

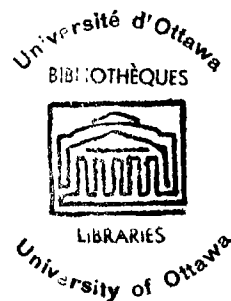
THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METAPHILOSOPHICAL
FOUNDATIONS OF THE NOTION OF STRUCTURE
IN THE WORKS OF CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to establish as precisely as possible what Claude Lévi-Strauss means when he uses the term 'structure' and in so doing establish a philosophical perspective to see if the notion of structure has any epistemological and metaphilosophical relevance.¹

The impetus for such a project arises from the fact that many commentators have repeatedly expressed the opinion that the notion of structure is either equivocal, banal, or completely devoid of meaning. This dissertation is a result of a conviction that the notion is indeed valid for philosophy, and that it is not devoid of, but pregnant with, meaning.

¹ The term metaphilosophical here is used to designate or refer to the possibility of using the notion of structure as a specific optic with which to study, teach, and regard philosophy as a human discipline. In this sense, as metalanguage refers to the language used for the study of linguistic phenomena, metaphilosophical refers to the notions used for the study of philosophical phenomena. It is not as such an historical perspective, but an ahistorical one which is being pursued, enabling the study of philosophy through a perspective which is neither solely thematic nor historical in the widely used sense of those terms. Therefore, the term metaphilosophical seems to fulfill this reference function better than another, and as the epistemological relevance will arise from a study of 'structure' as a conceptual tool, for our metaphilosophical purposes the notion will be regarded as a properly heuristic tool.

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Noël Mouloud has attempted to discourage such an attempt by saying that,

in effect, a preliminary philosophical analysis of this notion (structure) would put us before such a large array of rich signification, that we might not approach it except through a most complex dialectic.²

But he is encouraging when he says that, we are brought in a variety of ways to give to the structures of rational science a role which is heuristic, prospective and at the same time logical.³

However, the problem is rendered more complex by Lévi-Strauss himself, when he maintains that,

... it would be hopeless to try and reach a valid definition of social structure on an inductive basis, by abstracting common elements from the uses and definitions current among all the scholars who claim to have made "social structure" the object of their studies. If these concepts have a meaning at all, they mean, first, that the notion of structure has a structure.⁴

2 ... En effet, une analyse philosophique préalable de cette notion nous mettrait devant un éventail trop large et trop riche de signification, que nous pourrions rapprocher que par des dialectiques très complexes. Mouloud, N., "La logique des structures et l'épistémologie", Revue Internationale de Philosophie, Nos. 73-74, 1965, p. 314.

3 ... Ainsi nous sommes conduits de plusieurs manières à donner aux structures des sciences rationnelles un rôle qui est heuristique, prospectif, en même temps que logique. Ibid., p. 323.

4 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, Structural Anthropology, translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1967, p. 270.

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To give a further example of the difficulties involved in such an undertaking as this, reference can be made to Raymond Boudon's remarks when he says,

It seems incontestable therefore that the classical techniques of definition, definitions by proximate genus and specific difference, or more generally inductive definitions in Lévi-Strauss's meaning, will offer little help in discovering the significance of the notion of structure.⁵

Therefore, the assertions that a preliminary philosophical analysis might be too complex, that a definition of structure itself has a structure, and that definition by induction will not be fruitful, provide for the challenge of this thesis.

Furthermore, the purpose of the dissertation is to bridge the gap between ethnology, or cultural anthropology, and philosophy, and to perform a certain philosophical exegesis in the hopes of demonstrating a man's philosophical orientation as he studies man, not in a metaphysical, but in an anthropological sense.

5 ... Il semble donc incontestable que les techniques classiques de la définition, définitions par le genre proche et la différence spécifique, ou plus généralement définitions inductives au sens de Lévi-Strauss, doivent être d'un faible secours pour découvrir la signification de la notion de structure.
Raymond Boudon, A quoi sert la notion de "Structure" ?
Gallimard, Paris, 1968, p. 17

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This is supported by the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who has written that when the anthropologist

... returns to the living source of his knowledge, to that which operates in him as a means of understanding the cultural formations most remote from himself, he is spontaneously indulging in philosophy.⁶

It is the contention of this thesis that Lévi-Strauss spontaneously indulges in philosophy much too often to ignore, too well to dismiss, and too accurately for anyone not to take heed.

Lévi-Strauss has demonstrated the viability of his theoretical contributions to ethnology by an extensive demonstration of his method based on structural insights, in four major volumes, entitled globally Mythologiques, but individually bearing the titles: Le Cru et le Cuit, Du Miel aux Cendres, l'Origine des Manières de Table, and l'Homme Nu.

It is more than fair furthermore to say that in attempting to solve ethnological problems, Lévi-Strauss has unveiled philosophical problems and it is these that will bear the brunt of this investigation. It will be

⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Le philosophe et le sociologue', in Signs, Gallimard, Paris, 1960, p. 138, quoted by Claude Lévi-Strauss in The Scope of Anthropology, translated by S.O. Paul and R.A. Paul, Jonathan Cape, London, p. 43

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necessary however to move continually back and forth elucidating the anthropological problem, discovering the philosophical impact of the ethnological solution proposed by Lévi-Strauss, and return, to a certain extent, to the realm of the social sciences to make some kind of assessment as to its validity.

In The Elementary Structures of Kinship, Lévi-Strauss analyzed marriage systems in Australia, India, Southeast Asia, the Far East and South America. His aim was to explain, as well as clarify, the basic ethnological questions involving systems of exchange, such as the origin of incest, exogamy, endogamy, reciprocity, organic solidarity and dualistic structures of kinship.⁷ He dealt with the very fabric of ethnology, the warp and woof of the discipline as it were, much as the pith and substance of philosophy is concerned with being, the problem of the one and the many, the act of knowledge, essence and existence.

A basic problem in ethnology, as in other sciences, is the one of objectivity, and Lévi-Strauss in his attempt at explaining the structures of kinship was trying to avoid not only a psychologism but also a reductionism. His attempt at Deutung, with links between different levels of occurrences and taking into consideration the concept of overdetermination, was to establish a scientific explanation, that is, one which is realistic, simplifying

⁷ Cf. Glossary of Terms, Appendix 2, p. 126.

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and explanatory.

For example, one of the basic problems in terms of objectivity is how to prevent one's personal optic from clouding over the lens of scientific observation to such an extent that projection replaces explanation. To deal with primitive societies is to fly in the face of the unusual and still maintain one's objectivity while taking into consideration the very Gestalt which might be distorting one's vision.

Basically then, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, tries to deal with the problems of kinship systems: their structure, purpose and evolution. The long surviving problem for ethnology has been the extreme complexity of these structures, which has not facilitated the search for their genesis or their levels of causation, formal, efficient, material or final.

Lévi-Strauss asserts that a historical or geographical study could not exhaust the problem of the origin of dual organizations, such as the moiety,

... and that for a better understanding of these organizations we must take into consideration certain fundamental structures of the human mind. ⁹

8 Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Analysis and Linguistics," in Language in Culture and Society, A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology, Editor, Dell Hymes, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, p. 42.

9 Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship; Translated by J.H. Bell, J.R. von Sturmer and R. Needham, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1968, p. 84.

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That is, to understand kinship systems, such as those of dual organization, he is positing a solution which takes this study directly to Lévi-Strauss' notion of structure.

What Lévi-Strauss means by structure is that it is an objective condition of knowledge, or ethnologically speaking, that a structure is an objective condition for a society to exist. For example, the prohibition of incest is a structure, and is, in effect, an objective condition which allows for society. Structures therefore are not invariable laws of conception in the Kantian mode, for they grow and maintain, but are rather principles, or rules, or laws. They are furthermore, the content of a society apprehended through a logical organization conceived of as a property of the real.¹⁰

And so Lévi-Strauss has a specific meaning for structure which seems more a priori than a posteriori, yet he still has to reconcile his mode of observation with his conclusions. That is to say, he is establishing an a priori, such as his notion of structure, after an

¹⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, "La structure et la forme. Réflexion sur un ouvrage de Vladimir Propp", Cahier de l'Institut de Sciences économiques appliquées, mars 1960, p. 3.

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a posteriori examination of the problems of ethnology. This is based on a fundamentally philosophical insight into the workings of the human mind based on a conception of the symbolic process which he will later substantiate with his Mythologiques, and the success of his explanatory method, based on this insight, belongs to ethnology proper. However, the concern here is with this insight which posits 'structure' as an explanatory mode, and the aim is to regard it both as a conceptual and a heuristic operation.

Therefore an initial observation which can be made is that in his use of 'structure' Lévi-Strauss is not referring to the entire system as a structure, but rather sees structure as underlying some systems.

Defining the notion of structure in Lévi-Strauss' work can furthermore be executed and clarified with reference to the use of the notion of models built according to empirical reality. It is these models that would have a structure or a principle of distribution or organization, and in effect these models are logical constructions, or

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theories or hypotheses. And so the notion of structure has a structure.

But for these models to merit the status of structure they must fulfill four conditions, and Lévi-Strauss cites them in Structural Anthropology, especially as regards social structures.

The question then becomes that of ascertaining what kind of model deserves the name "structure". This is not an anthropological question, but one which belongs to the methodology of science in general. Keeping this in mind, we can say that a structure consists of a model meeting with several requirements.

11 R.B. Braithwaite, in Scientific Explanation (Cambridge: 1959) has a complete chapter on "Models for scientific theories; their use and misuse", which is a succinct and precise explanation and elaborates the problems and advantages of models, and the author writes: "... there are great advantages in thinking about a scientific theory through the medium of thinking about a model for it; to do this avoids the complications and difficulties involved in having to think explicitly the language or other forms of symbolism by which the theory is represented. The use of models allows of a philosophically unsophisticated approach to an understanding of the structure of a scientific deductive system."

In a footnote he goes on to quote P.A.M. Dirac who writes, in reference to models as pictures, that "one may, however, extend the meaning of the word 'picture' to include any way of looking at the fundamental laws which makes their self-consistency obvious." (Braithwaite, p. 93)

c. also Brodbeck, May, "Models, Meaning and Theories", Symposium on Sociological Theory, ed. L. Gross, Evanston: Row, Peterson & Co., 1959.

cf. Rudner, Richard S., "Models", p. 23-28, Philosophy of Social Science, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.

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First, the structure exhibits the characteristics of a system. It is made up of several elements, none of which can undergo a change without effecting changes in all the other elements. Second, for any given model there should be a possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type.

Third, the above properties make it possible to predict how the model will react if one or more of its elements are submitted to certain modifications.

Finally, the model should be constituted so as to make immediately intelligible all the observed facts. ¹²

Structure itself does not have any contents, but is the content itself apprehended through a logical organization conceived as a property of the real, as was noted earlier.

But even more clearly, to combine a series of quotes from Lévi-Strauss, the following hopefully clarifies the notion somewhat.

... Opposite to formalism, structuralism refuses to oppose the concrete to the abstract, and to give the latter a higher value. Form is defined in opposition to a substance which is foreign to it; but the structure has no distinct content: it is itself the content, apprehended in a logical organization conceived of as a property of the real... ¹³

¹² Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., Structural Anthropology, pp. 271-272.

¹³ Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., Structure et la Forme, p. 21
 ... A l'inverse du formalisme, le structuralisme refuse d'opposer le concret à l'abstrait, et de reconnaître au second une valeur privilégiée. La forme se définit par opposition à une matière qui lui est étrangère; mais la structure n'a pas de contenu distinct: elle est le contenu même, appréhendé dans une organisation logique conçue comme propriété du réel ...

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... The formalist dichotomy, which opposes form to content, and which defines them according to antithetical characteristics, is not imposed by the nature of things, but by the accidental choice which he (Vladimir Propp) makes of a field where only form survives and content is abolished...¹⁴

... We can stress this point which sums up the entire difference between formalism and structuralism. For the first, the two fields have to be absolutely separated, for only the form is intelligible, and the content is nothing but a residue deprived of significant value. For structuralism this opposition does not exist: there is not, on the one hand, abstract, and concrete on the other. Form and content are of the same nature, amenable to the same analysis. The content gets its reality from its structure, and that which we call form is the "placing in structure" of local structures, which is the content"...¹⁵

¹⁴ Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., Structure et la forme, p. 21
... La dichotomie formaliste, qui oppose forme et contenu, et qui les définit par des caractères antithétiques, ne lui est pas imposée par la nature des choses, mais par le choix accidentel qu'il a fait, d'un domaine où la forme seule survit, tandis que le contenu est aboli ...

¹⁵ Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., Structure et la forme, pp. 21-22. ... On nous permettra d'insister sur ce point, qui résume toute la différence entre formalisme et structuralisme. Pour le premier, les deux domaines doivent être absolument séparés, car la forme seule est intelligible, et le contenu n'est qu'un résidu dépourvu de valeur signifiante. Pour le structuralisme, cette opposition n'existe pas: il n'y a pas, d'un côté de l'abstrait, de l'autre du concret. Forme et contenu sont de même nature, justifiables de la même analyse. Le contenu tire sa réalité de sa structure, et ce qu'on appelle forme est la "mise en structure" des structures locales, en quoi consiste le contenu ...

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Lévi-Strauss clearly establishes the problems of his inquiry with these references. From an empirical observation of kinship structures he has established models which reflect their basic structure, yet not according to a strict formalism, for he is not imposing the structure on the contents. But rather he is making an attempt to discern the 'fundamental structures of the human mind' which ground the social reality of kinship.

Further to this, culture can be regarded as the order that man constructs out of his environment, and the analysis of this order can for our purposes here be either formalistic or structuralistic.

Ward H. Goodenough has asserted that culture is what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, and that it must consist of the end product of learning, that is, knowledge in a most general, if
¹⁶
 relative, sense of the term. Culture then is not a material phenomenon, it is not, as such, concrete; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions, but it is rather than that an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting
¹⁷
 them.

¹⁶ Ward H. Goodenough, Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics, Dell Hymes, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, p. 36.

¹⁷ Culture as such is not an entity. It might, in some ways, even be compared with the Husserlian Lebenswelt.

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The most important feature of culture seems, therefore, not to be its content, but its structure. Therefore to be immersed in a culture is not to be surrounded by an empirical reality so much as it is to be enmeshed in a world of collective representations created by a given culture and a given tradition out of the original chaos, that is, the chaos of nature.

Further, these structures maintain two basic principles, those of pertinence and latency. A structure can be regarded or considered as an ordered ensemble of pertinent traits, that is, of certain elements which recur in a given activity and which alone are considered pertinent from a given point of view. These elements are grasped by a process of abstraction, and are seen as forming a structure in which they are defined by purely internal relationships. The other principle, that of latency, would have it that a structure is not immediately apparent to ordinary observation nor to simple reflection. And so the method of structuralism which attains both the form and the content cannot as such be accused of formalism.

Structure ... does not refer to observed relations between elements but to relations which gives to the terms they relate a positional value in an organized ensemble in such a way that the whole ensemble is significant. This concept allows systems to be compared in regard to their differences from each other, and to explain such differences, instead of merely reducing them to their common elements; for it enables one to find the common relationship by which

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these differences may be defined. Different ensembles can then be seen as variations of one another. Consequently structure may be described as a syntax of transformations which cause the passage from one variant to another while revealing that the number of such passages is limited. 18

These structures are unconscious, in a very un-Freudian way, and it is these structures which are the basis of cultural institutions. In effect, what lies hidden in the unconscious are the structural forms of reality. And, the social structures evident in human relationships point to structures in the unconscious depths of the mind, and the laws which the mind obeys in forming such structures can be formulated both scientifically and mathematically. It is, in effect, not a Jungian collective unconscious but a structural unconscious of forms.

And in discussion with Piaget and Jung, Lévi-Strauss makes a philosophical contribution to a theory of knowledge when he states in The Elementary Structures of Kinship that,

Every newborn child provides in embryonic form the sum total of possibilities, but each culture and period of history will retain and develop only a chosen few of them. Every newborn child comes

18 Ambrose McNicholl, o.p., "Structuralism," Irish Theological Quarterly, "July, 1968, p.265.

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equipped, in the form of adumbrated mental structures, with all the means ever available to mankind to define its relations to the world in general and its relations to others. But these structures are exclusive. Each of them can only integrate certain elements out of all those that are offered. Consequently, each type of social organization represents a choice, which the group imposes and perpetuates. In comparison with adult thought, which has chosen and rejected as the group has required, child thought is a sort of universal substratum the crystallizations of which have not yet occurred, and in which communication is still possible between incompletely solidified forms. 19

The impact of such a statement is made somewhat clearer when compared, or placed alongside one which appears in The Savage Mind, a later work. Speaking of the tendency towards taxonomy or classification, Lévi-Strauss says,

... This is a striking example of the concern with differentiating features which pervades the practical as well as the theoretical activities of the people we call primitive. Its formal nature and the 'hold' it has over every kind of content explain how it is that native institutions, though borne along on the flux of time, manage to steer a course between the contingencies of history and the immutability of design and remain, as it were, within the stream of intelligibility. They are always at a safe distance from the Scylla and Charybdis of diachrony and synchrony, event and structure, the aesthetic and the logical, and those who have tried to define them in terms of only one or the other aspect have therefore necessarily failed to understand their nature. Between the basic absurdity Frazer attributed to primitive practices and beliefs and the specious validation of them in terms of a supposed common sense invoked by Malinowski, there is scope for a whole science and a whole philosophy. 20

19 Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structure of Kinship, p. 93

20 Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, p. 74.

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Therefore, before continuing, it has been noted that the notion of structure in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss is not amenable to an inductive definition in that it arises out of a philosophical insight based on the complexity and variation of ethnological data which had previously eluded anthropological explanation. That is, the notion of structure was deduced in a Copernical sense in that if the structures of kinship do not produce an explanatory response after empirical investigation, perhaps it is just as well to posit the reverse, in that structure is established by man rather than by society, and subsequent to the evidences of this assertion structure or structuration can be found to exist in society.

That is to say, as linguistics moved from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena in phonology to that of their underlying unconscious structure, Lévi-Strauss follows the same procedure in ethnology. And further, he is attempting to deduce them logically so as to establish general laws. But he also is scientific in that he wishes to maintain his analysis as realistic, simplifying and explanatory. The problem for ethnology, as shall be seen in the following first chapter, is that there are two orders of reality: systems of appellations and systems of

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attitudes, one which is linguistic and one which is psychological. Therefore to explain these two levels of reality, and this adequately, Lévi-Strauss uses the notion of structure as grounded in thought, as linguists from²¹ de Saussure to Chomsky, have attempted to demonstrate.

