1).

The Highlands are an area of decline, an area where everyone's thoughts are of past glories and present gloom. There is said to be a Highland problem, and no one has yet found the solution.

The most saddening thing about the Highlands is that the problem has been there for so long. Daniel Defoe wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in a poem entitled "Caledonia: A Poem in Honour of Scotland:"

"Wake Scotland, from thy long Lethargick Dream,
Seem what thou art , and be what thou shalt seem;
Shake off the Poverty, the sloth will die,
Success alone, can quicken Industry.

To Land Improvement, and to Trade apply,
They'll plentifully repay thy Industry."

(Defoe 1707: 54 - 5).

It is a poem that could have been written by a member of the Highlands and Islands Development Board (H.I.D.B.) more than 250 years later (2). The Board was set up in 1965 to attempt to solve the Highland Problem, one more in a long line of agencies which have tried to Improve the Highlands. But, since the Problem has been with us for so long the important question becomes not what can be done to stop and perhaps reverse the decline, but why there is any social life left there at all. Surely the end of the road must have been reached by now? the argument of this paper is that it is only by consideration of this question that we can come to any useful conclusion about the Highlands; that is, that there is no solution to the Highland Problem. What is so depressing about the Highlands and Islands is that the problem as it is at present constituted permits no solution: the road is endless.

People now date the start of the decline at the crushing of the clans by Butcher Cumberland in 1745. The process of destruction of the old ways of life has been carried on ever since. Some accuse the English of genocide (Ellis 1969:17), meaning that the eradication of the old Highland culture is as terrible as the murder of the inhabitants themselves. The English are explicitly compared with the mid-twentieth century Germans (loc. cit). Francis Thompson sums up the prevailing attitude when he says:

"All ethnic groups which differ in outlook, lifestyles, culture and language have had the "colonizing" pressures of master races; and the Gaels were, and indeed are today, in no way different from the Red Indians, the Jews, the Eskimoes, and the vanishing tribes of the Amazon river, all of whom face the prospect of extinction by processes of assimilation before another century is out" (Thompson 1974:62)

The English are the colonial power which has swamped the Highlands and has destroyed their identity. The Gaels are just one more subject race.

This is seen then to be a process of acculturation, of social change, of modernization, perhaps of Westernization. The Highlands have been the scene of a clash of two cultures; the dominant English and the noble, but defeated, Highlanders. The recent history of the Highlands is seen as the steadily increasing erosion of old ways of life, and of the drawing of the area into the wider social and economic life of Britain and the world. Increasing communications whether through railways and roads or through the spread of the English language, have forced the Highlanders to adopt new ways. There are still a few elements of the traditional life left, but they are fast disappearing.

The picture of traditional life has been painted by Eric Cregeen in the following words. Traditional Highland society :

'....possessed the characteristics of many more modern 'primitive' peoples. It is a society based on kinship, in which status is fixed by inheritance, and authority goes by descent. Knowledge and skills are handed on by example and word of mouth and are not exposed to overmuch questioning so that custom controls most of life. Religion is compatible with magic and with a widespread belief in witchcraft. The economy is largely a subsistence one, with only a modest degree of specialisation and markets are narrow. Central government is weak, and law and order are frequently disturbed by powerful magnates and tribal chiefs". (Cregeen 1971:150-1).

The echoes of early evolutionary anthropology, of for example Maine, are clear. No evidence is ever produced to justify this picture, however. In fact people seem quite ready to admit that there is very little evidence to support this view of life before the Fall. Professor Smout, in a widely acclaimed history of Scotland, admitted that there were only two extant reports of life before 1745 - those of Burt and Martin (Smout 1969:332) - yet he goes on to conclude that:

"The Highlands were tribal in the exact sense that nineteenth century Africa was tribal.....At the root of Highland Clanship lay the myth that all in a given clan were descended from a common ancestor who had, in some incredibly misty period of the past, founded the tribe" (Ibid: 334).

He says this on the basis of two reports. He recognises that Burt spokein words that might have come from a Victorian explorer of darkest Africa (col. cit.) but fails to ask why this was, and what effect this

might have had on Burt's reports. Highland history, its social and economic life, are continually being rewritten so that the traditional way of life that used to exist appears to be disappearing. It does not matter, perhaps, that it is being rewritten on flimsy evidence, since this makes the rewriting easier to see. The view of the Highlands is clear, though. It is of a traditional culture that is being attacked, and undermined by modernizing influences.

Some "traditions" are being eaten away and replaced by "modern" practices. The cas chrom, the one-tyned foot plough of the Highlander, has disappeared. This tradition has definitely gone. But the category of tradition itself remains, and in fact, the disappearance of the cas chrom is seen as evidence of decline now. Once an object like this has disappeared it becomes part of tradition, part of what was. But what is disturbing is that it stays and is used as an argument for decline now; in this sense it is part of what is. The cas chrom still exists. At Kilmuir, in the north of Skye, there is a museum devoted to crofting life. It is called a 'Folk Musaum'. It is a taigh dubh (4) with a thatched shed containing an old four-shaft loom next to it. Inside there are two main rooms separated by a boxed-in bedroom. On the walls there are claymores and a decayed set of bagpipes. The curator told me that the building was still a working croft until twenty years ago. Were they really using claymores in the fifties? The problem is that everything has become conflated, the whole of the Highland past is added together and becomes traditional.

This past is used to justify the present. The current decline, the depression and the apathy, are justified by the past glories. Once there was a system of life which was perfectly adapted to its surroundings. "While Hebrideans were dependent on their environment for their whole subsistence a very beautiful ecological adaptation to circumstances took place..." (Darling 1968: 35). However, this "beautiful ecological adaptation" has been attacked by the sheep of the Clearances, and by the deer of the sporting lairds, and so now we have the "sick but surviving culture of Highland Gaeldom" (Darling 1955: 281). The Highlands are seen to be declining; this decline is relative to the Traditional Past. This "sick but surviving culture" represents the remnants of the past, and it is this that constitutes the Highland Problem.

The problem facing those who try to solve the Highland Problem, such as the H.I.D.B., is that if there is a clash of two cultures in the Highlands, on which side should they intervene? Collier, in a book entitled 'The Crofting Problem', said:

"Despite our store of information about the Highlander, there has not been sufficient recognition of the basic issue: to what extent can or ought the Highlands maintain their distinctive qualities of social organisation and outlook in an age of easier intercourse, universal education and economic interpenetration?" (Collier 1953:10).

The Traditional

The traditional and the modern can be seen as two categories that are in constant competition. Individual elements may change but the categories remain. The crofting system, for example, was once a modern influence, but it is now part of the traditional way of life that must be preserved (see Hunter 1976). Folklore is one of the standard elements of a tradition, and the contents of the category 'folklore' are always declining. ~~People speak of the folklore that must be collected before it disappears.~~ It does not matter what the facts are, what empirical evidence is presented, it is as if 'folklore' were just an empty space. Any fact could be fed into it with the result that it would be thought to be in decline. The idea that Gaelic folklore has only recently started to decline, and that somehow, only a few years ago, everyone sang, danced and told stories is a falsehood, since folklore has always been disappearing. Martin Martin, a gentleman of Skye, for example, wrote in 1703:

"There are several instances of heathenism and pagan superstition among the inhabitants of the islands related here; but I would not have the reader think those practices are chargeable upon the generality of present inhabitants, since only a few of the oldest and most ignorant of the vulgar are guilty of them" (1934:65).