Philosophically speaking, Lévi-Strauss is enmeshed in the Lockan "tabula rasa", Cartesian "innate ideas", and Kantian "a priori forms" debate, and the aim here is to resolve this dilemma showing structure to be of paramount importance for a philosophical theory of knowledge as a principle of intelligibility.

21 Structural linguistics studies what is unconscious in language; that is, when we speak we are not conscious of the syntactic and morphological laws of our language. Even the scholar who knows those laws is not thinking about them when he is speaking, generally. Structural linguistics also regards language as a system to see how it is structured, and it does not treat words as independent entities, but analyses the relations between words in the system. And more important for the notion of structure, structural linguistics seeks to establish general laws not only inductively, for example by the Baconian method of collecting data through observation, but also by means of deductive reasoning.

Maurice Cranston, Philosophy and Language, Canadian Broadcasting Company, Toronto, 1969, "The Structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss", p. 62-63.

CHAPTER ONE

THE STRUCTURES OF KINSHIP

The problem of kinship has long plagued anthropology and this arises from the difficulty involved in specifying what it is that establishes the phenomenon of kinship from the kin's point of view. Like many ethnological problems it is the problem of the observer, as are many sociological problems as well as philosophical problems especially when they deal with epistemology.

However, there are two orders of reality in kinship systems, and these are on the one hand the system of terminology, or categories of kinsmen, and on the other, the system of attitudes, or of prescribed behaviors and sentiments deemed appropriate between the members of the various categories.¹

The terminological analysis was considered by Lévi-Strauss not to be amenable to a structural analysis, and analyses of such systems had been attempted, albeit not too successfully.

Lévi-Strauss ventured to apply the method of structural analysis to "systems of attitudes".

The difficulty arises from the epistemological stance required of the ethnologist as he examines a

¹ Harold W. Scheffler, "Structuralism and Anthropology" in Structuralism, ed. Jacques Ehrmann, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York, 1970, p. 68

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society which does not share his prejudices and assumptions. Basically, the problem is one of objectivity and projection. If the point is argued from the western perspective of kinship which regards relations between kin as biological, or consanguineal connections between persons, then in many societies there are no such things as "relations of kinship" of and for the members of that or those societies. Some societies in effect have no knowledge of, or conception about, consanguineal connections between persons.

The alternative is to expand the notion of kinship, without distorting it, to include genealogical connections which is what Lévi-Strauss has done, and maintained that these are recognized, and that persons so connected to one another are conceptually aggregated together into categories which we may call kinship categories. Furthermore, certain social relationships are deemed proper between the members of these categories and the person relative to whom (Ego) they are so categorized. Non-kin can also be assimilated to both kinship categories and social relationships according to various criteria, such as descent group membership. In this way, kin categories and relations may serve as the underlying model for the organization of social relationships throughout the whole society.² This also underlines

2 Ibid., p. 69.

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the importance of the notion of culture as an intellectual phenomenon.

That is to say that many primitive societies will maintain kin status with persons who do not share their blood relation which is at odds with our conception of kin, which in the main is a consanguineous mode of conception. The problem for ethnology is that the terminology in primitive societies does not reflect a consanguineous relation but rather deals with a genealogical relation, or one of descent. Therefore if the terminology which when translated reflects blood kin only at the level of language and not at that of social reality, there is a perceptual gap to be bridged. The epistemological stance required of the observer is that he see the kin relations according to the perceptual field of the one involved, that is, the native, and not make the automatic association of consanguinity when it does not in effect exist. In other words, to deal with the terminology is to deal with the problem at the level of the signifier and not at that of the signified. If the mode of perception is not linguistic but psychological. Lévi-Strauss' analysis attempts to see these genealogical categories and relations as the underlying model for social organization, rather than regarding it as the consanguineal categories and relations as is the custom in our society. And that is why the study of the conscious

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phenomena produces confusion, while a study of their underlying unconscious structure produces intelligibility, which can be regarded as a philosophical problem.

Lévi-Strauss' goal is to establish what these fundamental structures of the human mind are and to see how they affect kin categories.

Further to this categorization, Lévi-Strauss also addressed himself to the problem of the origin of kinship systems. And here he sees systems of kinship and marriage as one in origin as well as in their contemporary manifestation. Therefore, kinship for Lévi-Strauss is a social, integrating or communicating phenomenon which came into existence with the prohibition of incest. This kinship system is indeed a veritable system of transaction or exchanges, with women, goods and messages being communicated. With the incest prohibition, asserts Lévi-Strauss, society is forced to exist and its effect is to establish relationships of exchange between groups forcing them to exchange women.

As such, Lévi-Strauss was able to establish the basic "atom of kinship", or, in other words, that basic component of any kinship system as a system of communication based on women. The basic unit of kinship, seen as a system of exchange, is the set of biological or genealogical relations: brother/sister, mother/child, and those cultural

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relations husband/wife, and sister's husband/wife's brother, which are set up either directly through men exchanging their sisters in marriage or indirectly through the exchange of the sister of one man for the goods and services of another man. The basic oppositions are therefore brother/sister, mother/child, husband/wife and brother-in-law(or wife-giver)/brother-in-law (or wife-taker).³

This ethnological founding of the notion of structure allows for much discussion in the field of kinship studies and it is not the intention here to dispute the points Lévi-Strauss raises but rather simply to indicate the wealth of theoretical formulation which his studies have brought to cultural anthropology. And although there might not be too strong a philosophical perspective involved, so relegating it to the annex of this work, there is good reason to include at the least the empirical underpinnings of a structural study of kinship.

That is to say, the mind conceptualizes and it is most difficult, if not impossible, to translate this type of conceptualization from one language to another. This problem will be further analyzed in the examination

3 Cf., Appendix II. p. 126.

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of The Savage Mind in Chapter III, as will the question of a sensible logic, but for the present it is simply to indicate the intricacy of indigenous thought which had to be understood by the ethnologist if he were to do justice to his science. The extent to which the content of verbal categories may be constrained by the nature of the real objects or events which are being categorized is another such problem. Some things are easier to think than are others, (myths have men and not men have myths). This is also a factor of various peoples that they can have verbal concepts to deal with similarities and dissimilarities which our language just does not equip us to deal with in a fashion that is both efficacious naturally, nor accurate culturally.

Another cultural problem which has vexed ethnologists as well as psychologists, psychoanalysts and sociologists is the ubiquitous question of incest. To make the link between kinship relations and categories, as a model of perception, and the incest taboo, Lévi-Strauss asserts that,

... The primitive and irreducible character of the basic unit of kinship, as we have defined it, is actually a direct result of the universal presence of an incest taboo.⁴

4 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, p. 44

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And also he maintains that the maternal uncle is a necessary precondition for the structure to exist. "The error of traditional anthropology" says Lévi-Strauss, "like that of traditional linguistics, was to consider the terms, and not the relations between the terms."⁵

And so he makes a radical point of departure from what can be termed the common sense attitude in much of anthropology, especially in empirical or functional anthropology.⁶ In reference to Radcliffe-Brown who maintains that the elementary structure of the "first order" is the nuclear family, that is to say, that the biological family constitutes the point of departure from which all societies elaborate their kinship systems, and as says Lévi-Strauss about the idea, it is one which today would elicit the greatest consensus but that in his⁷ opinion there is no other which is more dangerous.

But Lévi-Strauss realizes full well the ubiquity of the biological family in human society. He maintains

5 Ibid., p. 45

6 Ibid., p. 48

7 Ibid., p. 48

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however that what confers upon kinship its socio-cultural character is not what it retains from nature, but, rather "the essential way in which it diverges from nature".⁸ He maintains that a kinship system exists only in human consciousness; it is an arbitrary system of representation not the spontaneous development of a real situation. And here we do well to remember de Saussure's reflections on linguistics and how language is a mental phenomenon in genesis in that what the verbal or vocal sign refers to immediately is a mental image and not existential reality. What is elementary in the elementary structures of kinship therefore is not the terms but rather the relations between the terms.

In Tristes Tropiques, posterior to The Elementary Structures of Kinship, Claude Lévi-Strauss reveals in an autobiographical vein some of his philosophical development, which can serve as a kind of optic to better understand the far reaching synthesis produced in his earlier work. He makes reference to de Saussure and Freud, stressing the aspect of meaningfulness or intelligibility beyond that of the rational, and he asserts "there existed beyond the rational a category at once more important and more valid: that of the meaningful. The meaningful is the highest form of the rational".⁹

8 Ibid., p. 49

9 Lévi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques, translated by John Russell, Athenium, New York, 1969, p. 59, cf. Appendix III.

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But besides lauding de Saussure, Freud, Marx and referring to geology, Lévi-Strauss also seems to demonstrate his personal quest for causality, his search for the explanatory mode rather than the descriptive, his intense curiosity, both as a scientist, and although he does not easily accept the appellation, as a philosopher.

In reference to geology he says "but the most august of investigations is surely that which reveals what came before, dictated, and in large measure explains all the others".

And as for Freud, he writes,

When I first read Freud his theories seemed to me to represent quite naturally the application to individual human beings of a method which geology had established the canon. In both cases, the investigation starts with apparently impenetrable phenomena; and in both he needs a fundamental delicacy of perception -- sensibility, flair, taste: all are involved -- if he is to detail and assess the complexities of the situation. And yet there is nothing contingent, nothing arbitrary, in the order which he introduces into the incoherent-seeming collection of facts. Unlike the history of the historians, history as the geologist and the psycho-analyst see it intended to body forth in time -- rather in the manner of a tableau vivant -- certain fundamental properties of the physical or psychical universe. A tableau vivant, I said: and, in effect, the acting out of proverbs does provide a crude parallel to the activities of geologist and psycho-analyst. These consist, after all, in the interpretation of each act as the unfolding in time of certain non-temporal proofs. Proverbs are an attempt to pin down these truths on the moral plane, but in other domains they are just called "laws". In every case our aesthetic curiosity acts as a spring-board and we find ourselves immediately in a state of cognizance. ¹⁰

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 60

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And as for Marx,

Marx followed Rousseau in saying -- and saying once and for all, as far as I can see -- that social science is no more based upon events than physics is based upon sense-perceptions. Our object is to construct a model, examine its properties and then say the way in which it reacts to laboratory tests, and then apply our observations to the interpretation of empirical happenings: these may turn out very differently from what we had expected.¹¹

And so to the general method of structural analysis which will be examined much more closely in the second chapter, but basically Lévi-Strauss says it all when he asserts:

All three (geology, psychoanalysis and Marxism) showed that understanding consists in the reduction of one type of reality to another; that true reality is never the most obvious of realities, and that its nature is already apparent in the care which it takes to evade our detection. In all these cases, the problem is the same: the relation that is to say, between reason and sense perception; and the goal we are looking for is also the same: a sort of super-rationalism in which sense perceptions will be integrated into reasoning and yet lose none of their properties. ... phenomenology I found unacceptable, in so far as it postulated a continuity between experience and reality. That the one enveloped and explained the other I was quite willing to agree, but I had learned from my three mistresses that there is no continuity in the passage between the two and that to reach reality we must first repudiate experience, even though we may later reintegrate it in an objective synthesis in which sentimentality plays no part ...¹²

¹¹ Ibid., p. 61

¹² Ibid., pp. 61-62

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This super-rationalism will be examined in the third chapter with reference to the aesthetic perception of Lévi-Strauss. But to return to the primary theme for the moment, there remains the teratological incest taboo. As a means of introducing the incest taboo, Lévi-Strauss begins with the distinction between nature and culture, between the fact that man is "both a biological being and a social individual".¹³ And as a cultural anthropologist, or ethnologist, Lévi-Strauss is considering the social or cultural aspects of man and his is an attempt to determine the origin. After surveying the natural processes in nature briefly to give an indication of the direction of his argument, he maintains that ... "a vicious circle develops in seeking in nature for the origin of institutional rules which presupposes, or rather are culture, and whose establishment within a group without the aid of language is difficult to imagine".¹⁴

That is to say, that wherever there are rules culture maintains, and universality is the criterion of nature. This is his double criterion, norm and universality. To quote Lévi-Strauss, "everything universal in man relates to the natural order, and is characterized by

¹³ Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, p. 3

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

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spontaneity, and that everything subject to a norm is¹⁵
cultural, and is both relative and particular."

However, the exception to this is the "fact or
group of facts, ... that complex group of beliefs, customs,
conditions and institutions described succinctly as the¹⁶
prohibition of incest."

"Here therefore is a phenomenon which has the
distinctive characteristics both of nature and of its
theoretical contradiction, culture. The prohibition of
incest has the universality of bent and instinct, and¹⁷
the coercive character of law and institution." Besides¹⁷
the question of kinship terminology, the problem of the
incest taboo has also plagued sociologists and anthropo-
logists and perhaps much more strongly, especially on¹⁸
the affective level.

And as Lévi-Strauss asserts, "the prohibition of
incest presents a formidable mystery to sociological¹⁹
thought."

Lévi-Strauss outlines the three classic types of²⁰
explanation of the prohibition of incest.

15 Ibid., p. 8

16 Ibid., p. 8

17 Ibid., p. 10

18 Ibid., p. 11

19 Ibid., p. 10

20 Cf., Appendix V. p.150.

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In his discussion of dual organization, Lévi-Strauss asserts that "the dual system does not give rise to reciprocity but merely gives it form"²¹ and further that dual organization is "not in the first place an institution" but is "above all, a principle of organization, capable of widely varying ... applications."²² What he is asserting further to his survey of various dual systems, is that the principle extends to political life, as well as to religious and ceremonial life, as well as to the marriage system, and the reason for the wide application of this principle is clearly stated by Lévi-Strauss:

In all these forms, there is a difference of degree, not of kind; of generality and not of type. To understand their common basis, inquiry must be directed to certain fundamental structures of the human mind, rather than to some privileged region of the world or to a certain period in the history of civilization.²³ (Italics are mine, not Lévi-Strauss'.)

The aim then of the book is to perceive how these structures were made up and what the method was by which they might be apprehended and analyzed. The answer to the latter can be found discussed in more extensive detail

21 Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, p. 70.

22 Ibid., p. 75

23 Ibid., p. 75

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in the second chapter of this paper. However, Lévi-Strauss does not cringe from the responsibility of his enterprise and asserts that there are three fundamental structures of the human mind that can be established and these are:

"The exigency of the rule as a rule; the notion of reciprocity regarded as the most immediate form of integrating the opposition between the self and others; and finally the synthetic nature of the gift, i.e. that the agreed transfer of a valuable from one individual to another makes these individuals into partners, and adds a new quality to the valuable transferred." ²⁴

And his aim is as succinct: "our sole intention (at this point) is to find out if they do exist, and to grasp them in their concrete and universal reality." ²⁵

Lévi-Strauss then examines briefly infant thought which he maintains "provides a common basis of mental structures" ²⁶ and which can be seen as that period in the mental development of the individual when he has not yet been acculturated or socialized. That is to say,

Adult thinking is built around a certain number of structures which it specifies, organizes and develops from the single fact of this specialization, and which are only a fraction of the initial summary and undifferentiated structures in the child's thought. In other words, the mental schemata of adult diverge in accordance with the culture and period to which he belongs.

24 Ibid., p. 84

25 Ibid., p. 84

26 Ibid., p. 84

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However, they are all derived from a universal resource which is infinitely more rich than that of each particular culture. Every newborn child provides in embryonic form the sum total of possibilities, but each culture and period of history will retain and develop only a chosen few of them. Every newborn child comes equipped, in the form of adumbrated mental structures, with all the means ever available to mankind to define its relations to the world in general and its relations to others. But these structures are exclusive. Each of them can integrate only certain elements out of all those that are offered. Consequently, each type of social organization represents a choice, which the group imposes and perpetuates. In comparison with adult thought, which has chosen and rejected as the group has required, child thought is a sort of universal substratum the crystallizations of which have not yet occurred, and in which communication is still possible between incompletely solidified forms.²⁷

And so,

The further we penetrate towards the deeper levels of mental life, the more we are presented with structures diminishing in number but increasing in strictness and simplicity. ²⁸

Having elucidated his basic goal, Lévi-Strauss maintains that what he is searching for are "certain basic mechanisms 'which he maintains are universally subjacent'"²⁹ And this applies to all forms of social organization and it is with child thought that he recognized the "capital of mental structures and of institutional schemata which

²⁷ Ibid., p. 93

²⁸ Ibid., p. 94

²⁹ Ibid., p. 100

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are the initial resources at man's disposal in the launching of social enterprises,"³⁰ and so for his theory of enterprises or social institutions he has to designate as illegitimate other methodologies which do not recognize the basic search their discipline has to undertake.

Now getting to the core of his argumentation, Lévi-Strauss reviews the history of the social sciences and discusses two postulates of much of the human or social sciences, at the turn of the century and for a part of this century, wherein a human institution had only two possible origins, "either historical and irrational, ... or by design ... either incidental or intentional".³¹ That is to say that if a human institution could not be considered, in terms of causality, from the point of view of rationality, then the only way to regard it would be as the result or product of a series of historical accidents, which by themselves are not worthy of attention but because of the result of their interaction are brought into a different perspective. However important the point of methodology which Lévi-Strauss is pointing out in terms of other disciplines, notably history and historical reconstruction, that consideration shall be dealt with in the third chapter

30 Ibid., p. 95

31 Ibid., p. 100

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and here focus attention on the relevance this has for his argument concerning structure.

As he says, perhaps somewhat succinctly, but nevertheless clearly,

Psychology once argued along these lines. It argues that mathematical concepts were either innate properties, testifying to the superiority and irreducible nature of man's mind, or that they must have derived from experience by an automatic process of association. This antinomy was resolved once it was realized that even the lowly fowl can apprehend relationships. Once this was acknowledged, both associationism and idealism found themselves non-suited. There was no longer any need for highly complex historical reconstructions to account for really primitive concepts. But at the same time it was realized that such concepts were in no way the crowning point of the structure, but merely its basis and the humble raw material of its foundations. It had been believed that the only choice was between accepting the origin of the concept as transcendental or reconstructing it from bits and pieces, which was impossible. This antithesis vanished before the experimental discovery of the immanence of relation.

The same change in attitudes is beginning to appear in the study of human institutions, which are also structures whose whole -- in other words, the regulating principle -- can be given before the parts, that is, that complex union which makes up the institution, its terminology, consequences and implications, the customs through which it is expressed and the beliefs to which it gives rise. This regulating principle can have a rational value without being rationally conceived. It can be expressed in arbitrary forms without being itself devoid of meaning. ³² (Italics mine)

And so Lévi-Strauss explains the relationships between cross-cousin marriages and dual organizations in

32 Ibid., p. 101

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ethnological studies, as both having their origin "in the apprehension, by primitive thought, of those completely basic structures on which the very existence of culture rests."³³ And so what he is pursuing as an ethnologist is not a study of the institutions but of their foundations.