Folklore was disappearing even in the late seventeenth century when Martin toured the Outer Isles.

A very clear example of the way in which the clash between traditional and modern has been controlled is in the case of the pibroch, the grand music of the bagpipes. There are something like three hundred tunes within the canon of pibroch, and these are strictly limited. Very occasionally new tunes are added, but these have to come up to very strict standards. It is said that after the 1745 rebellion the bagpipes, the national instrument of the Highlands, were banned. The only way, therefore, of remembering the old tunes was by a very strict control, under which no variations could be allowed. Thus we have the form of the present day pibroch, of a ground with a series of increasingly complex variations. There are other sorts of pipe music, but pride of place is reserved for the pibroch. This is the height of the art, and the music which outsiders find so hard to appreciate. These tunes must be played with no variation from the traditional way. The justification for this strict, unalterable structure is based upon the eighteenth century turmoil in the Highlands. Only by strict adherence to the traditional method could the national music of the Highlands be preserved. Within the canon of pibroch there can be no modern. There are changes of style-complication for its own sake is not so admired now as it once was - but pibroch itself remains inviolable, stuck in the eighteenth century. It might be possible to play jazz on the bagpipes, but that could never, never, be pibroch.

The bagpipe-playing, kilt-wearing Scot is part of the traditional image of the Highlands. One of the major figures in the establishing of this myth was undoubtedly Sir Walter Scott:

"Scotland will never be able to repay her debt to Sir Walter Scott for his revelation of that glorious region of beauty known as the Trossachs. He not only revealed the beauty of the landscape but he has peopled the district with personalities whose names and deeds will be remembered as long as these scenes remain." (Anon 1931).

It was Scott who revealed the Trossachs. Before Scott the scenery did not exist. This particular guide represents the decay of nineteenth century romanticism to the sickly sweet, yet patronisingly arrogant view of the Highlands on the frontispiece: a picture of two military pipers bordering a pride of Highland terriers, white, furry, and appealing, bounding over the mountainside to welcome the reader to "Scotland: Picturesque and Romantic!"

The idea that at one time the kilt and the bagpipe were part of the everyday life of the Highlander also led Professor Blackie to recommend their use in Highland education. J.S. Blackie was a professor of Greek at Glasgow university who became fascinated by the Highlands, with their traditions. A man who might well have been regarded elsewhere as an eccentric, who thought that Greek had Celtic origins, he was a major figure in the late nineteenth century debate on the Highlanders and their problems. His concern for the true past, for the traditional glories, led him to recommend that in Highland schools:

"Highland subjects will be treated with a national preference - sections of history in which the Gael had performed the principal part will be discussed in fuller detail. Highland songs will be sung in every class, and the most sublime passages of Ossian, along with the beautiful descriptions of scenery in Duncan Ban and Alister MacDonald will be recited (5) and, perhaps acted in character on show days. Shinty, of course, and every characteristically Highland sport, will be cultivated on holidays. The picturesque, the patriotic, and healthy Highland garb will be worn by all the scholarsWith or without the Gaelic language he will grow up a Highlander, as he was born, and present to the world, undisguised and unperv- erted, one of the finest types of manhood that history knows" (Blackie 1877:388).

Blackie thus wished to change the Highlands, to Improve them. His solution to the Highland Problem was to get back to the traditional way of life. This is a common view. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland, it is often said, have been, and still are, bedevilled by Improvers; those who look at the Highland way of life and determine that it is inadequate. There are those who say that the Highlands must be modernised as soon as possible, but the people who complain most are those who follow in the path of Scott and Blackie. They say that the way of life in the Highlands is not what it once was; that it has deteriorated from a once fine and noble state of society to the present state of apathy. It is said that only a century ago the townships were self-sufficient (Gibson 1946:265). Yet one only has to remember the agitation of the 1880's, or the famines of the late 1840's to realise that people have for a long time been complaining in the same way. Wordsworth's arrival at the island of Iona was spoilt by the appearance of beggars, who marred his view of the Traditions.

"How sad a welcome! To each voyager
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.

(Wordsworth 'Iona (Upon Landing). 1947:42).

This is the approach of those who would set up a kind of human zoo, where the inhabitants would speak Gaelic, live in black houses, eat potatoes, salted herrings and porridge, and where the tourist and the social scientist could go to study the native with his 'simple' and 'ancient' way of life. It is sad to see people in an apparent state of alcoholic apathy, but it remains necessary to ask why the Highlanders are seen in this way. The traditions of the past are a fundamental feature. Thus when Calum MacLean says that "Life at times was a hard struggle, but the straths and glens did breed a sturdy stock, a race more generously endowed both mentally and physically than the football fans and cinema devotees of our day" (1959:17). It must be realised that he too is a potential Improver, someone who stands outside the Highlands and Islands and judges them to be below standard. With a claymore in his hand the bottle throwing football hooligan is transformed into a noble savage.

The Highlands.

I have talked so far of the Highlands, or of the inhabitants of the Highlands, without defining exactly what I meant by these terms. This is clearly not a simple geographical category: such ideas as the 'Highland Line' are of little value since they fail to distinguish between 'True Highlanders' and those that merely live north of this line. When William Ross, then Secretary of State for Scotland, was announcing the formation of the H.I.D.B. in 1965, he talked of the Highlander as "the man on Scotland's conscience". In order to explain what he meant it is necessary to relate the idea of the Highlander to the traditional.

If we read Calum MacLean's 'The Highlanders' we find that the book chronicles a succession of meetings with old men and women who were the last remaining people in that area to speak Gaelic, but who were, above all else, repositories of tradition. They could remember the folk tales and the songs, the reasons for the names given to all the local landmarks, their grandfathers had been alive at the time of the famine, and so on. The true Highlander is part of tradition, and as such is disappearing too.

This definition of the Highlander has practical results in the field of development policy. If the true Highlander is a rural, traditional beast then there is no way in which a development policy can include, for example, the possibility of urbanisation. The H.I.D.B. implicitly recognised this when they argued that crofting, whilst inefficient, should be maintained since it was part of the traditional way of life.. Francis Thompson has talked of the 'Resurrection of a Culture' (1971) meaning the creation of a Highland society based upon the past. In another article, entitled 'The Optimum Highland Society' he points out quite rightly that the policy of the H.I.D.B. will lead to urbanisation, and that the idea of the urbanised Highlander is a contradiction. Therefore the policies of the H.I.D.B. will lead to the death of Highland culture. Drawing on Plato, Owen and Fourier he says that the Optimum Highland society would be based upon units of no more than 5000 people. Anything larger than this would result in the death of Highland culture.