To borrow the definition of culture noted by Ward H. Goodenough would seem *à propos* in an attempt to clarify what is perhaps something of a categorical statement.

Goodenough, in defining culture, also ascribes a specific sense to ethnography, the term we have preferred to use up to now as with ethnology, and he maintains that ethnography is that branch of anthropology whose task is to describe specific cultures adequately, and this has been Lévi-Strauss' main preoccupation.

Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative sense of the term. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them ...

... Given such a definition, it is obviously impossible to describe a culture properly simply by describing behaviour or social economic and ceremonial events and arrangements as observed material phenomena. What is required is to construct a theory of the conceptual models which they represent and of which they are artifacts. We test the adequacy of such a theory by our ability to interpret and predict what goes on in a community as measured by how its members, ... do so. ³⁴

³³ Ibid., p. 101

³⁴ Ward H. Goodenough, "Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics," op. cit., p. 36

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In discussing Deutung, or interpretation, there could always be extensive references to Ricoeur, Hartmann, Evans; however, the main consideration is philosophical interpretation. That is, to examine interpretation or intelligibility in terms indigenous to the social sciences.

To introduce the problem briefly, Lévi-Strauss writes,

"... we are confronted with the fundamental problem of explanation in the social sciences. If it is true, as Boas has heavily emphasized, that all types of social phenomena (languages, beliefs, techniques and customs) have this in common, that their elaboration in the mind is at the level of unconscious thought, the same question must always be raised as to their interpretation." ³⁵

36

In opposing the genetic and mathematical mode of explication and explanation what Lévi-Strauss is asserting is that to maintain the rational logical model, which is conscious, does not produce an explanation. For example, in terms of the sociologists imposing a form on the content in his search for explanation, Lévi-Strauss refers to André Weil of the University of Chicago, who in his algebraic analysis, used sixteen elementary units to determine the characteristics of an Australian aboriginal system with eight marriage classes. And as Lévi-Strauss says, "however, the aboriginal mind never had recourse to these sixteen categories." ³⁷ It seems similar to the

35 Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., p. 108

36 Cf., Appendix V

vi-Strauss, op. cit., p. 109

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problem posed by the Egyptian paradox of the golden numbers, and the size of pyramids, the complexity of which only indicate mathematical if not psychological projection. But more to the point, Lévi-Strauss would maintain that these types of analyses "contravene a well-known principle of logic, viz., a class which can be defined in extension can never be postulated.

The existence of a class may be established, but it can never be reduced."³⁸ In fact, the other problem referring to methodological contrivance may not be the sociologists' but the natives' fault.

And it is evident in certain ethnological inquiries that certain "cultures have engaged in or indulged in a real labor of categorization in their own social institutions... The system as such therefore ... cannot be a faithful representation."³⁹ And here Lévi-Strauss makes a thrust at philosophy which no doubt deserves reproduction in full:

The sociologist to whom it might give doubts should remember that he is not the first to have encountered it. (That is, this double blind situation of observer and observed). The Logic of the Schoolmen was the work of people who thought and believed, that they had discovered the laws which their own thinking obeyed. Despite the fact that in certain cases thought develops consistently

38 Ibid., p. 110

39 Ibid, p. 110

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with the models of classical logic, and that any intellectual processes may be interpreted in keeping with its requirements, it is known today, through closer observation, that in most cases, the laws governing the processes of thought, are governed by very different laws. The grammarians of Port Royal believed they had discovered the true laws of speech, but we have since learned that syntax and morphology rest on a substructure which has few points in common with the frameworks of traditional grammar."⁴⁰

In effect he is stating the structural perspective when he further asserts that "no understanding will come (of it) through considering merely its visible content and empirical expression. Custom is only a superficial aspect of the system of relations, which is what must be isolated."⁴¹ And this is in reference to what was asserted in Tristes Tropiques where he maintains that 'to get to the real one must repudiate experience', that is, that:

... understanding consists in the reduction of one type of reality to another; that true reality is never the most obvious of realities, and that its nature is already apparent in the care which it takes to evade our detection. In all these cases the problem is the same: the relation, that is to say, between reason and sense-perception; and the goal we are looking for is also the same: a sort of super-rationalism in which sense-perceptions will be integrated into reasoning and yet lose none of their properties.

And so I stood out against the new tendencies in metaphysical thinking which were then beginning to take shape. Phenomenology I found unacceptable, in so far as it postulated a continuity between experience and reality. That the one enveloped and

40 Ibid., p. 110

41 Ibid., p. 115

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explained the other I was quite willing to agree, but I had learnt from my three mistresses (Marxism, psychoanalysis and geology) that there is no continuity in the passage between the two and that to reach reality we must first repudiate experience (*Italics mine*), even though we may later reintegrate it in an objective synthesis in which sentimentality plays no part. 42

Furthermore, ethnologically, reference to cross-cousin marriages, which are a preferential union, that is, that in contrast to the prohibition of incest, which says who cannot be married, cross-cousin marriages assert which spouses are preferred, and so the difference between the prescribed system and the prohibitive systems. That is to say, there is a difference between those that maintain privileged unions and prescribed spouses, and those that maintain forbidden unions and prohibited spouses. Marriage prohibitions thereby have no biological basis for cross-cousin marriages and establish a division that cuts across a category of relatives who, from the point of view of biological proximity, are strictly interchangeable. 43

Furthermore, the fact that they are conceived of in this fashion by the natives themselves establishes the empirical basis for a philosophical interpretation of conceptualization.

42 Lévi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques, op. cit., pp. 61-62

43 Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, op. cit., p. 121.

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The problem therefore is why are unions socially different which bear the same biological stamp, what is the principle behind this type of union, what, in effect, is the principle which grounds the prohibition of incest ?

And this is the major difference between a structural approach and a functional approach as that espoused by the great anthropologist Malinowski, among many others.

It is denied that the raison d'être of an institution might be found in the institution itself; instead, it is reduced to a series of contingent connections...⁴⁴ ... of the three types of institutions, cross-cousin marriage is the most significant, making the analysis of this form of marriage the veritable experimentum crucis in the study of marriage prohibitions.⁴⁵

What Lévi-Strauss is proposing in opposition to this functional methodology is to treat cross-cousin marriage, rules of exogamy and dual organization as "so many examples of one basic structure. This structure should have been interpreted in terms of its total characteristics, instead of being broken up into bits and pieces and set alongside one another in a juxtaposition which might justify an historical interpretation but which would have no intrinsic significance."⁴⁶

44 Ibid., p. 122

45 Ibid., p. 123

46 Ibid., p. 123

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But these "systems" are not only analysable as such, they are conceived of in this fashion by the natives themselves, a fact which helped to found a later work by Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind which will be discussed in the third chapter.

As A.B. Deacon has so noted, and as quoted by Lévi-Strauss himself,

It is perfectly clear that the natives, (the intelligent ones) do conceive of the system as a connected mechanism which they can represent by diagrams ... The way they could reason about relationships from their diagrams was absolutely on a par with good scientific exposition in a lecture room. 47

And further,

It is extraordinary that a native should be able to represent completely by a diagram a complex system of matrimonial classes... I have collected in Malekula, too, some cases of a remarkable mathematical ability. I hope ... to be able to prove that the native is capable of pretty advanced abstract thought." 48

And, as says Lévi-Strauss in conclusion,

Primitive thought, therefore, is not incapable of conceiving of complex structures and apprehending relationships. 49

And the reason for this problem is epistemological,

47 Ibid., p. 126

48 Ibid., p. 127

49 Ibid., p. 127

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In our opinion, the source of all the uncertainties surrounding the problem of incest and the study of marriage prohibitions is none other than our tendency to think of marriage in terms of our own institutions. ⁵⁰

At the basis of all these ethnological facts is basically that "every right acquired entails a concomitant obligation, and that every renunciation calls ⁵¹ for a compensation", and in terms of this analysis that "the acquisition of a capacity to apprehend these structures poses a problem, but a psychological not a sociological one ... We know for a fact that structures ⁵² of this type are conceived of by primitive thought". And it is to be asserted, not only is it a psychological problem, but a philosophical one as well.

Basically Lévi-Strauss, as he himself asserts, is trying to get away from "cultural history", and as he states further that

If it is true that the transition from nature to culture is determined by man's ability to think of biological relationships as systems of oppositions ... and if it is true that exchange is the immediate result of these pairs of opposition ... then no doubt it could be said that: 'Human societies tend automatically and unconsciously to disintegrate, along rigid mathematical lines ...' ⁵³

50 Ibid., p. 128

51 Ibid., p. 132

52 Ibid., p. 133

53 Ibid., p. 136

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Lévi-Strauss considers then exchange to be a mere aspect of a total structure of reciprocity which "was immediately and intuitively apprehended by social⁵⁴ man". Lévi-Strauss criticizes Frazer's explanation which sees exchange as a derivative phenomenon arising from calculation and reflection. And so to the fatal thrust against this kind of explanation when he says "the least that can be said of this principle is that it constitutes a remarkably radical conversion to a sociological doctrine⁵⁵ of final causes".

And there is no better description of the method than as stated by its progenitor,

In a theory such as ours, in which the apprehension of a certain logical structure is made the fundamental basis of marriage customs, it is important to note that this structure is often visible even in systems in which it has not materialized in a concrete form ... We have seen exchange ... as a phenomenon of reciprocity, as the universal form of marriage.⁵⁶

And further, in conclusion,

Once this relationship (cross-cousin marriages) is conceived of as a structure of reciprocity (it can be shown) the institution of cross-cousin marriage occupies an exceptional position, placed as it were at the bifurcation leading to two extreme types of reciprocity, viz., dual organization and the prohibition of incest.⁵⁷

54 Ibid., p. 137

55 Ibid., p. 140

56 Ibid., p. 143

57 Ibid., pp. 143-144

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He substantiates his argumentation with references to Kroeber who asserted that,

much of the formalized social organization of primitive peoples is in the nature of unconscious experiment and play of fashion rather than the core or substance of their culture ... it may well represent the pinnacle of their achievement, just as experiment and play with abstractions, words and plastic forms resulted in the pinnacles of Greek civilization, while science, technology and the control or exploitation of nature are those of our own. But pinnacles are end products, not bases.⁵⁸ (*Italics mine*)

And as says Lévi-Strauss concerning the foundation or "bases" of dual organization, "regarded as an institution limited in its forms and in its distribution",

there are a certain number of logical structures the recurrence of which in modern society, and at different ages in life, proves it to be both fundamental and universal.⁵⁹

And so we come to the best definition of structure so far espoused by Lévi-Strauss as he asserts,

Of these (three types of phenomena) structure is the simplest. It consists of a symbolic whole which is capable of expressing different significations, though it is undeniable that there is always a functional relation between that which signifies and that which is signified.⁶⁰

58 Ibid., p. 150

59 Ibid., p. 151

60 Ibid., p. 158

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As says Lévi-Strauss,

That the aborigines are not conscious of the postulated law should not be used as an argument against seeking it. For there is no need to be conscious of linguistic laws to be able to speak, nor of the laws of logic to think. None the less, these laws exist, and the theoretician rightly strives to discover them.⁶¹

In effect then "social phenomena may exist and function without being cognized," as has said Skirokogoroff.⁶²

"The logical structures are elaborated by unconscious thought" says Lévi-Strauss definitively.⁶³

Therefore the structural perspective is constructed on a relational logic, a logic of binary opposition which is the basis of Boolean algebra which through the work of George Boole and Augustus de Morgan founded logistic, or symbolic logic, and its substance is the analysis of relation. Furthermore, through Russell, Whitehead and Moore, modern logic and mathematical thinking developed and allows for wider analyses than traditional logic. And so Lévi-Strauss asserts, in answer to the logic of his own argumentation, that,

The logic, however, must be there if kinship systems are really systems, and if, as our whole work has attempted to show, formal structures, consciously or unconsciously apprehended by the human mind, constitute the indestructible basis of marriage institutions, of the incest prohibition whereby the existence of these institutions is made possible, and of culture itself, the advent of which is constituted by the incest prohibition.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 177

⁶² Ibid., p. 177

⁶³ Ibid., p. 268

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 440

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In criticizing his fellow sociologists who have erred on the way to truth, he says little, but quotes Engels to substantiate his point.

The empiricism of some contemporary sociologists merely repeats, on a different plane, the mistake of an outmoded idealism, and it must be answered in the same way:

'It is, therefore, from the history of nature and human society that the laws of dialectics are abstracted. For they are nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as of thought itself ... (Hegel's) ... mistake lies in the fact that these laws are foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, are not deduced from them ... The universe, willy-nilly, is made out to be arranged in accordance with a system of thought which itself is only the product of a definite stage of evolution of human thought. If we turn the thing around then everything becomes simple, and the dialectical laws that look so extremely mysterious in idealist philosophy at once become simple and clear as noonday'.⁶⁵

The philosophical perspective herein exposed is to some degree an attempt at the reconciliation of the poles of formal and informal, subjective and objective, realistic and idealistic.

The laws of thought -- primitive or civilized -- are the same as those which are expressed in physical reality and in social reality, which is itself only one of its aspects.⁶⁶

To clarify the notion of structure, it can be regarded as a regulating principle, and reciprocity as an example seen as a mathematical limit. As a mathematical term it can, as a limit, be either asymptotic or stochastic.

⁶⁵ F. Engels, Dialectic of Nature, New York, 1940, pp.26-27

⁶⁶ Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, op. cit., p. 451

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Further to this, incest can be seen as the limit of the principle of reciprocity, that is, the point at which it cancels itself out,⁶⁷ for with incest there is no exchange, no reciprocity. It approaches it, but in effect never reaches it.

And Lévi-Strauss makes the comparison that "what incest is to reciprocity in general, such is the lowest form of reciprocity (patrilateral marriage) in relation to the highest form (matrilateral marriage)."⁶⁸

As for Lévi-Strauss' definition of incest it can but serve to reinforce the continuity of the perspective presented here in an edited fashion.

The prohibition of incest is less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister or daughter to be given to others. It is the supreme rule of the gift, and it is clearly this aspect, too often unrecognized, which allows its nature to be understood. All the errors in interpreting the prohibition of incest arise from a tendency to see marriage as a discontinuous process which derives its own limits and possibilities from within itself in each individual case.⁶⁹

A point of philosophical importance arises in Lévi-Strauss' concluding remarks when he maintains that "the prohibition of incest becomes clear as soon as one grants that society must exist"⁷⁰ It is perfectly accurate for a

67 Ibid., p. 454

68 Ibid., p. 454

69 Ibid., p. 481

70 Ibid., p. 490

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scientist to maintain this perspective, as it is for the physicist concerning matter and so on, however, there are many philosophical perspectives possible ranging from Aristotle's definition of man as social to the cultural philosophies of the Teutonic type appearing in the late nineteenth century.

Therefore in this first chapter it has been noted that Lévi-Strauss was attempting a structural analysis of the system of attitudes, and not of terminology of kinship problems, and that the categories of kinship can be regarded as the underlying model for the organizing of social relationships throughout the whole society.

Subsequently it was indicated that Lévi-Strauss was searching of the origin of kinship systems and that he established that they are a direct result of the universality of the incest taboo. Finally, he established that kinship systems are symbolic systems.

In his search for a principle of intelligibility for these symbolic systems, he introduces the "diachronic" and "synchronic" polarity of structural linguistics as borrowed from Ferdinand de Saussure, with the concomitant return to the incest taboo as a principle of intelligibility.

And so the conclusion arrived at is that to under-

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stand the forms of social life it is necessary to go to the "fundamental structures of the human mind", and furthermore that the logical structures are elaborated by unconscious thought, and a regulating principle in the area of social relations is the incest taboo.

Therefore, up to this point it can be seen that Lévi-Strauss has broached the problem of the origin of kinship and its universality, that the very existence and the origin of society is being sought, and fundamentally that the origin returns to the elaborated logical structures in a symbolic system at the unconscious level.

Now the aim is to deal with the theoretical contributions which make such an enterprise possible.

CHAPTER TWO

STRUCTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In this second chapter the theoretical contributions of Lévi-Strauss will be rendered more precise as regards his actual use of the notion of structure.

Basically, Structural Anthropology can be considered to be as much a contribution to the social science of ethnology as Copernicus' contribution was to astronomy, Kant to philosophy, and what Einstein did for theoretical physics. Perhaps the praise is too easily granted, but an attempt will be made to substantiate it.

As Lévi-Strauss himself states about his approach,

Here is a Copernican revolution, which will consist of interpreting society as a whole in terms of a theory of communication. This enterprise is currently possible on three levels: for the rules of kinship and marriage serve to assure the communication of women between groups, as economic rules serve to assure the communication of goods and services, and linguistic rules, the communication of messages ... But there is much else in society besides matrimonial, economic and linguistic exchanges. One finds also other languages, like art, myth, ritual, religion; and finally other elements not now susceptible of being structured whether by their nature or because of the insufficiency of our knowledge.¹

However to ground this reference to communication theory which Lévi-Strauss repeats, reference can be made to a fundamental point in the first chapter where he asserted that one has to "turn to the fundamental

¹ Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, op. cit., p.82

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structures of the human mind" and the fact that these, like the laws of linguistics, are unconscious, merits a special approach, and this is what constitutes that of a structural anthropology.

The structure of reciprocity was, as was noted, an objective condition for society to exist. Structures are not invariable laws of conception, but are rather 'a content apprehended through a logical organization conceived of as a property of the real'.

The unconscious is of major importance within this theoretical framework and as Lévi-Strauss asserts:

The unconscious ... is always empty -- or more accurately, it is as alien to mental images as the stomach is to the foods that pass through it. As the organ of a specific function, the unconscious merely imposes structural laws upon inarticulated elements which originate elsewhere-- impulses, emotions, representation, and memories. We might say therefore that the preconscious is the individual lexicon where each of us accumulates the vocabulary of his personal history, but that this vocabulary becomes significant, for us and for others, only to the extent that the unconscious structures according to its laws and thus transforms it into language. Since these laws are the same for all individuals and in all instances where the unconscious pursues its activity, the problem which arose in the preceding paragraph can easily be resolved. The vocabulary matters less than the structure. Whether the myth is recreated by the individual or borrowed from tradition, it derives from its source -- individual or collective (between which interpretations and exchanges constantly occur) -- only the stock of representations with which it operates. But the structure remains the same, and through it the symbolic function is fulfilled.²

2 Ibid., p. 199

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The unconscious is in effect an aggregate of structures³ and this is the reason that it functions the way it does demonstrating to be something of a viable field of inquiry for the science or art, whatever, of psychoanalysis and psychology. On the other hand with his theory of structures, Lévi-Strauss has been able to resolve in one way the enigma of discussing something that is unconscious and that is always unconscious, and which has been approached only through a complicated project of inferences and following a theory of signs and indices. However, the point is not precisely, at least for the moment, to interpret the difficult interrelations of psychoanalysis and anthropology.

This unconscious optic or lens or whatever other analogy comes to the readers' mind, is defined by Lévi-Strauss when he says that structure consists of a model meeting with several requirements. First, it exhibits the characteristics of a system, there must be a possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type; also, it is possible to predict how the model will react if one or more of its elements are submitted to certain modifications and finally the model should be constituted so as to make immediately intelligible all the

3 Ibid., p. 198

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observed facts. (cf. Glossary of Terms on model)⁴

A theory in effect is a model, as is a structure.

However, to return to the unconscious which is equivalent to the symbolic function which in turn is equivalent to the totality of the unconscious structures, for Lévi-Strauss, the symbolic function and the structural laws of the unconscious are in effect equivalent expressions.⁵

The symbol appears as a result of the incest taboo as does language, says Lévi-Strauss. Language offers the most complete model of exchange and of the symbolic process.

Exchange is not a complex edifice, constructed starting with obligations to give, to receive, and to repay, and helped by an affective and mystical mortar. It is a synthesis immediately given to, and by, symbolic thought which, in exchange as in all other forms of communication, overcomes the contradiction which is inherent to it to perceive things like the elements of dialogue, simultaneously under the relation of self and other, and destined by nature to pass from one to the other. Whatever is from one or from the other represents a situation derived through relation to the initial relational character. But does not the same hold true for magic ?⁶

⁴ Cf., Glossary of Terms. Appendix 2.

⁵ Cf., Edmond Ortigues, Le Discours et le Symbole, Aubier Montaigne, Paris, 1962.

⁶ Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss" in Sociologie et Anthropologie, par Marcel Mauss, P.U.F. Paris, 1950, p. XLVI.

L'échange n'est pas un édifice complexe, construit à partir des obligations de donner, de recevoir et de rendre, à l'aide d'un ciment affectif et mystique. C'est une synthèse immédiatement donnée à, et par, la pensée symbolique qui, dans l'échange comme dans toute autre forme de communication, surmonte la contradiction qui lui est inhérente de percevoir les choses comme les éléments du dialogue, simultanément sous le rapport de soi et d'autrui, et destinés par nature à passer de l'un à l'autre. Qu'elles soient de l'un ou de l'autre représente une situation dérivée par rapport au caractère relationnel initial. Mais n'en est-il pas de même pour la magie ?

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And so he says in Structural Anthropology "as in the case of women, the original impulse which compelled men to exchange words must be sought for in that split representation⁷ that pertains to the symbolic function."

The purpose however of a structural anthropology which depends greatly on structural linguistics is, in the words of Vogelin, that there are not only "operational" but also⁸ "substantial" comparabilities between language and culture. And as Ward Goodenough says, "indeed we may define a language in precisely the same terms in which we have already defined culture. It consists of whatever it is one has to know in order to communicate with its speakers as adequately as they do with each other and in a manner which they will accept as⁹ corresponding to their own."

If such an experiment is successful, that is, the comparison between language and culture, then, as says Lévi-Strauss,

We shall be in a position to understand basic similarities between forms of social life, such as language, art, law, and religion, that on the surface seem to differ greatly. At the same time, we shall have the hope of overcoming the opposition between the collective nature of culture and its manifestations in the individual, since the so-called "collective consciousness" would, in the final analysis, be no more than the expression, on the level of individual thought and behaviour, of certain time and space modalities of the universal laws which make up the unconscious activity of the mind.¹⁰

7 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, op.cit., p. 61

8 Ibid., p. 61

9 Ibid., p. 37

10 Ibid., p. 64

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And Goodenough makes the point even more precise when he says,

Relatively little attention is devoted systematically at least, to isolating the concepts or forms in terms of which the members of a society deal with one another and the world around them, and many of which are signified lexically in their language.

The great problem for a science of man is how to get from the objective world of materiality, with its infinite variability, to the subjective world of form as it exists in what, for lack of a better term, we must call the minds of our fellow men.¹¹

And we think this is what Lévi-Strauss means in Tristes Tropiques when he says that to get to the real one must repudiate experience. that is, the ineffable complexity of the individual as compared with the singularity of its foundations.

Exchange, which is reflected in the circulation of goods, messages and especially women, is seen as the symbolic system of our unconscious at work. And so the task is the search for the structural laws of the unconscious for it is these that allow for a true science of man, and also to clarify the impact of these synchronic laws on the diachronic¹² finality of consciousness.

And in terms of the symbolic function of men, which is now considered the definition of man which more closely

11 Ward H. Goodenough, op. cit., p. 39

12 Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., p. 178

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matches his uniqueness, Lévi-Strauss asserts,

... only the history of the symbolic function can allow us to understand the intellectual condition of man. in which the universe is never charged with sufficient meaning and in which the mind always has more meaning available than there are objects to which to relate to them. Torn between these two systems of reference -- the signifying and the signified -- man asks magical thinking to provide him with a new system of reference, within which the thus-far contradictory elements can be integrated.¹³

And further,

The effectiveness of symbols would consist precisely in this "inductive property" by which formally homologous structures, built out of different materials at different levels of life -- organic processes, unconscious mind, rational thought -- are related to one another. Poetic metaphor provides a familiar example of this inductive process, but as a rule it does not transcend the unconscious level.¹⁴

And Lévi-Strauss does not shy away from the origin of the impact of symbolism on modern man through its introduction by psychoanalysis and reinforces our conception of his contribution as holistic and integrative, for he asserts that the ethnological study of shamanism may one day "serve to elucidate obscure points of Freudian theory ... specifically of the concepts of myth and the unconscious."¹⁵

In reference to the instance of trauma in psychoanalysis where cathexis appears or is activated, and repression is initiated, he says that although real events, which can

13 Ibid., p. 179

14 Ibid., p. 197

15 Ibid., p. 197

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indeed be catalogues, seem to be the cause of the repression, he would maintain that,

the traumatizing power of any situation cannot result from its intrinsic features but must, rather, result from the capacity of certain events, appearing within an appropriate psychological, historical and social context, to induce an emotional crystallization which is molded by a pre-existing structure.

In relation to the event or anecdote, these structures -- or more accurately, these structural laws -- are truly atemporal. For the neurotic, all psychic life and all subsequent experiences are organized in terms of an exclusive or predominant structure, under the catalytic action of the initial myth. But this structure, as well as other structures which the neurotic relegates to a subordinate position, are to be found also in the normal human being, whether primitive or civilized. These structures as an aggregate (as we noted earlier) form what we call the unconscious ... (as such) the unconscious ceases to be the ultimate haven of individual peculiarities -- the repository of a unique history which makes each of us an irreplaceable being. It is reducible to a function -- the symbolic function, which no doubt is specifically human, and which is carried out according to the same laws among all men, and actually corresponds to the aggregate of these laws.¹⁶

But well realizing the digression this might prompt one to follow we introduce it here only to specify what structure actually means for Lévi-Strauss, at least in this one example.¹⁷ And so the method of Structural Anthropology is established.

If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same

16 Ibid., p. 198

17 Cf., Ortigues, Part 3, chapter 2, p.188 passim.

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for all minds -- ancient, and modern, primitive and civilized -- it is necessary to grasp the unconscious structures underlying each institution and each custom. in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs, provided of course that the analysis is carried far enough.¹⁸

And furthermore, in another, more recent work, Lévi-Strauss says that,

it is linguistics, and more precisely structural linguistics, which has familiarized us since then with the idea that the fundamental phenomena of the life of the mind, those which condition and determine its most general forms, are situated at the level of unconscious thought. The unconscious would therefore be the mediating term between myself and others. In more intensely examining its contents, we do not extend ourselves, if we can put it that way, in the meaning of ourselves: we rejoin a plan which does not appear strange to us because it conceals our most secret self; but (much more normally) because, without having us come out of ourselves, it puts us in contact with forms of activity which are at the same time ours and others, conditions for all mental activities of all men of all times. Thus, the apprehension (which can be but objective) of the unconscious forms of the activity of the mind leads nevertheless to subjectivation; since in definitive, it is an operator of the same nature which, in psychoanalysis, allows the regaining for ourselves the self which is the most foreign, and, in the ethnological inquiry, allows us access to the most foreign of others as if it were another us. In both cases, it is the same problem which is posed, that of a sought for communication, one time between a subjective I and an objective I, and at another time between an objective I and a subjective I. And, in both cases also, the most rigorously positive search for the unconscious itineraries of this meeting, traced once and for all in the innate

18 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, p. 22.

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structure of the human mind and in the particular and irreversible history of individuals and groups, is the condition of success. ¹⁹

Furthermore.

It is in the rational character of symbolic thought that we can look for the answer to our problem. Whatever was the moment and the circumstances of its apparition in the ladder of animal life, language could only have been born in one fell swoop. Things could not have started progressively to signify. After a transformation, the study of which does not belong to the social sciences, but to biology and psychology, a passage was affected, from a stage where nothing had a meaning, to another where everything had one. Now, this remark which

¹⁹ Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction à l'Oeuvre de Marcel Mauss," Op., cit., p. XXXI.

Car c'est la linguistique, et plus particulièrement la linguistique structurale, qui nous a familiarisés depuis lors avec l'idée que les phénomènes fondamentaux de la vie de l'esprit, ceux qui la conditionnent et déterminent ses formes les plus générales, se situent à l'étage de la pensée inconsciente. L'inconscient serait ainsi le terme médiateur entre moi et autrui. En approfondissant ses données, nous ne nous prolongeons pas. si l'on peut dire, dans le sens de nous-mêmes: nous rejoignons un plan qui ne nous paraît pas étranger parce qu'il recèle notre moi le plus secret; mais (beaucoup plus normalement) parce que, sans nous faire sortir de nous-même, il nous met en coïncidence avec des formes d'activité qui sont à la fois nôtres et autres, conditions de toutes les vies mentales de tous les hommes et de tous les temps. Ainsi, l'appréhension (qui ne peut être qu'objective) des formes inconscientes de l'activité de l'esprit conduit tout de même à la subjectivation; puisqu'en définitive, c'est une opération du même type qui, dans la psychanalyse, permet de reconquérir à nous-même notre moi le plus étranger, et, dans l'enquête ethnologique, nous fait accéder au plus étranger des autrui comme à un autre nous. Dans les deux cas, c'est le même problème qui se pose, celui d'une communication cherchée, tantôt entre un moi subjectif et un moi objectivant, tantôt entre un moi objectif et un autre subjectivé. Et, dans les deux cas aussi, la recherche la plus rigoureusement positive des itinéraires inconscients de cette rencontre, tracés une fois pour toutes dans la structure innée de l'esprit humain et dans l'histoire particulière et irréversible des individus ou des groupes, est la condition du succès.

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appears banal, is important, because this radical change is without counterpart in the domain of knowledge, which elaborates itself slowly and progressively. In other words, at the moment where the entire universe, in one blow, became significant, it did not as such become any better known, even though it is true that the apparition of language would precipitate the development of knowledge. There is therefore a fundamental opposition in the history of the human mind, between symbolism, which offers a character of discontinuity, and knowledge which is marked by continuity.²⁰

And so, maintaining this intimate dialogue with language, Lévi-Strauss, as we noted earlier concerning the fact that the content gains its reality from its structure,

20 Ibid., p. XLVII

C'est dans ce caractère relationnel de la pensée symbolique que nous pouvons chercher la réponse à notre problème. Quels qu'aient été le moment et les circonstances de son apparition dans l'échelle de la vie animale, le langage n'a pu naître que tout d'un coup. Les choses n'ont pas pu se mettre à signifier progressivement. A la suite d'une transformation dont l'étude ne relève pas des sciences sociales, mais de la biologie et de la psychologie, un passage s'est effectué, d'un stade où rien n'avait un sens, à un autre où tout en possédait. Or, cette remarque, en apparence banale, est importante, parce que ce changement radical est sans contrepartie dans le domaine de la connaissance qui, elle, s'élabore lentement et progressivement. Autrement dit, au moment où l'Univers entier, d'un seul coup, est devenu significatif, il n'en a pas été pour autant mieux connu, même s'il est vrai que l'apparition du langage devait précipiter le rythme du développement de la connaissance. Il y a donc une opposition fondamentale, dans l'histoire de l'esprit humain, entre le symbolisme, qui offre un caractère de discontinuité, et la connaissance, marquée de continuité.

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asserts in the Savage Mind that in a sense logic, signs²¹ are empirical and intelligible. The form and the content play the role of signifier and signified, but they are not analysable separately, or one without the other, they can only be encountered in the sign. And it is in this sign that we find the conceptual scheme and if this scheme is analyzed it is an analysis of the form and the content, and this scheme is that of a symbolic system, of a representation (scheme or schema).

What is empirical and intelligible is the structure therefore in Lévi-Strauss' terminology. The study of a signifying structure does not involve its creation by the observer. Meaning is caused by the degree of divergence which separates the discreet units into structure. The signifier is the structure, that which is signified is the meaning, but the meaning is given by and in the structure. The way which the structure unites discrete elements is the only possible scientific explanation of meaning. There are also necessary relations here in the sign and arbitrary relations with external reality. Therefore, for Lévi-Strauss the only possibility of a relation between thought and the structure of things and the structure of our mind is of the same

²¹ Lévi-Strauss, Savage Mind, op. cit., p. 173

²² Yvan Simonis, Claude Lévi-Strauss ou La Passion de l'Inceste, Aubier Montaigne, Paris, 1968, p. 207.

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order. Our thought can be expressed in language, but language expresses both our unconscious as well as things. And so there is a homologous relation between speech and language, consciousness and unconsciousness.

And these relations are what are revealed in a sensible logic, as expressed in primitive societies, especially with the problem presented by totemism, and other classificatory tendencies in primitive societies. and so we will move into our third chapter beginning first with a discussion of totemism, and how a structural anthropology helps to clarify this particular problem, as it did kinship, and then discuss the effects of a structural approach as explanation of the classificatory capabilities of what is termed the "savage mind".²³

Structural Anthropology has been used here generally as a focus for our perspective, considering its impact on ethnology. we did not think this to be unreasonable; however, as we have used various aspects of the book to explain the structures of kinship the workings of the savage mind as well as of the unconscious, we have perhaps fragmented our primary source. In this chapter this effect is heightened by what follows it in terms of Lévi-Strauss' work and to avoid the impression which, mutatis mutandis,

23 Ibid., p. 198

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might develop in our reader as he goes along that this section was somehow lacking, or perhaps superfluous. we will try to effect a synthesis of the method of structuralism, and its possible philosophical impact, and in so doing serve the vigilante of both coherence and clarity.

The problem that Lévi-Strauss faces is basically how to explain sociological phenomenon without resorting to a circular definition. Therefore he looks for a symbolic foundation of society rather than a sociological foundation of symbolism. As he maintains,

All culture can be considered as an ensemble of symbolic systems. the first of which are those of language, marriage rules, economic relations, art, science, and religion. All these systems try to express certain aspects of physical reality and social reality, and even more, the relations maintaining between the two and which the symbolic systems maintain between themselves. That they cannot succeed in doing so in a way which is integrally satisfying, and especially equivalent, results first of all from the conditions of functioning proper to each system: they always remain incommensurable. ... with the result that no society is ever integrally and completely symbolic... The health of the individual mind implies participation in the social life as the refusal to participate corresponds to the apparition of mental illness.²⁴

²⁴ Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction à l'Oeuvre de Marcel Mauss," op. cit., pp. XIX-XX

Toute culture peut être considérée comme un ensemble de systèmes symboliques au premier rang desquels se placent le langage, les règles matrimoniales, les rapports économiques, l'art, la science, la religion. Tous ces systèmes visent à exprimer certains aspects de la réalité physique et de la réalité sociale, et plus encore, les relations que ces deux types de réalité entretiennent entre eux et que les systèmes symboliques eux-mêmes entretiennent les uns avec les autres. Qu'ils n'y puissent jamais parvenir de façon intégralement satisfaisante, et surtout équivalente, résulte d'abord des conditions de fonctionnement propres à chaque système: ils restent toujours incommensurables: il résulte qu'aucune société n'est jamais intégralement et complètement symbolique. La santé de l'esprit individuel implique la participation à la vie sociale, comme le refus de s'y prêter (mais encore selon des modalités qu'elle s'impose) correspond à l'apparition des troubles mentaux.

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For Lévi-Strauss therefore any society whatsoever is comparable to a universe where only discreet masses are highly structured, and when one individual finds himself between masses he finds himself among the abnormal and mentally ill because he cannot participate in a symbolic order. Michel Foucault's history of madness indicates a similar concept through a different optic.²⁵

The polarity of group and individual evinced in both psychoanalysis, and other forms of psychotherapies, and shamanism is evident if we use the metaphors of adjustment, of productive return to society, or normal functioning used by all psychologies. As says Lévi-Strauss, "magic readapts the group to predefined problems through the patient, while psychoanalysis readapts the patient to the group by means of the solutions reached."²⁶

The conclusion that Lévi-Strauss comes to therefore in his analysis of the magico-social system where shamanism is practised returns again to the foundations of structuralism as such, and which will bear the weight of the structural analysis of myth and other social structures.

If this analysis is correct, we must see magical behaviour as the response to a situation which is revealed to the mind through emotional manifestations, but whose essence is intellectual. For only the history of the symbolic function can allow us to understand the intellectual condition of man,

25 Cf., Michel Foucault, Histoire de la Folie, Plon, Paris, 1961. Cf., Appendix VI

26 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, op.cit., p.177

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in which the universe is never charged with sufficient meaning and in which the mind has always more meanings available than there are objects to which to relate them. Torn between these two systems of reference -- the signifying and the signified -- man asks magical thinking to provide him with a new system of reference, within which the thus-far contradictory elements can be integrated. But we know that this system is built at the expense of the progress of knowledge, which would have required us to retain only one of the two previous systems and to refine it to the point where it absorbed the other.²⁷

What seems to come through this entire analysis is when in conflict, man is oriented toward contradictory systems, toward oppositions, and this is the ground of his basic structures, wherein resides the symbolic function.

In his next chapter entitled the "Effectiveness of Symbols", Lévi-Strauss demonstrates the theory of structural analysis exposed in his discussion of shamanism with an example of the shamanistic cure which is worth considering for our purposes since it leads inexorably to the foundations of the notion of structure.

In this chapter, Lévi-Strauss exposes the effectiveness of the shaman's incantations in alleviating difficult childbirth. Despite the fact that women of Central and South America have easier births than those of western societies, there is always the exception and upon the request of the midwife, the shaman is called upon to help. The philosophical impact of this exegesis will, it is to be believed, become clear as our exposé progresses.