One of the failures of the H.I.D.B. has lain in the inability to see, or refusal to admit, that a mere statistical increase in population is an insufficient solution to the Highland Problem. On the one hand they claim that their results will be judged by their ability to hold population in the true crofting areas; that is, to maintain the traditional way of life. On the other, they proclaim proudly that the 1971 census showed an increase in population for the first time for over a century. Yet this increase is more than accounted for by the modernised, urbanised, industrialised areas of Easter Ross, Inverness and Lochaber. The "true-crofting areas" are still decreasing in population.

One of the most interesting things that is happening to the category Highlander is its absorption of the idea of the Lowlander, leaving only opposition to the English. This is a movement that was apparent in 1822 when Sir Walter Scott, dressed in a kilt welcomed George IV to Edinburgh. (The fact that Scott had a Campbell great-grandmother is precisely the point). It is apparent in the Prebbles that are in the pockets of every neophyte nationalist. John Prebble's work on the Clearances (1969) itself argues that the exploiters were the Lowlanders, or Highland lairds corrupted by Lowland Scots influences. Now the Lowland Scots' exploitation of the Highlands is used as an argument for nationalism, through the device that Sorley MacLean uses when he talks of "the atom bomb of Anglicised landlord capitalism," when he means the clearances (1969:21 my emphasis).

Development and Social Change.

The aim of those who attempt to solve the Highland Problem is to cause some social change. There is a problem which needs a solution, which will mean a degree of social change. If Highland society is on the decline, it has to be shown exactly why it appears to be continuously breaking down. Some talk of a "continuity and change", of "conflict and change." The implication of this approach to change is that one day there will be an end to the process. Against this view, I maintain that the Highland way of life is a category, just like folklore, which is always declining. The interesting thing about the decline of the Highland way of life is that people have been talking about it for so long. Folklore is, of course, a perfect example of this since it is always being collected on the point of disappearance. If it were not just about to disappear then it would not be folklore. But this works just as well for economic life. There have been several times when it seemed possible that things might improve, whether through kelp, or fishing, or oil, but all the time people have carried on talking about the Highland Problem, about the inevitable demise of Highland society. One could turn the question round and ask rather "Why has Highland society lasted so long?" The point is that the categories of traditional and modern shift their boundaries but maintain their essential opposition.

The agricultural system provides an example. It is defined as part of the traditional way of life. But the consequence of defining it in this way is that it cannot be changed; and the problem therefore for development agencies is that they are trying to change something which is defined as unchanging. They can, like Gillanders (1962, 1968), insist that the only solution is the operation of harsh economic laws, but then these will destroy the whole category of crofting. The debate on the 1976 Crofting Reform Act has been centred along these lines. The object of the act is to allow crofters, traditionally tenants, to become owner-occupiers. The debate has centred on whether or not the introduction of market forces will destroy crofting. There can be no true reform of the category crofting, since any such reform either leaves crofting unscathed or else destroys it.

Crofting.

Crofting is the traditional method of agriculture. The H.I.D.B. have stated that whilst crofting may be inefficient it must still be maintained, since it is part of the Highland past that must be preserved. Crofting is a system of agriculture which involves the division of the land around the township among the inhabitants. On this land is grown hay, potatoes and perhaps oats or rye. Around the township is the common grazing, the moorland which is shared by all the crofters of the township. Now, crofting is only said to have been in existence since the nineteenth century, since the clearances. Before that the system of agriculture was that of runrig (see Gray 1952), a system where land was redistributed at intervals.

Yet, according to the Scottish National Dictionary crofting is first recorded in Scotland in the thirteenth century. It was not in fact until the 1870's and 80's (?), long after the Clearances that are supposed to have created crofting, that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands became synonymous with the term 'Crofter'. The term had existed before; it referred to a tenant, the 'croft' referred to the land around the township. Now crofting refers to the whole system of agriculture.. This change in the meaning of the word becomes apparent at the time of the land law reform agitation of the 1880's, when the problems of the Highlands and Islands were to be solved by solving the problems of the crofters. The Crofters' Act of 1886 set up the Crofters' Commission. Suddenly crofting had become the traditional method of agriculture that needed support. The content of the category tradition had changed but the meaning

had remained the same.

The anthropologist and social change in the Highlands.

The anthropologist has long been concerned with small groups, and the need to record their way of life before it disappears. This is the major concern of the anthropologists who have studied the Highlands. Vallee wrote a 'Study of social change' (1954) and Parman wrote of 'Sociocultural Change' (1972). The emphasis has been on social change and the consequent breakdown and disappearance of traditional ways of life.

Parman's thesis "...attempts to explain the seemingly anomalous survival of crofting and crofting communities" (1972:1). Unexpectedly, for her, values are not congruent with those of the wider society. She chronicles the change from self-sufficiency to dependence upon the outside world (ibid:185). She uses a concept of boundedness derived from the work of Barth and argues that:

"the crofting township persists as a relatively strongly bounded system not because it is inherently static, isolated, or resistant of change, but because of the constraints and incentives stemming from the larger society". (ibid:3).

Parman therefore distinguishes between the township and the outside world, and between the self-sufficient system and the current state of affairs, of a decline into dependency. Her idea of change therefore involves taking the social life of Shawbost, a township in Lewis, and separating it into two categories. The one that refers to the old way of life, and is restricted by boundaries imposed by the outside world; and the other which involves connections with the outside world and a decline in self-sufficiency. These categories are therefore the traditional and the modern. To talk of change, in this context, involves a division of events which are happening at any one time into these two categories, followed by the technique of saying that one set of events relates to the past, and one relates to the future. Hence there is a perception of change. This is no more social change than the decline and disappearance of folklore.

Similar comments could be made of Vallee's work on Barra, the southernmost of the Outer Hebrides. His thesis makes use of what he terms a "dual-synchronic" approach. This is the same technique that Parman uses, but in a less sophisticated guise. That is, the comparison is made between two different descriptions of Hebridean social structure, differentiated by time. The first is no more than the mythologised, romanticised past, and the second is the introduction of new elements. The result is a picture of decline. In his article on burial and mourning customs, Vallee again chronicles the recent absorption of Barra into the wider society. He says:

"Many of the traditional cultural practices, extant less than a generation ago, have disappeared or are only rarely observed, It is in the prevalence of the Gaelic language and in the persistence of certain ritual observances that the Barra of today resembles most closely the community of old. Of the ritual practices, none contains more traditional elements than those associated with death and mourning" (ibid:121).

Vallee is studying burial and mourning customs because they are more

traditional, because they contain more traditional elements. This is no more than a doctrine of survivals, a doctrine that was supposedly discarded many years ago.

The development of the Highlands.