27 Ibid., p. 178

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Albeit, Lévi-Strauss goes into extensive detail of the shaman's chant, which for our purposes does not require retelling, but which deals with the problem at hand in terms of a contest. This contest is waged between different forces which include the following: the power responsible for the formation of the fetus, the soul of the mother-to-be, the shaman, other protective spirits at the service of the shaman, vitality and resistance. This community of forces naturally centres on the soul which is understood in a specific sense. The soul does not imply the distinction between animate and inanimate, as everything is animate, but corresponds rather to the Platonic notion of 'idea' or archetype of which every being or object is the material expression.²⁸ The basic contest is meaningful only if it can be understood however, "how specific psychological representations are invoked to combat equally specific physiological disturbances."²⁹

As Lévi-Strauss maintains the song, or the shaman's chant, "constitutes a psychological manipulation of the sick organ, and it is precisely from this manipulation that a cure is expected."³⁰ The conquest we mentioned earlier refers to that between good and evil spirits for possession

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 183-184

²⁹ Ibid., p. 186

³⁰ Ibid., p. 187

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of the mother's soul. and the shaman's chant is used to develop a background or scenario. As says Lévi-Strauss, "everything occurs as if the shaman were trying to induce the sick woman -- whose contact with reality is no doubt impaired and whose sensibility is exacerbated -- to relive the initial situation through pain, in a very precise and intense way and to become psychologically aware of its smallest details."³¹ This transition therefore is basically from "prosaic reality to myth. from the physical universe to the physiological universe, from the external world to the internal body."³² The battle for an easier childbirth, directed by the shaman, follows furthermore two definite lines of attack, "one of which is supported by a psychophysiological mythology and the other by a psychosocial mythology."³³

The purpose of delving into this somewhat esoteric domain is about to be made clear when it is considered that the cure consists "in making explicit a situation originally existing on the emotional level and in rendering acceptable to the mind pains which the body refuses to tolerate."³⁴ Basically therefore what occurs is that the

31 Ibid., p. 188

32 Ibid., p. 188

33 Ibid., p. 192

34 Ibid., p. 192

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arbitrary pains which are alien are reintegrated into a whole where everything is meaningful. The pains are no longer foreign elements having been mediated by the myth which is held by the shaman, the woman, and her social group ... The result of course is that the woman gets well. Lévi-Strauss makes clearer the purpose of this investigation when he compares it to contemporary medicine which sees sickness as a cause and effect relationship between microbes and the illness, germs and disease as it were, but that this is considered as external to the mind of the patient. While in the case of the monsters and the disease in primitive society,

the relationship is internal to the mind, "whether conscious or unconscious: it is a relationship between symbol and thing symbolized, or, to use the terminology of linguists, between sign and meaning. The shaman provides the sick woman with a language, by means of which unexpressed, and otherwise inexpressible, psychic states can be immediately expressed. ³⁵

Therefore what occurs is on the borderline between physical medicine and psychological medicine. a psychological application to a physiological condition. Lévi-Strauss compares this to psychoanalysis where in both cases conflicts and resistances which are on the unconscious level are made conscious. This is due either to repression by other psychological forces. and in childbirth is a result of the very nature of the forces, which is not psychic but organic or even simply mechanical.

35 Ibid., p. 193

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In both instances the tensions are resolved not through simple knowledge of their existence for the patient in either instance can be told what the problem is without the guarantee that the intellectual formulation will result in amelioration if there is no affective charge or some force attached. In both cases therefore, in that of the psychoanalyst and the shaman, "conflicts materialize in an order and on a level permitting their free development and leading to their resolutions."³⁶ We have already noted that this is referred to as abreaction in psychoanalysis. and through the dynamics of transference the patient in either case can resolve the conflict.

The patient suffering from neurosis eliminates an individual myth by facing a 'real' psychoanalyst; the native woman in childbirth overcomes a true organic disorder by identifying with a 'mythically transmuted' shaman.³⁷

It is basically simply a reversal of the psychoanalytical procedure. One consists of abreaction, the other of adreaction, in the one it is the patient that speaks and draws on his personal lexicon, in the other it is the shaman that speaks and draws upon the collective mythical lexicon of the group. Lévi-Strauss compares this method of primitive medicine with contemporary therapeutic techniques. Referring to R. Desoille's

36 Ibid., p. 194

37 Ibid., p. 194

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research on daydreaming where it is emphasized that psychopathological disturbances are accessible only through the language of symbols,³⁸ Lévi-Strauss indicated where the analyst speaks to his patient by means of verbal metaphors, or symbols. Another psychologist, M.A. Sechehaye, seems to confirm. at least for Lévi-Strauss, the strong comparison to be drawn from shamanism and psychoanalysis with the awareness that speech just could not penetrate beyond the conscious no matter how symbolic it might be.

The work of this psychotherapist has been with actions and gestures which she maintains penetrate the screen of consciousness and their meaning goes directly to the unconscious. The present analysis is being exposed to bring more light to bear on what it is that Lévi-Strauss is dealing with as an ethnologist and how his noting of structure has been able to resolve the problems that he has encountered. We have laid bare the foundations of shamanism and made some comparisons with psychoanalysis in the hopes of setting the ground for a structural analysis of the totality of either event. We will now elaborate on the structural possibilities of an analysis of man through a use of the notion of structure. The analysis we have just presented is therefore intended to

38 Ibid., p. 195

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serve as a reference point, a bench mark if you will, for the discussion that follows.

Lévi-Strauss entitled this chapter the effectiveness of symbols and his reasons become clear as we see what symbols are able to do in various environments, and in comparing shamanism and psychoanalysis he makes the point more precise.

The effectiveness of symbols would consist precisely in this "inductive property" by which formally homologous structures, built out of different materials, at different levels of life -- organic processes, unconscious mind, rational thought -- are related to one another. Poetic metaphor provides a familiar example of this inductive process but as a rule it does not transcend the unconscious level. 39

And so we come to the structural conception of myth and the unconscious. As says Lévi-Strauss,

... The traumatizing power of any situation cannot result from its intrinsic features but must, rather, result from the capacity of certain events, appearing within an appropriate psychological, historical, and social context, to induce an emotional crystallization which is molded by a pre-existing structure. In relation to the event or anecdote, these structures -- or, more accurately, these structural laws -- are truly atemporal ... These structures as an aggregate form what we call the unconscious.⁴⁰

We shall return to this formulation in a later chapter but here we have seen a direct use of the notion of structure which will bear fruit as we go along.

39 Ibid., p. 197

40 Ibid., p. 198

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It is in the structural study of myth moreover that Structuralism as such has made a great deal of headway. The ethnological study of myth, or religion, initiated by Tylor, Frazer and Durkheim, was at first psychologically oriented but their main interest was ethnological and they fell behind in advances in psychology only to find their theories quickly becoming outmoded. Roheim and others (Dumézil) have tried to bridge the gap between the two fields but it is hard to be master in more than one house. The problem therefore was neglected and it was not until Lévi-Strauss returned to the field of the study of myth with a method suitable to its object that the effort was renewed. Here we will discuss the foundations of the method and will not deal with its applications, a responsibility we will continue to refuse, considering the application lies in the four volumes of the Mythologiques and is far beyond the scope of this investigation. However, to state the problem succinctly we quote Lévi-Strauss when he states how the analysis of myth, or religion can be handled.

Instead of trying to enlarge the framework of our logic to include processes which, whatever their apparent differences, belong to the same kind of intellectual operation, a naive attempt was made to reduce them to inarticulate emotional drives, which resulted only in hampering our studies. 41

41 Ibid., pp. 202-203

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As he states, in reference to what myth is regarded as, either collective dreams or æsthetic play, or the basis of ritual, "whatever the hypothesis, the choice amounts to reducing mythology either to idle play or to a crude kind of philosophical speculation."⁴² And so we have another example of a problem faced by ethnologists and which was provided with a satisfactory solution by a structural method, which we will now elucidate.

The question is simply posed: "In order to understand what a myth really is, must we choose between platitude and sophism?"⁴³

The answer is to be found in an initial comparison with structural linguistics of the structural methodology. As in linguistics the answer lay in an examination of the combinations of sounds, not the sounds themselves. That is, every language has some of the same sounds as others, the human vocal apparatus being limited in its production of vocables, yet there is assuredly a difference.

The solution for linguistics lay in de Saussure's formulation of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign,⁴⁴ and Lévi-Strauss regards myth as a language but that "in order to preserve its specificity we must be able to show

42 Ibid., p. 203

43 Ibid., p. 203

44 Ibid., p. 205

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that it is both the same thing as language, and also something different from it."⁴⁵ Following the Saussurian distinction between lanquage and parole one being structural, the other statistical, the former belonging to reversible time, the latter being non-reversible. This notion of time referent is important for the study of myth.

Myth refers to events long passed, but it has an operational value in that the specific pattern described is timeless, explaining all three modes, the past, the present, and the future. In other words, myth rides the dual horse of both lanquage and parole. Lévi-Strauss' hypothesis concerning myth is therefore as follows:

(1) If there is a meaning to be found in mythology, it cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined. (2) Although myth belongs to the same category as language, being, as a matter of fact, only part of it, language in myth exhibits specific properties. (3) Those properties are only to be found above the ordinary linguistic level, that is, they exhibit more complex features than those which are found in any other kind of linguistic expression.⁴⁶

And it is also in this section that Lévi-Strauss lists some of the principles of a structural analysis such as "economy of explanation; unity of solution; and ability to reconstruct the whole from a fragment, as well as later stages from previous ones."⁴⁷ But more precisely, or in

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 205

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 206

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 207

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the concrete sense of analysis, the method is elaborated as follows:

The technique... consists in analyzing each myth individually, breaking down its story into the shortest possible sentences, and writing each sentence on an index card bearing a number corresponding to the unfolding of the story.

Practically each card will thus show that a certain function is, at a given time, linked to a given subject. Or, to put it otherwise, each gross constituent unit will consist of a relation. (*Italics Lévi-Strauss'*)⁴⁸

However, Lévi-Strauss makes a further distinction in his method of analysis between the linguistic orientation which does not deal with the synchronic and diachronic aspects of the myth nor its reversible and irreversible time characteristics with the resulting hypothesis that "the true constituents of a myth are not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning.⁴⁹

And so we come to the Structural analysis of myth in its most profound and radical sense, as well as in its most proleptic meaning as the writing of the Mythologiques has demonstrated. We have included a more detailed account in an annex since to explain the procedure in detail would but lead the bulk of this explanation astray. Suffice it to note that a complex rendering of several structural

48 Ibid., p. 207

49 Ibid., p. 207

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analyses is included for those wishing to reinforce their understanding of what we are writing, but to include an ethnological enterprise in toto seems to be at variance with our prime purpose here, which is avowedly philosophical.

In lieu of ethnology we shall present a synthesis of Lévi-Strauss' main ideas in terms of the analysis of myth, and let the reader peruse this section at his own leisure. Concluding this article on the structural analysis of myth, Lévi-Strauss should be allowed to speak for himself.

Three final remarks may serve as conclusion. First, the question has often been raised why myths, and more generally oral literature, are so much addicted to duplication, triplication, or quadruplication of the same sequence. If our hypotheses are accepted, the answer is obvious: the function of repetition is to render the structure of the myth apparent. For we have seen that the synchronic-diachronic structure of the myth permits us to organize it into diachronic sequences (the rows in our tables) which should be read synchronically (the columns). Thus, a myth exhibits a "slated" structure, which comes to the surface, so to speak, through the process of repetition. However, the slates are not absolutely identical. And since the purpose of the myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (an impossible achievement if, as it happens, the contradiction is real), a theoretically infinite number of slates will be generated, each one slightly different from the others. Thus, myth grows spiral-wise until the intellectual impulse which has produced it is exhausted. Its growth is a continuous process, whereas its structure remains discontinuous. If this is the case, we should assume that it closely corresponds in the realm of the spoken word, to a crystal in the realm of physical matter. This analogy may help us to better understand the relationship of myth to both langue on the one hand and parole on the other. Myth is an intermediary entity between a statistical aggregate of molecules and the molecular structure itself. 50

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And so he makes the point that he will develop
in The Savage Mind:

Prevalent attempts to explain alleged differences between the so-called primitive mind and scientific thought have resorted to qualitative differences between the working processes of the mind in both cases, while assuming that the entities which they were studying remained very much the same. If our interpretation is correct, we are led to a completely different view -- namely, that the kind of logic in mythical thought is as rigorous as that of modern science, and that the difference lies, not in the quality of the intellectual process, but in the nature of the things to which it is applied. This is well in agreement with the situation known to prevail in the field of technology: what makes a steel axe superior to a stone axe is not that the first one is better made than the second. They are equally well made, but steel is quite different from stone. In the same way we may be able to show that the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally; the improvement lies, not in alleged progress of man's mind, but in the discovery of new areas to which it may apply its unchanged and unchanging power. 51

And that is indeed a philosophical position in that it implies that if man's mind has not changed and reality, metaphysical reality, that is, has not altered its constitution, to what do we apply the history in the progress of thought, if indeed it is progress. And it is these various improvements in man's situation, or simply changes rather than improvements, that allow for the structure of man's mind to apply to reality and squeeze meaning out of the universe that confronts him.

51 Ibid., p. 227

CHAPTER THREE

TOTEMISM, THE SAVAGE MIND AND THE STRUCTURES OF THE MIND

When this project was prefaced with the assertion that The Savage Mind is Lévi-Strauss' most philosophical work it was meant to indicate primarily that Lévi-Strauss in his earlier works¹ was indeed a cultural anthropologist - that is an ethnologist; however, as he advanced theoretical solutions not only to the empirical puzzles and riddles he encountered in primitive societies, he stepped more and more outside the field of empirical anthropology and through the limen of theoretical anthropology. And hence our reference to Merleau-Ponty and the anthropologist acting as philosopher.

Moreover, the major criticisms of Lévi-Strauss have been originating from empirically tending anthropologists - especially the British school, and the American school to a somewhat less degree, due primarily to their philosophical presuppositions.

However, Lévi-Strauss is of another tradition. His forebearers are Durkheim and Mauss more than Boas and Taylor. His scientific curiosity, engendered through his own personal development not being satisfied with the results obtained in the field, has progressively turned to what D. Bidney has termed metaanthropology. That is to say, to ascertain through a philosophical analysis what are the foundations of cultural anthropology, that is, ethnology. No matter how much he disclaims the title of

¹ Cf., Bibliography.

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philosopher. he has shied away from this responsibility, in the same fashion that he accused Durkheim of failing in courage when faced with the incest taboo,² Lévi-Strauss, by indulging in metaanthropology, is searching for the presuppositions of ethnology, the philosophical presuppositions, and this is especially evident when he discusses the "observations of the ethnologist".³ He is dealing not with an investigation of cultural and social reality, he is searching for the very nature of the reality of culture, of cultural causality, and also of the significance of cultural determinism and its bearing on the modes of human experience and evaluation. He is dealing with the ontological and epistemological postulates necessary to rendering ethnology, in theory and method, intelligible. As Freud termed a part of his psychology, metapsychology, as Aristotle termed that which was beyond his physics, metaphysics, we would maintain that Lévi-Strauss is dealing with metaanthropology.

To pose the problem Lévi-Strauss begins Totemism with the assertion that totemism is comparable to

2 Cf., The Elementary Structures of Kinship, Chapter 2.

3 Simonis, Passion de l'Inceste, op. cit., p. 120

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4
hysteria. More precisely,

Totemism is like hysteria, in that once we are persuaded to doubt that it is possible arbitrarily to isolate certain phenomena and to group them together as diagnostic signs of an illness, or of an objective institution, the symptoms themselves vanish or appear refractory to any unifying interpretation ... The first lesson of Freud's critique of Charcot's theory of hysteria lay in convincing us that there is no essential difference between states of mental health and mental illness ... the mental patient is our brother, since he is distinguished from us in nothing more than by an involution -- minor in nature, contingent in form, arbitrary in definition, and temporary -- of a historical development which is fundamentally that of every individual existence. 5

And this is the very fabric of the totemic illusion, maintains Lévi-Strauss, in that it allows for the observer to place "the savage mind, within culture itself, to be isolated from civilized man". 6 It is convenient warp. In effect, it is,

firstly the projection outside our own universe, as though by a kind of exorcism, of mental attitudes incompatible with the exigency of a discontinuity between man and nature which Christian thought has held to be essential. 7

Writers on totemism include Van Genep, with his Present State of the Problem of Totemism, where he maintained the problem would lie unsolved for a great many years; Frazer, and his monumental Totemism and Exogamy; and also Goldenweiser and many others which Lévi-Strauss briefly examines, surveying the different interpretations given to explain

4 Lévi-Strauss, Totemism, translated by Rodney Needham, Boston, Beacon Press, 1963, p. 1

5 Ibid., pp. 1-2

6 Ibid., p. 2

7 Ibid., p. 3

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the origin and even the existence of the phenomenon.

He concludes his observations by saying that "totemism is an artificial unity, existing solely in the mind of the anthropologist, to which nothing specifically corresponds in reality."⁸

However, he asserts that something which has been worthy of the attention of anthropologists deserves attention, even though it is "so-called" and we will do the same in the hopes of clarifying our basic purpose in this work, which is to make the link between totemism, the savage mind, and the nature of the notion of structure.

The reason that we consider the argumentation worthy of note is because it deals with the transition from nature to culture, which grounds the appearance of the symbolic function and of language as we previously noted, and as such establishes a philosophical ground for investigation.

The term totemism, as generally understood in the history of ethnology, covers relations posed "ideologically" between two series, one natural and the other cultural, and so Lévi-Strauss posits the following table to denote these two series, and the terms they encompass.

NATURE	Category	Category	Particular	Particular	9
CULTURE	Group	Person	Person	Group	

8 Ibid., p. 10

9 Ibid., p. 17

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There are two axes therefore, Nature-Culture, Group-Individual. There are reasons however for this classification or categorization by primitive thought which Lévi-Strauss explains can be understood in the case of totemism, "the reality of which is reduced to that of a particular illustration of certain modes of thought".¹⁰

We have already seen the importance ascribed to the bridge built by the incest prohibition between nature and culture, and which is maintained in this short work in that "the advent of culture thus coincides with the birth of the intellect."¹¹ The passage however, Lévi-Strauss maintains, was a triple one integrated into a singular instance, from animality to humanity, from nature to culture, and from affectivity to intellectuality.¹²

In SEP* the fundamental structures were those of reciprocity and exchange, the exigency of the rule as rule, and the reciprocal obligations of the gift, but now there is a subtle move from Structural Anthropology which was a kind of synthesis through different papers and articles gathered together to present a comprehensive and representative example of his work. In Totemism the optic is widened and the perspective deepened.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 104

¹¹ Ibid., p. 100

¹² Ibid., p. 101

*SEP is a short form for the work The Elementary Structures of Kinship.

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Nature then, by herself, is continuous, while man,¹³
the observer by selection sets up discontinuous patterns.

Now these communication systems, women, goods and
messages are imposed on nature.¹⁴ Cultural processes then
are discontinuous by nature. With Structural Anthropology
he established, to our satisfaction at least, the systematic
aspect of structure at the unconscious level of culture. The
unconscious nature of the level on which could be discovered
the laws governing exchange also guaranteed the observer's
objectivity. To quote Lévi-Strauss on this point:

It is in the relational character of symbolic thought that we can find the answer to our problems. Whatever may have been the time or the circumstances of its appearance in the scale of animal life, language could only have been brought to birth all at once. Things could not possibly have set themselves to signifying progressively. Following upon a transformation which it is not the social sciences' business to study, but biology's and psychology's, a passage took place from a stage in which nothing had meaning to another in which everything had. Now this remark, however banal it may at first appear, is of importance because this radical change has no counterpart in the domain of knowledge, which elaborates itself only slowly and progressively. In other words, at the moment in which the whole universe, in one fell stroke, became significant, it did not follow from this that it was any better known; even if it is true that the appearance of language was to precipitate the rhythm of the development of language.

Thus, there is, in the history of the human mind, a fundamental opposition between symbolism, with its character of discontinuity, and knowledge characterized by continuity. The result is that the two categories of the signifying and the signified were constituted simultaneously and in reciprocal solidarity, like two complementary

¹³ E. Michael Mendelson, "The 'Uninvited' Guest; Ancilla to Lévi-Strauss on Totemism and Primitive Thought", in The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism, Edmund Leach, ed., Tavistock, 1967, p. 121.

¹⁴ Simonis, Passion de l'Inceste, op. cit., p. 105

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blocks, but that knowledge, i.e. the intellectual process which permits us to identify in respect of each other, certain aspects of the signifying and certain aspects of the signified -- one could even say: to choose from the entity of the signified those parts which present one towards another the most satisfactory relationship of mutual convenience -- only set itself in motion very slowly. Everything happened as if humanity had acquired all at once an immense domain and the detailed plans thereof, together with the notion of their reciprocal relationship, but that it had spent thousands of years in order to learn which of the plan's determined symbols represented which different aspects of the domain. The universe was significant a long time before we began to find out what it signified; that much is obvious. But the preceding analysis also shows that it has signified, from the beginning, the totality of that which mankind can know of it. That which we call progress of the human mind and, in any case, the progress of scientific knowledge, has never consisted of, and never will consist of, more than a correction of outlines and classifications, a regrouping of elements, a definition of affiliations, and a discovery of new resources within an entity which is both closed and self-complementary. ¹⁵

The problem presented by totemism is in effect therefore the problem of how men perceive, select and intellectually order, and socially structure the similarities and differences in both the natural and the cultural realms respectively, and how connections are established between these two orders. ¹⁶ Natural species then are chosen in totemism not because they are "good to eat" but because ¹⁷ they are "good to think".

Having taken a short look at totemism and the problem it presents for anthropology, and to use these few

¹⁵ Mendelson, op. cit., pp. 125-126

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 142

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 133

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paragraphs as but an introduction to The Savage Mind, we can now search for the philosophical notion of structure as outlined in this work.

In this work he continues a theme exposed at the beginning of Totemism when he tilted against the tendency to regard the primitive, the savage, the indigenous as less than his western observer. Basically the aim of the work is to demonstrate that thought is basically the same in all men, of every age and culture, and the same patterns show themselves in all the various spheres of human activity.¹⁸

Structural ethnology therefore is searching for the fundamental nature of human intelligence, and does so by examining its expressions, in social structures, in myth, in poetry, in religion and so on. It seeks a coherent and systematic description of the human mind, without reducing the importance of affectivity, and the search, as we noted before, is for the unconscious structures of the mind. The technique used to get to these structures, or to decipher them, is the use of the model. The model searches to match the ideal, not the empirically observed structures, in effect, the synchronic structure, and this model lies halfway between the hidden structure and the observed reality. Structure therefore has a dual meaning. It is on the one hand a principle as evolved in SEP and it is also

18 McNicholl, "Structuralism," op. cit., pp. 261-262

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an ensemble, an ordered ensemble of pertinent traits.¹⁹
On the other hand, these traits are latent, and hence
the requirement of the special method evolved by structural
linguistics.

The structure is therefore the relation between
terms which gives these terms their positional value to
make the totality, or structure in the latter sense, its
significant value.

Structure then is amenable to the description that
it is a syntax of transformations which cause the passage
from one variant to another, while revealing that the
number of passages is limited.²⁰ With this notion in hand
we can hope for a clearer understanding of the philosophical
position outlines in The Savage Mind.

The theme that savage or uncultured thought is
just as logical as our own highly technological-urban-
intellectual culture is the basic point put forward and
is asserted from one perspective when Lévi-Strauss quotes
the author of the article 'nom' in the Encyclopédie:

... the delimitation of concepts is different in every
language ... the use of more or less abstract terms
is a function not of greater or lesser intellectual
capacity, but of differences in the interests -- in
their intensity and attention to detail.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 264

²⁰ Ibid., p. 265

²¹ Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, op. cit., p. 2

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And he continues in this line when he asserts that,

This thirst for objective knowledge is one of the most neglected aspects of the thought of people we call 'primitive'. Even if it is rarely directed towards facts of the same level as those with which modern science is concerned, it implies comparable intellectual application and methods of observation. In both cases the universe is an object of thought at least as much as it is a means of satisfying needs.²²

Lévi-Strauss also insists that "every civilization tends to overestimate the objective orientation of its thought and this tendency is never absent,"²³ and we are hard put to disagree with him. The purpose behind a study of primitive thought is of course to try and effect as objective a stance as possible while he is searching for these 'fundamental structures of the human mind' and while the ethnologist can never be sure of his complete objectivity, he is increasing his margin of safety through such a technique.

Furthermore, classification as a science even if the objects in question are not for economic, or nutritional needs, is not a practical science. "It meets intellectual requirements rather than or instead of satisfying needs",²⁴ says Lévi-Strauss. Quoting Simpson he argues that:

22 Ibid., p. 3

23 Ibid., p. 3

24 Ibid., p. 9

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The whole aim of theoretical science is to carry to the highest possible and conscious degree the perceptual reduction of chaos that began in so lowly and (in all probability) unconscious a way with the origin of life. In specific instances it can well be questioned whether the order so achieved is an objective characteristic of the phenomena or is an artifact constructed by the scientist ... the most basic postulate of science is that nature itself is order ... all theoretical science is ordering, and if, systematics is equated with ordering, then systematics is synonymous with theoretical science. ²⁵

The assertion is that primitive thought is founded on this demand for order. Not shying away from any assertion of universality, Lévi-Strauss continues to say that this "is equally true of all thought but it is through the properties common to all thought that we can most easily begin to understand forms of thought which seem very strange to us."²⁶

We will return to this question of science, or rather more properly, a philosophy of science in our last chapter, but for the moment we find this route of access to the notion of structure more than convenient for as says Lévi-Strauss concerning Simpson:

As Simpson has shown with the help of an example drawn from nineteenth-century biology, it is due to the fact that, since scientific explanation is always the discovery of an 'arrangement', any attempt of this type, even one inspired by non-scientific principles, can hit on true arrangements. This is even to be foreseen if one grants that the number of structures is by definition finite: the 'structuring' has an intrinsic effectiveness of its own whatever the principles and methods which suggested it.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 9-10

²⁶ Ibid., p. 10

²⁷ Ibid., p. 12

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The development of a history of scientific thought has to deal with the lag between neolithic or early historical man and the modern history of science. Neolithic man mastered the great arts of civilization, that is, of pottery, weaving, agriculture and the domestication of animals, and there was an arrest in technological development until the beginning of modern science which only goes back a few centuries. The explanation put forward by Lévi-Strauss is that this can be accounted for by recourse to different or distinct modes of thought. This is not an evolutionary development that he is referring to but rather "two strategic levels at which nature is accessible to scientific inquiry: one roughly adapted to that of perception and the imagination: the other at a remove from it."²⁸

Lévi-Strauss describes this 'prior' rather than "primitive" science by recourse to the term 'bricolage' or in English it might be seen as the activity of the handyman or 'fixer'. Mythical thought is a kind of intellectual 'bricolage' and its characteristic feature is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is limited.²⁹ The elements of this closed universe do not have a specific use ascribed

28 Ibid., p. 15

29 Ibid., p. 17

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to them but they each represent a set of actual and possible relations; "they are operators but they can be used for any operation of the same type".³⁰

And in much the same way, the elements of mythical thought lie halfway between percepts and concepts, says Lévi-Strauss, and between image and concepts there is an intermediary, namely signs, with the image signifying and the concept signified, according to de Saussure's³¹ formulation.

Also, and this is of importance to the nature of thought, "signs resemble images in being concrete entities but they resemble concepts in their power of reference."³² And so to return to structure and quote Lévi-Strauss in detail:

The elements which the bricoleur collects and uses are 'pre-constrained' like the constitutive elements of myth, the possible combinations of which are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from the language where already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuvre. And the decision as to what to put in each place also depends on the possibility of putting a different element there instead, so that each choice which is made will involve a complete reorganization of the structure, which will never be the same as one vaguely imagined nor as some other which might have been preferred to it. ³³

30 Ibid., p. 18

31 Ibid., p. 18

32 Ibid., p. 18

33 Ibid., p. 19

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Lévi-Strauss compares the bricoleur mentality to that of the engineer who, it might be said, questions the universe while the bricoleur addresses himself to a collection of oddments left over from human endeavours, that is, only a sub-set of the culture. And as he says, Information Theory shows that it is possible, and often useful, to reduce the physicists' approach to a sort of dialogue with nature.

... the scientist never carries on a dialogue with nature pure and simple but rather with a particular relationship between nature and culture defineable in terms of his particular period and civilization and the material means at his disposal. He is no more able than the 'bricoleur' to do whatever he wishes when he is presented with a given task. He too has to make a catalogue of the previously determined set consisting of theoretical and practical knowledge, of technical means, which restrict the possible solutions.³⁴

Since the flights to the moon the accuracy of speculation on the origins of the solar system, if not the universe, has been greatly favoured, although speculations, pre-moon flights, was as valid as possible considering the means at the disposal of scientists.

The big difference however between the bricoleur and the engineer is that the latter is "always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization while the former by inclination or necessity always within them."³⁵

34 Ibid., p. 19

35 Ibid., p. 19

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The engineer works by means of concepts, the bricoleur by means of signs.

And so to make this small digression relevant we can see that the two are opposed on the axis of opposition between nature and culture. Whereas, says Lévi-Strauss, concepts aim to be wholly transparent with respect to reality, signs allow and even require the interposing and incorporation of a certain amount of human culture into reality.³⁶

Both the engineer and the bricoleur says Lévi-Strauss are on the lookout for messages. Those of the 'bricoleur' have been communicated in advance and are much like rule books, or textbooks, that is, a collection of past experiences in dealing with a similar experience; the scientist on the other hand, is always on the lookout for "that other message which might be wrested from an interlocutor in spite of his reticence in pronouncing on questions whose answers have not been rehearsed."

Concepts thus appear like operators opening up the set being worked with and signification like the operator of its reorganization, which neither extends nor renews it and limits itself to obtaining the group of its transformations.³⁷

The weight of this statement will be, if possible, gracefully reintroduced in the conclusion as one of the fundamental contributions of structural anthropology which

36 Ibid., p. 20

37 Ibid., p. 20

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might be made to philosophy both as a heuristic and a conceptual tool. However, ours now is a task more involved with elaborating Lévi-Strauss' contribution, rather than its application which could but render murky the waters of our theme for the present. Our aim is only to fix it as a point to which we will definitely return, and perhaps to produce some anticipation giving our reader strength to continue.

Images cannot be ideas but they can play the part of signs or to be more precise, co-exist with ideas in signs and, if ideas are not yet present, they can keep their future place open for them and make its contours apparent negatively. Images are fixed, linked in a single way to the mental act which accompanies them. Signs, and images which have acquired significance, may still lack comprehension; unlike concepts, they do not yet possess simultaneous and theoretically unlimited relations with other entities of the same kind. They are however already permutable, that is, capable of standing in successive relations as we have seen, only on condition that they always form a system in which an alternation which affects one element automatically affects all others. On this plane logicians' 'extension' and 'intention' are not two distinct and complementary aspects but one and the same thing. One understands then how mythical thought can be capable of generalizing and so be scientific, even though it is still entangled in imagery. 38

Bricolage so obtains its definition as where the signified changes into the signifying and vice versa. This formula, says Lévi-Strauss, explains how an implicit inventory or conception of the total means available must be

38 Ibid., p. 21

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made in the case of mythical thought also, so that a result can be defined which will always be a compromise between the structure of the instrumental set and that
 39
 of the project.

Science as a whole is based on the distinction between the contingent and the necessary, this being also what distinguishes event and structure. The qualities it claimed at its outset as peculiarly scientific were precisely those which formed no part of living experience and remained outside and, as it were, unrelated to events. This is the significance of the notion of primary qualities. Now, the characteristic feature of mythical thought, as of 'bricolage' on the practical plane, is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets (but by means of a structured set, namely language. But it is not at the structural level that it makes use of it: it builds ideological castles out of the debris of what was once a social discourse), but by using the remains and debris of events ... The relation between the diachronic and the synchronic is therefore in a sense reversed. 40

Which is to say that mythical thought, as bricoleur, builds structures out of events, while science creates its
 41
 "means and results in the form of events," due to its structures, which are its hypotheses and theories.

Both approaches are equally valid, says Lévi-Strauss, since he says, "physics and chemistry are already striving to become qualitative again, that is, to account also for secondary qualities which when they have been explained will in their turn become means of explanation. And biology may perhaps be marking time waiting for this before it can
 42
 itself explain life."

39 Ibid., p. 21

40 Ibid., p. 22

41 Ibid., p. 22

42 Ibid., p. 22

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And as Lévi-Strauss rephrases it himself, the scientist creates events, or changes the world, by means of structures, while the 'bricoleur' creates structures by means of events.

By means of this comparison, Lévi-Strauss then attempts to demonstrate how the structural approach works, through the intermediary of insight, or discovery of structure. He makes reference to smaller-than-life paintings, or models, or miniatures, but smaller in terms of their theme. He wards off an initial and spontaneous objection by referring to the painting of the Sistine Chapel which though huge in dimension, in terms of the theme which is the end of time, there is a reduction of dimension. Art then is seen as a reduction, either in terms of scale or in terms of properties. And he explains the aesthetic emotion in terms of its reversal of the process of understanding since we usually work from its parts to its totality, since to overcome the resistance it offers we divide it, while reduction in scale reverses this situation. But the homologue is known in such a way that knowledge of the whole precedes knowledge of its parts. As he states, "the intrinsic value of a small-scale model is that it compensates for the renunciation of sensible dimensions by the acquisition of intelligible dimensions."⁴³

43 Ibid., p. 24

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The central theme running throughout Lévi-Strauss' approach, as when he says that the "balance between structure and event, necessity and contingency, the internal and external is a precarious one,"⁴⁴ is basically the study of the relations which unify the sensible and the intelligible. This in reference to his statement in Tristes Tropiques where his search was for a super-rationalism able to coalesce both the sensual and the intellectual. This is the basic goal of what has come to be known as Structuralism.

And so we come to perhaps a more colourful description or discussion of what structure is for Lévi-Strauss, as he writes about this logic of the concrete, so evident in categorization and classification, and says:

This logic works rather like a kaleidoscope, an instrument which also contains bits and pieces by means of which structural patterns are realized. The fragments are products of a process of breaking up and destroying, in itself a contingent matter, but they have to be homologous in various respects, such as size, brightness of colouring, transparency. They can no longer be considered entities in their own right in relation to the manufactured objects of whose 'discourse' they have become the undefineable debris, but they must be so considered from a different point of view if they are to participate usefully in the formation of a new type of entity: one consisting of patterns in which, through the play of mirrors, reflections are equivalent to objects, that is, in which signs assume the status of things signified. These patterns actualize possibilities whose number, though it may be very great, is not unlimited, for it is a function of the possible lay-out and balances which may be effected between bodies whose number itself is finite. Finally and most important, these patterns produce by the conjunction of contingent events (the turning of the instrument by the person looking through it) and a law

44 Ibid., p. 30

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(namely that governing the construction of the kaleidoscope, which corresponds to the invariant element of the constraints just mentioned) project models of intelligibility which are in a way provisional, since each pattern can be expressed in terms of strict relations between its parts and since these relations have no content apart from the pattern itself, to which no object in the observer's experience corresponds -- even though, particular objective structures, such as those of snow crystals or certain types of radiola and diatomacae might be revealed while their empirical basis were yet unknown to the observer who had not yet seen them. ⁴⁵

And he makes his allegiance to structural linguistics even firmer when he mentions a little after that,

The terms never have any extrinsic significance. Their meaning is one of 'position' -- a function of the history and cultural context on the one hand and of the structural system in which they are called upon to appear on the other hand. ⁴⁶

And for the basic reason for this procedure he returns to the explanatory matrix he developed in SEP with references to the unconscious as a structuring and not a structured entity, much like the kaleidoscope in effect.

He disposes of the Jungian notion of 'collective unconscious' or 'archetypes' and asserts that "it is only forms and not content which can be common. If there are common contents the reason must be sought either in the objective properties of particular nature or artificial entities or in diffusion and borrowing, in either case, that is, outside the mind. ⁴⁷

45 Ibid., pp. 36-37

46 Ibid., p. 55

47 Ibid., p. 65

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Furthermore, he clearly notes that he "cannot postulate the formal nature of a connection when we are merely given the two connected terms. Relations between terms, like the terms themselves, must be approached indirectly and, as it were, off the cushion."⁴⁸

And his approach for getting at these relations, and the terms indirectly, is through the unconscious, which is a collection of structural laws. Another difficulty which surges forth to meet the ethnologist who is studying culture as an intellectual phenomenon, much like the linguist studying language, is that thinking, if it truly be a synchronic representation, is much affected by the diachronic variations of the event, as language is by the diachronics of demographic change, as well as the functional diachronics of communication. Thought on the other hand is much more fluid, to state what must be an understatement, but even a truism has to be stated to be true.