It has been said before, but it bears repeating, that there is a problem over the meaning of the word development. How exactly can the inhabitants of the Highlands improve their social and economic conditions? This is a case where an uncritical empiricism holds sway. Because such figures are easily measureable, the GNP, or the National Income, or in the case of the Highlands the population, are considered to be the only measures of progress. The use of these statistics gives a false aura of accuracy to the debate. There is a too easy satisfaction to be gained merely by the shorthand of measurement. This leads, too, to a variety of economic determinism through the idea that since it is these quantifiable factors which are the indices of growth or progress, then any increase in industry which will lead to an increase in any one of these indices will cause an increase in 'growth', and social progress will be made. Thus kelp, fishing and one suspects, oil, have all been seen as saviours of the Highland way of life. We have the strange spectacle of the social planners being vulgar Marxists. (Friedman 1974).

The problem is that the H.I.D.B. have in no adequate way specified what they are trying to improve, to develop, and what they are doing it for. The Strath of Kildonan report, for example, talks of a desire to develop the area because of its historical background (The Clearances of Sutherland). But there is no coherent idea of what it is that is being socially improved, and despite the initial talk of improving social conditions it soon becomes clear that all that is meant by development is projects with a direct return on capital. (see Carter 1972).

Another result of this economic determinism is that the initial aim of improving social conditions is forgotten. There can be no social philosophy for the economic determinist, except that economic determinism is itself a very rigid social philosophy. This leads to the result that social factors are only considered in so far as they are a hindrance to economic development. And when we do get discussions of social factors, it is of distinctly limited scope.

I have argued that there is something called the traditional Highland way of life. The question facing a development agency is whether or not this way of life is worth preserving. Gillanders (1962:275) complains that, "sentiment and emotion persistently bedevil highland economic analysis".

"The real hope for the highlander today-as I see it - cannot be in tourism, but in the simple courage to implement proved economic principles. The Highlander must cease to regard himself as a member of a chosen race to whom normal economic laws do not applyNeither cultural nor spiritual distinctiveness can be maintained much longer unless a sounder basis to the community is devised". (1968:148).

Therefore, "Without reorganisation on a big scale there can be no future for a crofting economy in the Highlands". (1962:265).

But Gillanders has clearly not perceived the fundamental problem, and that is, that just as for Thompson the idea of the urbanised Highlander is a contradiction, so too is the idea of a modernised tradition; that is, crofting subject to "economic laws". This is the double bind that the H.I.D.B. find themselves in. If they try to preserve the traditional way of life then they have to sacrifice economic development, and vice versa. It was this that led them to realise that even though crofting would lead to further depopulation, they had no option but to support it. The problem is that there can be no middle way. The categories traditional and modern do not mix, and they continually shift, taking over new areas of activity. The problem facing the Highlands and Islands Development Board is that they are trying to change something which is previously defined as unchanging. As long as the categories traditional and modern are opposed there can be no solution to the Highland Problem.

Conclusion.

The Highlands and Islands are said to be going through a period of social change. I have argued that the anthropologists who have studied the area have made this same assumption. They have taken Highland culture and separated it into two elements : the traditional and the modern. The traditional is the idealised past, the myth that was rewritten history so as to give the appearance of decline in the present. The categories traditional and modern are opposed although the content of these categories may change. Thus the 'social change' appears paradoxically to be static. Crofting has become part of the traditional way, and the kelp industry, the fishing industry, and the oil industry will soon be forgotten, just as the kelp, the railways, the hydroelectric schemes have all passed by. As soon as an agency tries to engage in development it gets drawn into this discourse, and thus confronts an insoluble problem.

Ed Condry.

Notes.

1. Review of Hunter (1976) by "The Quiet Crofter". Stornoway Gazette. 20.11.76.
2. Interestingly enough Defoe too was a government agent. He was sent up north as a government spy at the time of the Union. (see DNB).
3. See e.g. Whitaker (1959).
4. The "traditional" black house of the Highlands and Islands with thick stone walls, and a low thatched roof.
5. ~~A word that is not in the OED, but is presumably related to "reiter", to repeat.~~
6. Quoted in Storey (1974).
7. Alexander MacKenzie, the influential editor of the Celtic Magazine, in an article which stirred up much debate, wrote of the "crofting or lotting system" (1877:449 my emphasis).

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Ritual and Knowledge Among the Baktaman of New Guinea

by Frederik Barth New Haven Yale University Press 1975 292pp £9.10

Frederik Barth's monograph is of great importance because it uses a theoretical approach derived from communications theory to analyze the state of ritual and knowledge among a remote New Guinea group. The significance of this book arises from the fact that, due to the culturally unique forms of codification of ritual and knowledge in New Guinea societies and Barth's theoretical conceptions and use of communications theory, these states of knowledge cannot be fully charted.

As an antidote to the static, conceptual systems approach of structural functionalism, Barth uses communications theory to illuminate the process through which social praxis (transaction) determines the form of the replicated messages that make all cultures ongoing systems of communications. Through repetition, symbolic codings emerge and are perpetuated, and the 'sacred symbols' of the Baktaman are framed in analogue codes; which is really no more than Barth's way of saying that they are built on metaphors because he has to find some kind of logical association to provide the conceptual justification for treating them as 'sacred symbols'. Barth suffers from the popular preconception that all primitives have complex forms of codified ritual and knowledge; the malaise of the professional decoder investigating 'temple cults' that owe more to the high traditions of the Old Testament or Vedas than to their New Guinea social context. Communications theory can reveal the design features of the system it isolates - primed to uncover the codifications of ritual and knowledge it can show that they are underdeveloped due to the social praxis of secrecy and the lack of an exegetical tradition - but its focus is set by the anthropologist who uses it.

Frederik Barth applies communications theory to his Baktaman material to determine how ritual and knowledge are codified. As a result he finds codes of ritual and knowledge but these are more the result of his basic premises.

His major premise is that: "Every culture is an ongoing system of communication and contains a corpus of replicated messages"⁽¹⁵⁾ The mechanism of a culture's systems of communication is that through interaction messages are repeated and replicated. Through this process of repetition - replication these messages become routinized and develop into symbolic codings. The degree of repetition-replication-routinization gives them a social value and they are all obviously embedded in social praxis. Barth writes:

* Thanks to the Canada Council (W75-2884) and the Canadian I.D.R.C. (C.F.3-F-75-6010-07) for supporting my fifteen months fieldwork among the Ommura of the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, to Edwin Ardener, and to Jessica Mayer, my co-fieldworker, for reading and criticizing this paper.

"Thus only those messages which are constantly recreated will be transmitted and persist as part of the tradition; ie. only those metaphors and idioms that catch on and are reused become part of the corpus of these codes" (229).

Barth's schema relies heavily on communications theory as in his phases of interaction which consist of: (i) triggering, (ii) conceptualization of response, (iii) construction of response, (iv) the actual message output, (v) audience status (256-7).