Nevertheless, thinking in terms of a logic of the concrete admits necessarily as does any kind of thinking to degrees yet if thinking, in reference to our study here, has a certain structure then it can serve as an explanation as to why the warp of primitive institutions although varying in comparative studies maintain a certain

48 Ibid., p. 66

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similarity. This explains why native institutions,

though borne along on the flux of time, manage to steer a course between the contingencies of history and the immutability of design and remain, as it were, within the stream of intelligibility. They are always at safe distance from the Scylla and Charybdis of diachrony and synchrony, event and structure, the aesthetic and the logical, and those who have tried to define them in terms of only one or the other aspect have therefore necessarily failed to understand their nature. Between the basic absurdity Frazer attributed to primitive practices and beliefs and the spacious validation of them in terms of a supposed common sense invoked by Malinowski, there is scope for a whole science and a whole philosophy. 49

Therefore, the insistence on differentiation of "so-called" primitive societies is what shapes the practico-theoretical logics which govern the life and thought of these societies, says Lévi-Strauss, and the logical principle or structure allows for communication of significant messages, and can assimilate any kind of content. As Durkheim said, the basis of sociology is what may be called 'socio-logic'.

But the scope of this logic which can encompass so many levels, and deal with various types of content, although limited, of tremendous extension, does not escape Lévi-Strauss, and he even postulates a methodology which might serve to deal with this fantastic agglomeration of data.

The greater our knowledge, the more obscure the overall scheme. The dimensions multiply, and the growth of axes of reference beyond a certain point paralyze intuitive methods: it becomes impossible to

49 Ibid., p. 74

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visualize a system when its representation requires a continuum of more than three or four dimensions. But the day may come when all the available documentation on Australian tribes is transferred to punch cards and with the help of a computer their entire techno-economic, social and religious structures can be shown to be like a vast group of transformations.⁵⁰

Furthermore, he precises exactly what is the value of totemism as recognized by ethnologists when he says:

... ideas and beliefs of the totemic type particularly merit attention because for the societies which have constructed or adopted them, they constitute codes making it possible to ensure, in the form of conceptual systems, the convertibility of messages appertaining to each level, even of those which are so remote from each other that they apparently relate solely to culture or solely to society, that is, to men's relations with each other, on the one hand, or, on the other, to phenomena of a technical or economic order which might rather seem to concern man's relations with nature. This mediation between nature and culture, which is one of the distinctive functions of the totemic operator, enables us to sift out what may be true from what is partial and distorted in Durkheim's and Malinowski's accounts. They each attempted to immure totemism in one or other of these two domains. In fact however, it is pre-eminently the means (or hope) of transcending the opposition between them.⁵¹

The point asserted in totemism and classification systems is this method of differentiation mentioned above, and which appears somewhat arbitrary to some observers, or demographically explainable, or with recourse to psychoanalysis or a collective unconscious, these have all provided explanations. But throughout the foundation of all these observations is the postulate that nature is in

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 89

⁵¹ Ibid., p.91

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itself not contradictory, and only becomes so with the introduction of man. For various modes of activity there are various contradictions that appear, for hunters, sailors, trappers, farmers, and so on. What Lévi-Strauss is maintaining is that man's relations with nature are objects of thought and man never perceives them passively, that is, these relations. He reduces these to concepts and forms systems with them. As Lévi-Strauss states concerning explanations of mythology:

The mistake (of Mannhardt and the Naturalist schools) was to think that natural phenomena are what myths seek to explain, when they are rather the medium through which myths try to explain facts which are themselves not of a natural but of a logical order. ⁵²

The appeal made by a structural anthropology is therefore to form and not to content and so he turns to religions as an example, and here studies by Mircea Eliade have demonstrated recurring themes which demonstrate that men have had recourse to various solutions but that they all share "structures of contradiction". ⁵³

Again making sure he is understood clearly, Lévi-Strauss asserts that "... I do not mean to suggest that social life, the relations between man and nature, are a projection or even result, of a conceptual game taking place in the mind." "... there is always a mediator between praxis and practices, namely the conceptual scheme

⁵² Ibid., p. 95

⁵³ Ibid., p. 95

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by the operation of which matter and form, neither with any independent existence, are realized as structures, that is, as entities which are both empirical and intelligible..."⁵⁴ and he goes further to say that praxis constitutes the "fundamental totality of the sciences of man" but that for him "ethnology is first of all psychology."⁵⁵

And even more succinctly as regards to tasks, a goal or aim,

All that I claim to have shown so far is ... that the dialectic of superstructures, like that of language, consists in setting up constitutive units (which, for this purpose, have to be defined univocally, that is by contradicting them in pairs) so as to be able by means of them to elaborate a system which plays the part of a synthesizing operator between ideas and facts, thereby turning the latter into signs. The mind thus passes from empirical diversity to conceptual simplicity and then from conceptual simplicity to meaningful synthesis.⁵⁶

And so in classification of species, of various types of vegetation and wildlife which the primitive has categorized according to difference, where the Eskimo has more than 200 different kinds of snow in his environment, the Laplander several grasses for his reindeer, the North American for his cars, to make a technological comparison,

the diversity of species furnishes man with the most intuitive picture at his disposal and constitutes the most direct manifestation he can perceive of the ultimate discontinuity of reality. It is the sensible expression of an objective coding.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 130

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.130-131

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 131

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 137

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This is what totemism refers to in its essence,
and moreover,

... zoological and botanical classifications do not constitute separate domains but form an integral part of an all-embracing dynamic taxonomy the unity of which is assured by the perfect homogeneity of its structure, consisting as it does of successive dichotomies. One consequence of this feature is that it is always possible to pass from species to category. Again there is no inconsistency between the system (in evidence at the top) and the lexicon whose role becomes progressively more dominant as one descends the ladder of dichotomies. The problem of the relation between continuous and discontinuous receives a solution in terms of origin since the universe is represented as a continuum of successive oppositions. ⁵⁸

And these concrete classifiers not only serve to convey ideas; they can also, in their sensory form, show that a logical problem has been solved or a contradiction ⁵⁹ surmounted, says Lévi-Strauss, and as with the myth of Asdiwal the logical contradiction solved is the negation of non-existence. A logical structure is as such initially simply an opposition which fans out in two axes and then the permutations produce more and more axes and the system is exfoliated progressively, much as occurs through the logical structure, or the principle, of the prohibition of incest.

These axes can be of diversities and of similarities, but what is homologous is their structure, and not their function, which is one related to difference. The

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 139

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 143

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synchronic structure then of a primitive tribe can be no more than a projection of a temporal process into the order of simultaneity which is recounted by myth in terms of succession.⁶⁰ Therefore, the logical opposition of simultaneity and succession is overcome.

Using the tree as a comparative tool to explain a system of classification, Lévi-Strauss pursues the image wherein the terminal branches can no longer compromise the tree's stability nor alter its characteristic shape, but they still refer to the basics of the tree or its structure, such that,

The structure, intelligible at the start, in branching out reaches a sort of inertia or logical indifference. Without contradicting its primary nature, it can thereafter under the effect of multiple and varied incidents which occur too late to prevent an attentive observer from identifying it and classifying it in a genus.⁶¹

And like that of the cell structure of a tree, such is the logical structure of a conceptual scheme or system which is bound by reciprocal relations. And so the concluding principle to totemism and the manner in which it functions:

... when the relation between (human and animal) species is socially conceived as metaphorical, the relation between the respective systems of naming takes on a metonymical character; and when the relation between species is conceived as metonymical, the system of naming assumes a metaphorical character.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 148

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 160

⁶² Ibid., p. 205

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We shall return to this point in more detail a little later on however, using it first only as a spring-board, or as an introduction rather than a conclusion we can see perhaps somewhat clearer into the problem we are pursuing, and if not clearer, at least more comprehensively or synthetically.

If therefore birds are metaphorical human beings and dogs, metonymical human beings, cattle may be thought of as metonymical inhuman beings and race-horses as metaphorical inhuman beings.⁶³

Now to explain that insertion which is perhaps somewhat "out of the blue".

In terms of appellations, or our naming fecundity, we find birds easily gain Christian names, and this because they can be permitted to resemble men because they are indeed so very different. Birds love freedom, much as man does, they build homes, nest, take care of their young, they have similar social relations, flocks for example, and they have a means of communication which recalls our own articulated language.

The bird world is a metaphorical human society.

Now dogs on the other hand do not like birds form an independent society. They are domesticated animals and as such, part of our own society. But theirs is such a low place in this society that they take on not Christian names, but rather metaphorical names.

63 Ibid., p. 207

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Cattle on the other hand, although domesticated, are treated more like objects than are dogs. This can be seen through our revulsion as a culture on the eating of dogs, while African pastoral tribes have a reverse process at work where the dogs are treated as our cattle, much the same way as did the North American Indian. The names for cattle are generally descriptive, referring to their gait, their colour, or temperament. These names have a metaphorical character but they are epithets coming from the syntagmatic chain, or spoken chain, while the names for dogs come from the paradigmatic chain, the first come speech, the latter from language.

Now for the racehorse. They do not constitute an independent society like birds, being products of human industry, and live isolated lives, but rather resemble the desocialized condition of existence of a private society, for they are in a society which revolves around race courses. They all have completely different names, requiring unambiguous individuation and are completely arbitrary in the linguistic sense, following strict rules of possibility.

"Cattle are contiguous only for want of similarity, racehorses similar only for want of similarity. Each of these categories offers the converse image of one of the two other categories, which themselves stand in the relation of inverted symmetry,"⁶⁴ as Lévi-Strauss would have it.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 207

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The relevance of naming, or classification, has not only its import for ethnology, but also for a conception of man, for philosophy. for any Weltanschauung. It gives us an insight into the notion of species and of individual. As flowers grow and manifest themselves as units of a species, so does Homo Sapiens and as such man in his natural state is logically comparable to any other member of the animal or plant species. However, and this is the purpose of all this, culture makes the difference in this instance.

With the movement from nature to culture, or to society properly so, there is a transformation in this system for it "encourages each biological individual to develop a personality"⁶⁵ and so here is the ethic stressed by Lévi-Strauss in that every individual is unique, and as he asserts,

What disappears with death of a personality is a synthesis of ideas and modes of behaviour as exclusive and irreplaceable as the one a floral species develops out of the simple chemical substances common to all species... From this point of view it seems not untrue to say that some modes of classing, arbitrarily isolated under the title of totemism, are universally employed: among ourselves this "totemism" has merely been humanized. Everything takes place as if in our civilization every individual's personality were his totem: it is the signifier of his signified being. ⁶⁶

65 Ibid., p. 214

66 Ibid., p. 214

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All these systems then have a structure, that is systems of classification and the structure is supported by an axis which connects the general with the particular, the abstract with the concrete, and wherein all classification proceeds by pairs of contrasts, and as such classification only ceases when it is no longer possible to establish oppositions. And this happens when it has fulfilled its function, it runs out of steam so to speak.

Lévi-Strauss defines this savage mind as "neither the mind of savages nor that of primitive or archaic humanity, but rather mind in its untamed state as distinct from mind cultivated or domesticated for the purpose of yielding a return."⁶⁷ It should be obvious by now that for he who defines philosophy as love of wisdom, and not as a pragmatic discipline designed to produce a profit, this definition should bode well for our conclusion.

Art is somewhat like savage thought, for it claims at once to analyze and synthesize. to go to the furthest limits in both directions, "while at the same time remaining capable of mediating between the two poles."⁶⁸

The result of such an inquiry into man, as Lévi-Strauss has done as holder of the chair of social anthropology at the Collège de France, is "not to constitute man,

67 Ibid., p. 219

68 Ibid., p. 219

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but to dissolve him " But the reduction of man is
allowed on two conditions:

First, the phenomena subjected to reduction must not be impoverished; one must be certain that everything contributing to their distinctive richness and originality has been collected around them ... Secondly, one must be ready to accept, as a consequence of each reduction, the total overturning of any preconceived idea concerning the level, whichever it may be, one is striving to attain.⁷⁰

Basically a method of research through
Copernican revolutions.

Here our references to Thomas S. Kuhn in our concluding remarks might bear fruit, for a philosophical enterprise that takes its stand from this type of approach. And using this method of a structural ethnology one can study philosophy as a reflection on the cosmos, on reality, on the nature of things.

For Lévi-Strauss, he concedes all reason to be dialectical but this in a special way, and so we shall conclude our examination of the savage mind by examining what it is that Lévi-Strauss considers it, reason, to be.

His examination of reason, upon an axis of synchrony as opposed to diachrony, Lévi-Strauss' is a complex argument revolving around the importance of the temporal dimension, on the axes of simultaneity and succession. He

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 247

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 247

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argues against the epistemological perspective that sees a special position for the temporal dimension "as if diachrony were to establish a kind of intelligibility not merely superior to that provided by synchrony, but above,⁷¹ more specifically human." Where the historian and the philosopher of history see change and discontinuity, Lévi-Strauss rather perceives continuity. He is perhaps too materialistic when he writes that

Each episode in a revolution or a war resolves itself into a multitude of individual psychic movements. Each of these movements is the translation of unconscious development, and these resolve themselves into cerebral, hormonal or nervous phenomena, which themselves have reference to physical or chemical order.⁷²

However, this is offset by his respect for the individual as species, but as he says regarding the link between history and knowledge,

History does not therefore escape the common obligation of all knowledge, to employ a code to analyze its object, even (and especially) if a continuous reality is attributed to that object ... the code consists in a chronology.⁷³ Historical knowledge thus proceeds in the same way as a wireless with frequency modulation: like a nerve, it codes a continuous quantity -- and as such a symbolic one -- by frequencies of impulses proportional to its variations. As for history itself, it cannot be represented as an aperiodic series with only a fragment of which we are acquainted. History is a discontinuous set composed of domains of history, each of which is defined by a characteristic frequency and by a differential coding of before and after.⁷⁴

And in reference to this, the characteristic

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 256

⁷² Ibid., p. 257

⁷³ Ibid., p. 258

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 259-260

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feature of the savage mind is its timelessness,

its object is to grasp the world in both the synchronic and a diachronic totality and the knowledge which it draws therefore is like that afforded of a room by mirrors fixed on opposite walls, which reflect each other (as well as objects in the intervening space) although without being strictly parallel. The savage mind deepens its knowledge with the help of imagines mundi. It builds mental structures which facilitate an understanding of the world as much as they resemble it. In this sense, savage thought can be defined as analogical thought.⁷⁵

He further maintains that there has to be an objective condition for thought to exist and here it is the structure of the psyche and the brain.⁷⁶ The difference between savage thought and our own is that we traffic in our ideas while he hoards them up.⁷⁷ However, the savage mind is just as logical as ours, in the same sense and in the same fashion, though only when ours is "applied to knowledge of a universe in which it recognizes physical and semantic properties simultaneously."⁷⁸ The difference between savage thought and the thought of scientists on the other hand is that the physical world is approached from opposite ends. The savage mind approaches from the angle of sensible qualities and the other from that of formal properties. One arrives at the physical world by the detour

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 263

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 264

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 267

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 268

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of communication, the primitive mind, and that which arrives at the world of communication by the detour of the physical, or the scientific mind. "The entire process of human knowledge thus assumes the character of a closed system,"⁷⁹ and there is no real difference between the savage mentality and the civilized mentality, as both these become completely relative terms.

This is how Lévi-Strauss concludes his analysis of the savage mind and leaves the door open for a study of the manifestation of such a process in his four volumes of the Mythologiques which study the myths of South America and perform structural analysis in a brilliant fashion barely reproduced by other ethnologists. However, our concern here is mainly philosophical and an excursion or foray into the wilds of Brazil, or into the shining prose of Lévi-Strauss would but lead us astray with little enough energy to return to our point of departure. To sum then what we will attempt to delimit as the notion of structure as it has evolved throughout the work of Lévi-Strauss, from his monumental Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté to his collected papers in Anthropologie Structurale so to his wide-ranging and penetrating l'Esprit Sauvage. With reference to Totémisme Aujourd'hui and Tristes Tropiques and The Scope of Anthropology we hope to have rounded out our

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 269

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discussion by trying to be as representative as possible while still remaining within the orbit of our initial purpose.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRUCTURES AND THOUGHT

The notion of structure, as it has been indicated through the use of various texts, developed as a result of situations which due to their complexity had not as yet been provided with suitable explanations. As developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, in ethnology, structuralism inaugurated a new type of thinking. The process had occurred in linguistics, when de Saussure instituted the diachronic and the synchronic aspects of language, the difference between langue and parole, or language and speech or discourse, and between the paradigm and the syntagm. Lévi-Strauss used the method of structural linguistics to attempt a solution of the problems besetting ethnology, such as kinship structures and the terminology and attitudes of various kinship systems; the problem posed by totemism; the difficulties involved in the analysis of myth; as well as formulating a satisfactory notion of man and culture, from an ethnological point of view.

Seen in this light, structuralism personifies a type of thinking, a special community in the sociology of knowledge, opposed to nominalism, which had created kinship notation and its concomitant difficulties, and against functionalism, which can be seen as an epistemologically unrefined nominalism. Structuralism, in its refusal to

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impose a limit on its object before it even begins its study, is a search for a method to study a social or human fact without classifying it beforehand. It regards, much as does modern physics, reality as a continuous flow with man imposing discontinuity in his effort to understand better the world around him; that is, man, to know has to circumscribe sections of reality, but this imposition presents an epistemological obstacle if it is imposed before the investigation begins. It is basically the same problem which presented itself to linguistics in its search for a metalanguage which could explain language through the use of another language, as logic, symbolic logic, tries to explain the laws of logic logically. Unlike Aristotelian logic and that of the Schoolmen, it is not 'reason reasoning', or reason demonstrating its own operations, but rather an attempt to examine the object without altering its basic constitution through or in the process.¹

For example, in studying the colors of the spectrum, man imposes a structure on natural light in the hopes of establishing its constituent frequencies, and although the various frequencies which produce the various distinctive colours, do exist, they are not evident in

¹ Lévi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, op. cit., p. 329.

We have elsewhere (Chapter 2 of Structural Anthropology) criticized this ingenious undertaking which, as philosophers say, confuses 'reasoning reason' and 'reasoned reason' - Warner and Davis's conceptual system cannot help us grasp the structures of kinship any more than traditional grammar can perfectly express the operations of language, or Aristotelian logic permit the real functioning of thought to be understood. (SEP p. 329)

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natural light. The refraction of the light in the hope of measuring the various bands is an imposition by the observer but one which results in a better understanding of reality. Man has applied a discontinuous set to a continuous flow.

In structural linguistics and anthropology a model is created to further understanding. The understanding of the model allows for understanding of the reality examined by being homologous in structure with it. The charge of formalism against Lévi-Strauss insisting that he confuses the two, model and reality, even if the model is a logical perfection or synchronic structure which does not exist in reality in the same form, does not alter the fact that through the construction of the model one is better able² to understand the initial reality examined.