His reason for studying the Baktaman, an isolated and primitive 'tribe' of 183 persons, appears to have been based on the assumption that, through studying a group of this kind, the codification process of ritual and knowledge would surely become discernible. Allured by the Baktaman's 'temple cults', Barth was committed right from the outset to finding codes of ritual and knowledge. This commitment hampered him by ensuring that his theoretical schema based on transactionalist communications theory comprised a pyramid with social praxis as the base and the codes of ritual and knowledge as the tip. Having the discovery of the pyramid as a fieldwork blueprint, there was no way that Barth could question the concepts of ritual and knowledge and their applicability to the Baktaman. He could only define Baktaman codifications of ritual and knowledge as being the apex of this pyramid built on social praxis. The interconnection was theoretically predetermined - the Baktaman had to have codifications of ritual and knowledge and consequently the pyramid could never change its shape. His division of the book into four major sections: (1) context of experience, (2) rites of initiation, (3) idiom clusters and social praxis, (4) analysis of interconnection and interdependence, testifies to this.

The Baktaman

The Baktaman are a group (dialect?) of 183 people living in a mountain rainforest somewhere below Telefomin in the Western District of Papua New Guinea. They are numbered as being part of 1,000 Faiwol speakers and have patrilineal exogamous clans. The Baktaman and Barth's transactionalist-communications theory approach to them may best be introduced with the following quote:

"The total corpus of Baktaman knowledge is stored in 183 Baktaman minds, aided only by a modest assemblage of cryptic concrete symbols (the meaning of which depends on the associations built up around them in the consciousness of a few seniors) and by limited suspicious communication with members of a few surrounding communities. I have argued that such a corpus will only persist to the extent that its parts are frequently recreated as messages and thereby transmitted. The immediate determinant of the occurrence of such messages may be described as social praxis. The mutual feedback between thought and action, culture and society may thus be best approached through social organisation" (235).

Social organisation creates and conditions the sectors of knowledge or coding found in Baktaman society resulting in what Barth calls "creative and stagnant sectors of knowledge". He writes:

"Briefly I will argue that the dynamism of a sector of knowledge depends both (i) on the potential of the major codifications; i.e. the fertility and capacity for precision and development of the symbolic apparatus by which it is handled, and (ii) on the praxis, i.e. the social organisation of statuses and tasks that channel the communications" (239).

Writing in reaction to structural functionalism, Barth argues that there is no single comprehensive code. Baktaman coding is built around metaphors and idioms, which, although they cannot be logically deduced, are all interconnected in some way. This is combined with his major premise that the cumulative meaning of a symbol can be deduced from its statistical or repeated incidence in given social contexts. Baktaman ritual and knowledge are a result not only of social praxis, especially the practice of secrecy, but are also a result of the fact that the Baktaman ritual and knowledge are a result of the fact that the Baktaman have no logical alternative to them. "The absence of any systematic alternative to their own way of life has absolved them from the need to question features of their own customs and premises, and entails a very incomplete and unfocused self-image" (255).

Baktaman social praxis creates certain major disjunctions in the flow of information and Baktaman ritual and knowledge reflect this disjunction. Barth sees these as being: (1) the segregation of males and females which makes them different spheres of knowledge, (2) the segmentation of the male population into a small number of residential collectives, and (3) "..... partly congruent with this, the formal barriers of secrecy" (256).

Ritual and knowledge are manifested in 'temple cults' or male initiations. Only males participate directly in the fertility cults but the benefits of cult activity extend to the entire population and women play a certain supportive role in cult activities to which Barth pays no great attention. The Baktaman have seven degrees of male initiation but these degrees do not constitute an age grade system - there is an indefinite period of time between succession to one degree from another. The temple cults 'serve' to ensure the success of Baktaman food crops (especially taro), hunting, and warfare. Male cult activity centres around the following locations; the Katiam, clan cult house for taro and hunting, the Yolam, communal cult house for taro, and the Kaveram, men's house. For every occasion on which one of these 'temples' is used, a 'sacrifice' must be made to the ancestors (191). Barth states that the offering both provides food for "sacramental commensality" and guarantees the success of the taro crops. Only cult leaders and some other old men know all the secret initiation knowledge.

Secrecy and Symbolic Coding

Baktaman knowledge is characterised by Barth as being shaped by secrecy and a lack of exegesis which result from Baktaman social praxis. He writes:

"So the fact remains that in the normal flow of life persons with different premises will interact, confuse each other, and thus, in part, increase rather than resolve the puzzle of life for each other. The force of sacred symbolism constructing a Baktaman reality arises from secrecy rather than a logical coherence of form. But secrecy entails a pattern of distribution where most actors are excluded from knowledge. This

exclusion affects the very processes whereby such reality is socially constructed; and so emerge the characteristic features of Baktaman tradition; at once poorly shared, poorly systematised and puzzling and groping in thought and imagery, while yet creative, complex, moving and rich"(265).

Baktaman social praxis determines that secret information is forbidden except in the context of sacred locations, that different sectors of the population have different ways of decoding this information, and that there is no truthful ideal in Baktaman society. Barth focuses on initiations because he believes they are the "most didactically powerful organisation" among the Baktaman(260).

Coupled with the lack of exegesis, secrecy is the most major aspect of social praxis which affects and determines symbolic coding. "The force of sacred symbols in constructing a Baktaman reality arises from secrecy rather than logical coherence of form"(265). Barth summarises the reasons the Baktaman have no exegesis - "the barriers to verbalisation" - as being:

"a. the explicit taboos and rule of secrecy surrounding the sacred symbols, b. a more diffuse wariness and reluctance to speak about and thus carelessly activate occult forces, c. a fear of sorcery reprisals from rivals and persons criticized" (258-9)

Faced with the problem of describing the codification arising out of Baktaman social praxis, Barth utilizes the distinction between digital and analogue codes and comes to the conclusion that Baktaman ritual is framed in analogue codes or independent metaphors. Digital codes are like languages or computer programs in which transformations and conceptualizations are arbitrary (207-8). But in an analogue code conceptualization and transformation are not arbitrary:

"Its meaning depends on an understanding of this transformation from object to symbol and the experience from reality which it evokes when reversed. Meaning arises independently of any total code and not from the symbol's systematic place among a limited set of alternatives within such a code" (208).

An analogue code does not allow for permutations to be performed on each element in the same way. Communication in analogue codes is always embedded in a wider social context. Baktaman ritual and knowledge are communicated through analogue codes.

"An analogue code must consequently be understood in the context of its praxis; the practice of secrecy and the absence of exegesis are essential features of this praxis among the Baktaman" (229).

Analogue codes use metaphors or idioms to form the association between symbol and invoked concept. In an analogue code "... the symbolic value of the elements depends to a large extent on their uses as metaphors. " and "... the essence of metaphor is the use of the familiar to grasp the elusive and unrecognised rather than the mere ordering of phenomena by homology"(199). Barth resolves the problem of the metaphor's place in between the two logical domains it links by arguing that the metaphor belongs to the realm it illuminates rather than the realm from which it originates. "It follows from this that the domain of thought or experience which is being

explicated by metaphor is that which metaphor is used to illuminate, not that from which the idioms or metaphors are fetched"(210). Barth argues that the codes of Baktaman ritual and knowledge are analogue codes because the symbols cannot be deductively derived although they are cognitively connected and they comprise separate discrete metaphors(264).

Having set out to discover how the Baktaman codify their ritual and knowledge it is hardly surprising that Barth comes to the conclusion that these sectors of knowledge are codified, albeit in the disconnected metaphorical 'bridges' of analogue coding. To justify his conclusion Barth argues that the Baktaman's lack of any conceptual alternative means that they cannot, or have no need to, characterise the theme of their ritual. The social purpose and significance of the 'sacred symbols' is that: "Their relevance is overwhelmingly to agricultural growth and fertility and they encode this in the manner of a mystery cult"(236). Given the ecological situation of the Baktaman, it is not so surprising that: "The only theory of gardening and growth which the Baktaman know is contained in these metaphors and allegories"(238).

Barth opposes his theoretical approach - transactional communications theory and analogue codes - to structural functionalist approaches which presume the logical unity of conceptual systems. From an archaeological investigation of Barth's book, it becomes apparent that he probably only jettisoned the notion that Baktaman symbolic coding could be logically deduced sometime after he completed his fieldwork. One clue is his argument that the "central paradox" of Baktaman knowledge is the fact that for the Baktaman the sky is pure and the earth is polluting, yet taro, their staple crop, grows in the ground(235). This does not tally with his perceptive coverage of Baktaman taboos as being contextual and temporary or with his finding that, as in other New Guinea societies, the Baktaman say that the spirits of the dead go to their own place geographically removed but still on the ground. In New Guinea conceptual schemas there is little division of the earth and sky into separate opposed universes, as missionaries trying to explain the benefits of heaven over hell know to their frustration. It can only be presumed that this central paradox was part of an earlier model which Barth superseded. Barth presents another faulty analogy when discussing the multiplicity of connotations of Baktaman 'core symbols'. He writes:

"Moreover, the association seems to pose an intellectual problem to the actors so that they will attempt to harmonize the disparate connotations of each symbol into a more coherent chord"(263).

Such an assertion can in no way be related to the production of contextual noise that makes New Guinea 'music' unique and belongs more to universal theories of symbolism (Johnson 1975, Mayer 1975).

Beating initiates with nettles and rubbing them with pig grease, fur as a symbol of growth and fertility, white as a symbol of taro and plenty, these are examples of the idioms that Barth finds in Baktaman ritual. ~~Confronted with such metaphors and the Baktaman social praxis of secrecy and a lack of exegesis it is inevitable~~ that Barth comes to the conclusion that Baktaman ritual knowledge is a fertility cult articulated in analogue codes. However one must question to what degree his findings reflect a commitment to a general theory of symbolism because, given the Baktaman social praxis of secrecy and lack of exegesis, why should Baktaman ritual require any more codification than that necessary to perform an act in a given context? Barth's approach explains why the Baktaman do not

have ritual codification like that of literate stratified societies but it cannot explain the relative importance of different codified or recurrent activities to the Baktaman because of the commitment to initiation cults as being the most 'didactically' important organization in their society.

The Contextual Nature of Baktaman Society

The only way to demonstrate how Barth's transactional communications theory approach and his commitment to finding ritual and knowledge among the Baktaman affect his interpretation of his material is to analyze some 'sectors of knowledge' in a slightly different manner. Barth's approach is general and universalistic. It can be applied to any society where people interact, where culture is an on-going system of communication, and where messages which are repeatedly communicated become codified and ritualized. New Guinea societies, on the other hand, manifest unique aspects of social organisation and adaptation to their environments when compared to other major culture areas of the world. Barth has not focused on these specificities, some of which are: exchange and reciprocity (most probably short term reciprocity judging by Barth's description), the exchange of food and degrees of commensality (food being the primary commodity of exchange), sorcery and curing. By concentrating on male initiation ceremonies among the Baktaman and trying to analogue-ize their codifications, Barth may well have concentrated on the merely decorative (the New Guinea pidgin word is 'bilas') aspects of Baktaman society rather than those of recurring central importance to them.

If initiations are the most didactically powerful organization among the Baktaman, surely it would stand to reason that the same situation would hold true for all the neighbouring villages that could be classified as belonging to the Faiwol language group? Barth found out that all three temple cults - Katiam, Yolam, and Amowkwam - were not indigenous to the Baktaman but had, sometime within memory, originated in the 'West' (255). This means that the form of these initiation cults, like so many other decorative aspects found in New Guinea social systems, is a new fashion, although the social organization necessary to stage male initiations is undoubtedly traditional. The Faiwol groups adjoining the Baktaman have neither the exact same number of stages of male initiations - the Baktaman have seven - nor were they necessarily in operation when Barth carried out his fieldwork. Barth cites the case of the Augobrin who twenty years before had four grades of male initiation until warfare killed off all their knowledgeable senior men, leaving them at the time of fieldwork, with only a truncated form of first degree initiation (260). Among the Baktaman and their neighbours, male initiation cults and the knowledge imparted through them are controlled by powerful senior men and should the cult leader die, his cult may well be terminated if no new leader appears.

Taboos, like initiation knowledge, are contextual in that they are status specific. The Baktaman use them to demarcate particular social statuses and temporary ritual states. Barth writes that few taboos are universal or permanent (162). For the Baktaman, the conceptual definition of a given taboo is synonymous with contextual definition of the taboo because the concept and context of the taboo are indissociable.

It is not useful to see all Baktaman ritual coding as being framed in analogue codes. Emblems of rank and the body decorations worn by initiates (type of feathers, pig's tusks) are symbols of the same order as military insignia - they are status specific privileges denoting social position. On page 158 Barth presents a chart of the

particular body decorations that different initiation grades are allowed to wear. He writes:

"Finally the fact that public emblems of rank and valued privileges (feathers, drums, pig slaughtering, first harvest, various delicacies) have ritual significance entails that the social tug-of-war whereby interest groups seek to redistribute such goods is constrained by, and in turn affects, ritual codification"(266).

The contrary, that whatever ritual codification there is among the Baktaman is a result of this "social tug-of-war", is more probable.

Colour symbolism in New Guinea societies is a very problematic subject due to the difficulties inherent in trying to determine whether the colour - an aspect - of an object is given a greater significance than the object itself. Is the red colour of the pandanus fruit the reason it is eaten at ritual events or is the only reason for its consumption that it is a choice food and all pandanus fruits are red anyway? Barth approaches this problem in a most unsatisfactory way, arguing that colour is codified in Baktaman initiations without taking into consideration that, given the nature of Baktaman society and the resources of colours at its command, the Baktaman probably cannot distinguish between the efficacy of a colour and the efficacy of the object in which or from which the colour derives. His approach to determining the codification of colours is one of elementary semantics whereby he looks at the colours of all the objects used in initiations and on the basis of his interpretation of the meanings of initiations ascribes meanings to the three colours used - red, black and white (172).

The colour red is an idiom for patrilineal descent and the ancestors; it belongs with growth and increase (porkfat), ancestors and maleness (pandanus) (174-5). Red ochre is the most easily obtainable strong colour and the significance of painting something red is probably no more than colouring something with a strong colour. The colour black is an idiom for male solidarity and seniority. Barth writes:

"In conclusion, it would seem that black is made the vehicle of a conceptualization of corporate solidarity, strength, and reliability expressed by male groups in their joint cult of the ancestors" (177).

The crucial factor which Barth does not take into consideration when dealing with the significance of black is that the fires which are burned perpetually in the cult houses of the Baktaman totally blacken the roof and inside walls of the house and everything which is stored in the house for long periods of time (shields, bones and other 'sacra'). The colour white is an idiom for food, prosperity and plenty, probably because taro is white and because all Baktaman ornaments of wealth-shells, job's tears, even pig's tusks - are white. Taking a more metaphysical approach Barth writes:

"So white stands in its most abstracted sense for a cosmic force of growth and prosperity deriving from the ancestors; just as red symbolizes their effect on descendants so white symbolizes their effect on the world" (176).

Barth sets out to demonstrate that given the differences in the social positions of women and junior male initiates as opposed to the senior men who are the owners and codifiers of ritual knowledge,

there must be differences in each group's understanding of the symbolic meanings of the three colours. For senior men who are the only individuals who 'know' all the sacred knowledge, red is an idiom for descent and the ancestors, black is an idiom for male solidarity and seniority, and white is an idiom for food, prosperity and plenty (172). For women (Barth pays very little attention to the supportive role of women in the staging of male initiations), red is a sacred colour denoting virility and sexuality, black is an emblem of senior male status, and white signifies valuables and objects of wealth (178). The meanings of the colours for junior male initiates are that red refers to strength and secrecy and is associated with virility, black refers to senior male status and is a symbol for the 'prerequisites of status' such as loyalty, solidarity, and corporate activity, and white refers to wealth and value, the taro which comes from the ancestors (178-9).

The similarity of the meanings that the three colours have for the three groups - senior men, women and young initiates - demonstrates that colour codification cannot be of very great importance to the Baktaman and that looking at the uses of colour in Barth's way does not illuminate much. By abstracting a quality of an object, in this case colour, Barth has created a classification of semantic similarity by colour which is meaningless to the Baktaman who classify an object only as an object or by its use or function in a given context.

Barth shows a great misunderstanding of New Guinea societies in general when he states that excessively hot fires and the deprivation of water are used as methods of torturing the initiates (66). There must always be a fire to sit around whenever New Guinea villagers gather to talk in the evenings because it keeps them warm and a blazing fire is the only source of light at night. It is highly unlikely that a hot fire could be used for torture because New Guineans, unlike Western anthropologists, have a very high tolerance to wood smoke and seem to find the narcosis it induces relaxing. As for depriving the initiates of water, it would probably be more relevant to comment on how they are deprived of sleep because New Guinean villagers drink little flowing water and obtain most of the water in their diets from the excessive bulk of vegetables which they eat.

Barth underplays the importance of the sharing of food between the Baktaman themselves and elevates the sharing of food in the context of the cult houses to a 'sacrifice' offered by the Baktaman to the ancestral spirits to propitiate them and ensure fertility. He sees commensality as being a metaphor of communion with the ancestors, the consummation of a 'sacrifice', and a metaphor for the presence of 'ancestral altars' (199). He argues perceptively that the act of sharing food, of commensality among the Baktaman is a "... powerful idiom for equality and trust" because sorcery is made with scraps of food and to share food with people is to not suspect them of an intention to work sorcery (197). Commensality is so important to the Baktaman that before, when they had cannibal feasts, pig meat was always cooked together with the human flesh so that those who could not stomach human flesh could at least participate in the eating (198).

The emphasis which Barth places on commensality in the cult houses as constituting "sacrifice" is understandable in terms of his theoretical schema and what it constrains him to do with the Baktaman material. In order for ritual knowledge as practised in cult houses to be of central importance to Baktaman society as a whole there must be communication with the 'ancestral altars' through offered commodities (food or as Barth terms it 'sacrifice') thereby providing the

necessary hierarchy of exchange to elevate this relationship above the realm of material transaction.

It is equally likely that the idiom of giving food to the ancestors refers more to the contribution, distribution, and consumption of food within the cult houses by the Baktaman. The only tangible sign of the presence of the ancestors inside the cult houses is the ancestral relics assembled by the cult leader. The pigs' jaw bones kept in the cult houses are not so much relics of sacrifices as Barth sees them, but relics of pigs which have been feasted on in the cult houses, mementos that signify the prestige of the donors. All the conventions which Barth interprets as proving that the cult houses are 'temples' of the ancestors can just as easily be reinterpreted to show that what goes on is ceremonial exchanges of food between Baktaman and not sacrifices of food to the ancestors. The prerequisites for cult activity - a fire for warmth and to cook on and meat to cook on it - are of equal benefit to the cultists as to the ancestors.

In New Guinea societies the food assembled for ritual activities is not 'potlatched', it is used as payment. The purpose of giving is to ensure a return, and at feasts the food is redistributed in accordance with the status of the receiver.

Barth does not deal with one of the most important aspects of ritual in any New Guinea society: the meanings or codifications of the social use of food. Because food is the essential, primary commodity for the Baktaman and because surpluses of food are hard to accumulate we must ask who accumulates the food necessary for rituals, who gives it, who receives it? Barth virtually ignores the role of women in the preparations for ceremonies, especially in the providing of food and the making of decorations for the initiates. Given that Baktaman ritual knowledge is so poorly transmitted and that so few Baktaman know it, surely rather more of them have ideas about the social distribution of food?

Barth's conclusion is that Baktaman conceptualizations of social relations and their construction are poorly elaborated and transmitted and that their conceptualizations of their relationship to the ancestors are "poorly equipped". The entire field of knowledge is poorly elaborated and transmitted (259). But there is ongoing conflict between interest groups over "public emblems of rank and valued privileges" (266). As opposed to valued privileges and emblems of rank, initiation knowledge appears to be of minor importance to most of the Baktaman, not worth quarreling over, and something that only the few men who survive to senior status ever have to know.

Two sectors of knowledge which one would expect to be very important to the Baktaman are sorcery and curing. It is obvious that the secretive Baktaman did not tell Barth very much about sorcery - only that it could be made from scraps of food and one method by which women, a pretty powerless group in most New Guinea societies, could make sorcery against men - certainly little about the poison adult men used to make sorcery against their enemies, ways of detection, and antidotes to poison which they obviously must have had.

Although Barth states that sickness and the curing of sickness are "not codified" like the ritual fertility cults (244-5), from his sketchy description of curing ceremonies it would appear that there are certain basic equivalences which should have been mapped out and given more consideration. In curing ceremonies a pig is killed, the

sick person is annointed with some of the pig's blood, "spells and prayers" are given, the meat is distributed, and during the distribution some pieces are "discreetly taken" as an offering to the clan ancestors (192).

The similarities with cult activity are apparent and another perspective could have been obtained by tracing which features of the 'minor', more frequently enacted ceremonies are similar to those of initiations; analyzing cult activity as a social elaboration of these more basic and fundamental ceremonies.

To summarise Barth's approach; using communications theory he argues that the codifications of Baktaman ritual and knowledge are the result of Baktaman social praxis - of which the most determining factors are the practice of secrecy, the lack of exegesis, and the absence of any conceptual alternative. His conclusion is that these codifications are poorly shared, elaborated, transmitted, and systematized, but that the initiation cults are the most "didactically important" organisation in Baktaman society. The "only theory" of agricultural fertility, growth, and gardening that the Baktaman know is contained in the metaphors and allegories that Barth discovers and explains as analogue codes. The metaphors cannot be logically deduced but are all connected through their social meaning. To have discovered this is a great achievement.

The reason that Barth's communications theory cannot uncover the cultural specificities of Baktaman society is because innate to the approach is the notion that repeated social events become condensed into symbols which both summarize the event and represent a higher order of metaphysical statement than the event as a total configuration. Communications theory does not ignore the total configuration of an event; it uses the variables of sender, receiver, message, audience, context, etc. to map out the dimensions of the event. Only when the event is repeated and becomes routinized does the problem arise because the theorist regards the event as having become so routinized that it is greater than the sum of its part. Then the theorist looks for semantic patterning in the events and the symbols which condense them, searching for a higher order of social explanation. The metaphor necessary to lock together symbol and this higher order in a codification process of ritual and knowledge is supplied by the concept of analogue coding.

This is a deficient approach for analyzing the 'codifications' found in New Guinea societies because, due to the kinds of social organization, the context or configuration of a repeated event does not become abbreviated or codified into a higher order symbol of social meaning. The meaning of an event is indissociable from the context of its actual enactment; as Barth states, secret information will only occur in the sacred locations of the cult houses. It should be remembered that in New Guinea, unlike Africa, folk explanations are usually functional explanations. The things that have the greatest importance and the most social meaning to the Baktaman and are hence the most codified are those which can be exchanged or disputed over - food, emblems of rank, and valued privileges.

For Barth to come to the conclusion that the overwhelming relevance of the 'sacred symbols' is to agricultural growth and fertility is hardly surprising because given the ecological situation

of the Baktaman this is precisely what one would expect them to be preoccupied with. To discover that an arrow is an important symbol of maleness in Baktaman society is of the same order as discovering that money is an important symbol of banking in our own. Enough universal typologies of ritual and symbolic coding have been constructed. It is now time to investigate the cultural specificities of given social organisations to determine the applicability of the universalistic constructs of social anthropological theory. Concentrating on these crucial cultural differences will lead to the formation of new theoretical constructs.

On the other hand, Barth's Baktaman is really an allegory of the state of knowledge in social anthropology.

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The Creoles, though less than 2% of the total population of Sierra Leone, form 64% of the professional group - the educated elite of university degree holders on whom Dr. Harrell-Bond's study of marriage and family life focuses.

Under the guidance of missionaries and philanthropists, the Creoles, descendants of repatriated slaves and those identifying with them, readily accepted the ideals of Western (specifically British) "civilised life" - education and Christianity with the latter's necessary correlate, monogamous marriage.

They saw themselves as having, and were accredited with, a cultural superiority over the indigenous (Provincial) populations whose contact with the British colonists came later. Though the Creoles now hold no overt political power and are feeling increasingly insecure in relation to the Provincial majority, they still "set the pattern for the social development of the rest of the population" (33). In fact many Provincial professionals were raised by Creole guardians, so are no strangers to their ideology, and nearly all have spent time abroad (mostly in Western Europe or the United States).

The Creoles have rejected the idea of traditional African marriage in favour of an "idealised version of the Western model" of companionate monogamy, yet in reality the situation reflects an interplay between the often conflicting traditional values and "western" or "modern" ideals.

By placing marriage in its legal setting we are shown the complexities and contradictions inherent in the plural legal system that operates in Sierra Leone, particularly as statutory law (a modified form of English law imposed by the British) has both legal and social superiority over customary law though it bears little relation to social reality.

Marriage implies a change in social status, and to be married by statutory law gives high status in the community. The elaborate ceremonial and expense of such marriages bears some witness to this. For a woman, marriage by statutory law gives a legal and social superiority over the inevitable other women in her husband's life. Her legitimate children have higher legal status than any "outside children" (though there is little if any social stigma attached to illegitimacy).

The main source of conflict and "perhaps the most significant factor influencing the organisation of the family" (140) is the inevitability of a husband's extra-marital relationships. Men can maintain the myth of monogamy and thus safeguard their status within the wider community while at the same time enhancing their prestige in traditional terms by having and supporting "outside" girlfriends and possibly children.

In a fascinating discussion of the social consequences of an attempt to equalise the status of illegitimate children (publicity surrounding this proposition led to the general belief that the law had been passed) we can see how women feel their position to be very vulnerable. Marital conflict increased and women felt their superior status being eroded. Men too have become more cautious about having children outside marriage - unwed mothers are very much aware of their rights to increased maintenance, and the belief that their children have equal rights to inherit has led to an increase in paternity suits.

The greater emphasis on personal choice of marriage partner (within the limits of a suitable family background) and the recent innovation of the idea of courtship and romantic love have resulted in women having a

higher expectation of marriage. In courtship, men assume their idea of western behaviour, but once married their values and expectations are largely traditional. A discussion on attitudes towards sex and contraception again highlights some of the conflicts between traditional beliefs and modern ideals or needs.

By looking at marriage in relation to the values of the wider society Dr. Harrell-Bond has shown that for men the ideals of companionate monogamy are not compatible with these. Relationships are to a large extent based on ascription and particularism, to use Parson's terms, so a man cannot advance in the wider society if he isolates himself within the family unit. It can be said that people "value customary ways only so far as these help them attain their ends" (Colson). It seems that in Sierra Leone, as in many places, it is women who are more concerned to increase the structural isolation of the family unit and accept the values of companionate monogamy. Social status is for a woman very much bound up with the idea of being married and perhaps more importantly bearing children. Women feel that traditional marriage is a burden and that they have more to gain, from the point of view of status and economic benefit, as well as emotionally, if the stated ideas of modern marriage are upheld. As it is, women are prepared to put up with a great deal of emotional disappointment as long as the outward appearance of a successful marriage, and thus their status in the community, is maintained, and the home does not suffer financially as a result of the husbands outside activities or obligations.

Regardless of the interests of other parties, marriage is essentially a contract between individuals and one of the merits of the book is that it focuses very much on the individual at a very personal level. The extensive use of conversational material, students' essays, love letters and newspaper articles gives fascinating insights into the way people regard male-female relations and view their own position within them.

The outline of the methodology used and the inclusion of the questionnaires administered to university students (potential professionals) and the professional group itself is to be welcomed, both as a guideline for future research and for the sake of academic honesty.

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