² Hugo G. Nutini, "Some Considerations on the Nature of Social Structure and Model Building: A Critique of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Edmund Leach," in Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Anthropologist as Hero, E.N. Hayes & T. Hayes, eds., Cambridge, Mass., The M.I.T. Press, 1970, p. 73.

There are conscious and unconscious models. Conscious models he (Lévi-Strauss) calls those "homemade" models according to which the society views itself. These are what are usually called norms, and more often than not they stand in the "collective consciousness" as a screen hiding a deeper and more transcendental structure. Unconscious models, on the other hand, are those that are not directly or consciously perceived by the society because they lie at a greater depth. It is generally more profitable for the anthropologist to work with models that he has elicited and constructed out of these deeper-lying phenomena -- that is, with unconscious models -- than with conscious models or norms, since by definition the latter "are not intended to explain the phenomena but to perpetuate them" (Lévi-Strauss 1953:527 (SA 269-319) . . . Lévi-Strauss concludes that we must at no time forget that "cultural norms are not themselves structures." Here he seems to be saying that there are only unconscious models, since he equates conscious models with norms. Nutini, p. 74.

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The aim of constructing the model is to explain the functioning of the reality under study and this process of abstraction is resorted to because of the realization that examining the social structure of another type cannot be done with the guarantee that our own cultural, or ethnological perspective will not interfere.

As Lévi-Strauss says himself, when he claims that the final empirical experiments

guided and suggested by deductive reasoning will not be the same as the unsophisticated ones with which the whole process had started. These will remain as alien as ever to deeper analysis. The ultimate proof of the molecular structure of matter is provided by the electronic microscope, which enables us to see actual molecules. This achievement does not alter the fact that henceforth the molecule will not become anymore visible to the naked eye. Similarly, it is hopeless to expect a structural analysis to change our way of perceiving concrete social relations. It will only explain them better. If the structure can be seen, it will not be at an earlier, empirical level, but at a deeper one, previously neglected; that of those unconscious categories which we may hope to reach, by bringing together domains which, at first sight, appear disconnected to the observer.³

But as Nutini asserts in his article,

As a ground rule of real heuristic value, the distinction between conscious and unconscious phenomena and the models that anthropologists (or, for that matter, the subjects of our investigation themselves) build upon them is highly commendable; it is valuable not only at the observational level but at the level of experimentation as well. But it is not warranted to construe this distinction into a theoretical doctrine about the nature of the subject matter of social structure, for conscious paradigms are not models at all, if we take for granted that a model must be an explanatory construct. I believe I have made it clear that conscious models are not explanatory, that is, they do not entail causality; Lévi-Strauss himself seems to recognize this when he equates conscious models with "norms", which are not of themselves

³ Ibid., p. 113 also "On Manipulated Sociological Methods", in Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Vol. CXVI, No. 1, 1960, p.53.

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"structures" -- that is, models. (And Nutini maintains in a footnote that Lévi-Strauss, in many of his writings uses the terms structure and model interchangeably. ⁴

Nutini also writes,

Lévi-Strauss' most distinctive and important contribution to the theory of social structure was his dichotomizing of models into mechanical and statistical ... Unfortunately, few anthropologists seem to have been awakened from their "dogmatic slumber" by Lévi-Strauss' remarks ... Lévi-Strauss insightfully perceived that the mere ensemble of social relations does not constitute a structure and that the model or models that make up a given structure must be at a higher level; they are not only more abstract than the set of social relations but of a different nature -- However, the idea that the structure of a given phenomenon is to be sought at the empirical level is so ingrained in many social anthropologists that this is one of the aspects of Lévi-Strauss' conception of social structure that they find most difficult to accept, and it is the point on which Lévi-Strauss has been most misunderstood. ⁵

In effect what Nutini is referring to is that fact wherein Lévi-Strauss concerns himself with model building as supraempirical explanatory constructs, and this at the experimental level. And so Nutini writes concerning both the conceptual and heuristic value ascribed to a study of Lévi-Strauss mentioned earlier in this dissertation.

... mechanical and statistical models as theoretical constructs and as heuristic devices have the following properties by themselves and vis-à-vis each other: a) they are both supraempirical; that is, although based on or constructed from empirical facts, they are not themselves part of the facts; b) their value as models lies in the fact that they can be studied and compared independently of their component parts; c) social structure, or for that matter any structure, is composed of or can be explained by mechanical models, statistical models, or both at the same time, depending upon the ordered arrangements and internal relationships of the elements involved;

⁴ Ibid., p. 84

⁵ Ibid., p. 85

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d) although never explicitly stated, it is suggested that mechanical models, at least as heuristic constructs, correspond closely to Leach's jural rules, that is, they explain ideal behavior, while statistical models correspond to societal norms or actual behavior; e) given the proper conceptual matrix, statistical models can be translated into mechanical models, and vice versa.⁶

Models therefore, as having no empirical reality, and as logical constructions, must nevertheless be explanatory and not merely descriptive devices. They must answer to some degree, questions about the nature of the "why" and the "how" of the phenomena. In that they are supra-empirical, they are not found at the same level as the empirical phenomena they purport to explain. And as Nutini says, "at the descriptive level, we may speak of constructs or paradigms of a higher degree of abstraction, but these do not yet amount to models."⁷

And this would be in the sense of "paradigm", or construct, or intentionality structure, that T.S. Kuhn uses in describing the history of science. Models therefore are conceived of as the logical structure, or principles, or formulas, explaining the anthropologist's empirical reality.

In terms of Lévi-Strauss' approach, and one which has to be refined and clarified so as not to fall prey to a substantive interpretation nor to misinterpretation, it is to see the human mind as universal, and like language, this 'mind' differentiates empirical reality into constituent

⁶ Ibid., p. 91

⁷ Ibid., p. 102

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units; these units are organized into systems of reciprocal relations, and these systems enunciate rules to govern⁸ their possible combinations.

Lévi-Strauss assumes furthermore that the structures of the human mind are unconscious and generic, universal and invariable, and this is his Copernican revolution in ethnology. For Lévi-Strauss further, social life is both logically and temporally a posteriori or posterior to the a priori capacity to symbolize, and so he regards cultures as codes to allow significant communication or exchange, and all social processes as grammars governing particular rules of reciprocity. Kinship systems therefore are regarded as alliances between groups to ensure the exchange of women, and economic systems allow for the exchange of material goods. This is basically an interest in the syntax rather than the content of culture, and as such the ethnological method advanced is formal and structural rather than descriptive and empirical. Furthermore, the ultimate explanatory value of invariable synchronic structures of the human mind also demands that ethnological problems be phrased in structural or mechanical terms rather than in causal or statistical ones. And so, if empirical and historical events are conscious expressions of a more fundamental unconscious reality, it follows that data are not of themselves intelligible but require a supra-

8 Ibid., p. 110

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empirical model for their explanation.

In effect, it has been maintained that structural anthropology becomes in the final analysis a scientific verification of the rationalist philosopher's intuitive notion of dialectics by pointing to the empirical and social manifestations of this notion in ethnographic fact.

Lévi-Strauss is searching for analytical intelligibility, and not empirical prediction, and in the process establishes the opposition between inductive empiricism and deductive rationalism. In this sense it could be said that metaphysics is a structure to explain the reality of "being". It is through the philosophical experience, or through metaphysics that one gets to understand reality, or being, and not through a scientific naturalistic study or questioning of the reality that surrounds us. And if metaphysics is a model, with a structure, which is homologous to that of reality, we do not confuse the model for the reality, but apply it back to reality in our efforts to better understand it. A model therefore is in effect a means and a way of understanding, it is the apogee of insight, the limit of contact with reality.

In such a way one might study the history of philosophy as a series of models, with structures more or less homologous to that of reality. We can, from the pre-Socratics through the Greeks, through the Medievals, through

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the moderns and through contemporary philosophy, see a certain structural development. The aim is of course to keep perfecting the models and trying more and more to equate the structure as closely as possible to the structure of reality. It is absurd to think that reality has changed much since Aristotle and his colleagues in the history of philosophy have been examining being.

It is because of this approach that a certain optimism is allowed since there is always the possibility of new models to explain the world around us, be it psychological, ethical, sociological, or metaphysical, or even ethnological. However, certain features of the human mind can be regarded as constraints in social evolution where there are: first, the demands of the rule as rule; second, the notion of reciprocity, wherein the opposition between others and the self can be integrated; and finally the character of the gift, such that a relation or bond is established between the members involved in the exchange. Now **these** are the structures Lévi-Strauss has examined for an ethnological explanation of kinship structures, and in the process it is felt that he has touched upon enough philosophical questions to merit this dissertation. However, it is necessary to be quite clear in establishing the role of structures in an epistemological consideration, and maintain that this notion can be applied to other realms

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apart from that of social or cultural anthropology. From a philosophy of science, or that of a meta-anthropology, it is to be hoped that the validity of the enterprise has been indicated but the basic aim is to indicate its validity in philosophy, especially in its study and in formulating a direct contribution to its evolution.

As Needham has asserted in his defence of Lévi-⁹ Strauss, causal analysis in only one method of understanding, it is not a paradigm of all explanations to which sociological analysis must conform.

On the other hand, as opposed to empiricism, Sebag has asserted that structural anthropology becomes, in the final analysis, a scientific verification of the rationalist philosopher's intuitive notion of dialectics by pointing to the empirical and social manifestations of this notion in ethnographic fact. But this is only a part of the problem.¹⁰ Lévi-Strauss is working with the scientific principles of the rule of economy and parsimony in the hopes of explaining the greatest number of facts by the smallest possible theory. The model therefore for Lévi-Strauss manifests the same structure as the social reality and this is what is sought, the structure,

⁹ Rodney Needham, "Structure and Sentiment": Test case in Social Anthropology, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 122

¹⁰ Cf., Lucien Sebag, Marxisme et Structuralisme, Paris, Payot, 1964

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and through obtaining this structure, one can explain the actuality of the situation, but more than explain, one can understand it, and as such structuralism is not only a conceptual tool for explaining, it is also a heuristic tool which the ethnologist employs to understand the object of his study. Through this heuristic process the ethnologist is then able to construct more structures to penetrate deeper and deeper into the world of his object, the study of primitive man in this case. That is why Lévi-Strauss is able to write four huge volumes on mythology in South America; that is, through an initial understanding he was able to add to it and refine more and more as he went along. And this is the basic process of science, exhaust the differentiations, then one can be assured that the classification is complete.

Thought structures therefore are constructed through a perception of reality, and the structures are reflected in our understanding of reality through the conception of a model with a homologous structure. This structuring can be affected by socio-cultural factors due to the insertion of man in time and in space. But the schemata of thought however apparently Kantian they may seem, are not stable nor constant. They can be spontaneous, reflexive, analytic, synthetic, dialectical, analogical, metaphorical and metonymical. In terms of the savage mind, which totalizes,

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Lévi-Strauss has shown it to be analogical, or as a system of concepts imbedded in images. The savage mind in effect puts a philosophy of the finite into practice.¹¹

And this philosophy of the finite is established through a structuring of reality to render it intelligible, and this through the enterprise of language, magic, totem and myth. This philosophy of the finite represents the way in which man has been able to grasp the "real", and for him they constitute the "real". As says Peter Caws, in his delineation of structuralist thought, ". . . they are not structures of some ineffable reality that lie behind them and from which they are inseparable."¹² In other words, there is no Platonism involved but simply a search for intelligibility, a prime source of the philosophical enterprise.

The importance of the unconscious in this process is not to be discounted and there have been several references to this process in various schools of structuralism but they are all defineable by their general movement away from the lineal cause explanation applicable to closed or isolated systems and towards the feedback explanation of interrelated open systems.

11 Lévi-Strauss, Savage Mind, op. cit., p. 267

12 Peter Caws, "What is Structuralism", in The Anthropologist as Hero, op. cit., p. 203

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Not only is it an implicit epistemology, but it is also a philosophy of mind which bears philosophical expansion in its own right.

The development of a structural theory of the unconscious as an aggregate of symbolic laws has been achieved by the French school of structural psychoanalysis¹³ under the direction of Jacques Lacan, who as a radical Freudian has indeed been a true innovator. This school has established a theoretical interpretation for the creation of the individual unconscious based on the symbolic law of metaphor, or the psychoanalytical law of original repression.

Edmond Ortigues furthermore in his Le Discours et le Symbole maintains that symbolic thought at heart is conceptual thought without empirical intuition and in effect disengages the concept from all intuition of objects. The symbol is but an operator of structure as a means for establishing distinctive oppositions. But as Ortigues says,

the symbolic structures cannot evolve without producing crises, that is, discontinuities. In contradiction to knowledge or consciousness which requires continuity, collective symbolism obeys a law of discontinuity. In other words, its evolution has a dialectical character. 14

13 Cf., Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, Paris, Seuil, 1966. Jean Laplanche et Serge Leclerc, "L'Inconscient", dans Temps Modernes, Juillet, 1966, pp. 81-129

14 "Les structures symboliques ne peuvent évoluer sans que se produisent des crises, des discontinuités. A la différence du savoir ou de la conscience, qui exige la continuité, le symbolisme collectif obéit à une loi de discontinuité. En d'autres termes, son évolution a un caractère dialectique. Edmond Ortigues, Le Discours et le Symbole, op. cit., p. 215

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And so the function of the symbol, the essential¹⁵ function, is to render the form and the meaning inseparable, it says nothing, it is a pure operator of structures, a means of effecting distinctive oppositions, permutations and combinations necessary for the existence of a significant structure as such.¹⁶

And Lévi-Strauss reduces the unconscious to a function, the symbolic function¹⁷ and this is why he says that the world of symbolism is infinitely varied in content,¹⁸ but always limited in its laws.

However, a discussion of the structural unconscious is not one of the main concerns of this paper and would be better treated extensively in a paper dealing with the link between ethnology and psychoanalysis regarded as structurally as possible.

Since the main emphasis here is properly philosophical, critical and not only descriptive, it is to be noted that the work of Lévi-Strauss requires still a great deal of clarification before it can be melded to philosophy. For example, Lévi-Strauss for all the explanations he has brought to his discipline is seriously in need of some epistemological refinements. This is most evident when considering his categorical distinctions between the levels of observation and experimentation which lead to the denial

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 268

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 269

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 272

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 273

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of the empirical reality of the positional models built in order to explain a body of social phenomena. Also there is, as was mentioned, the problem of clarifying what might at first observation be regarded as a substantive theory of mind.

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As McNicholl¹⁹ asserts that the epistemology of structuralism is its least defined area, Lévi-Strauss does little in defining what he means by "real" or "reality" especially when discussing the epistemological status of the models vis-à-vis empirical reality. The relationship which has to be clarified here is that between two equally philosophical entities. There is the distinction to be clarified between reality, and concept reality, between the levels of observation and those of experimentation. The problem of dichotomizing the social universe into two different epistemological entities also has to be refined.

Also, another point which has to be clarified is the interrelation between these two realities, that is, a clarification of the canons of intelligibility, and this would be a question for both the methodology and philosophy of science. The relation between the two naturally belongs to a general methodology of explanation but the bifurcation of nature which occurs in the physical sciences has to be

¹⁹ Ambrose McNicholl, "Structuralism II: the latest from Paris," in Irish Theological Quarterly, October, 1968, p. 278

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guarded against in the social and human sciences, 20 and this especially in a philosophy with a sound metaphysics. This is where the question of interrelation and formalism has to be clarified in a properly philosophical sense.

The problem for the philosophy of science here would be in terms of the inferred and postulated. In science the sensed is given and the postulated inferred, this is not so in the social sciences, nor necessarily in philosophy. The problem for ethnology proper is that the object studied is not in postulated space and time but rather in sense-delivered space and time, and hence the difference between philosophy and science, as mentioned previously by Merleau-Ponty.

Another specifically philosophical point which requires clarification is that of the concept of model and its relation to empirical phenomena. The discussion of paradigm as a specifically philosophical entity also requires some clarification as does the heuristic value of structure in terms of the study of philosophy.

There is, philosophically speaking, a certain radical relativism in Lévi-Strauss' work which has to be clarified since when he speaks of the arrangement of content, rather than content itself, as providing intelli-

20 Lévi-Strauss, Structure et Forme, op. cit. passim.

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gibility he is leaving many areas of historical research by the wayside.

The philosophical controversy which structuralism has produced revolves around this arrangement of content and meaning, or intelligibility. The question posed was that, once the meaning had been drained of content, was there anything left which was valid for either the historian, the social scientist and the philosopher.

Paul Ricoeur, one of Lévi-Strauss' most stringent opponents, has referred to structuralism, in terms of formal philosophy, as a "discourse" at once "fascinating" and "disquieting" -- an "admirable syntactical arrangement" that said nothing. However, his interest is complimentary to structuralism and is constructive.

However, despite the problems posed by a philosophy of structuralism in terms of integrating it into the other predominant strains of either continental philosophy, British or North American philosophy, it is evident that much has to be delineated before it can be dismissed.

A properly philosophical enterprise would be to apply the methods of structuralism to the history of philosophy and see if there are models to be disengaged from the empirical reality which is philosophy, and as such achieve a better understanding of philosophy, and

²¹ Lévi-Strauss, "Réponses à Quelques Questions", dans Esprit, numéro 322, 1963, p. 653

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one which might prove to be pedagogically sound. That is to say, that if the history could be rendered more intelligible it would be a tremendous heuristic device for an introduction to philosophy.

On the other hand, if in discussing models, Lévi-Strauss is dealing with "ideal" societies and not "actual" societies, the domain of statistical models, then the impetus for philosophy would be to find, or at least pursue, an ideal understanding of reality as perceived by philosophy. In reference to Lévi-Strauss' use of the analogy that knowledge of the molecular structure of matter does not alter our basic perception, the same point could be made as regards philosophy. Philosophical reflection does not necessarily entail a radical change in sense perception but rather an intellectual approfondissement. In this sense the philosophical enterprise in its interrogative activity is searching for the fundamental ground of reality, as well as seeking intelligibility, or at least a principle of intelligibility. To succeed in this the whole of reality must be examined and defined in its totality. As Jean Ladrière writes,

Metaphysics is precisely the intellectual effort through which we try to determine that which is implicated in the grasping of the whole of reality considered formally under its aspects of totality.²²

²² La métaphysique est précisément l'effort intellectuel par lequel nous tentons de déterminer ce qui est impliqué dans la saisie du tout de la réalité, considéré formellement sous son aspect de totalité. Jean Ladrière, L'Articulation du Sens, Discours scientifique et parole de la foi, Aubier Montaigne, 1970, p. 88

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This could easily serve as a definition of structural studies where the search for meaning does not allow for a residue which is unexplained.

The transference of the insights of structuralism to the realm of philosophy will be no easy task, if it is to be rigorous and exacting, but the success these insights have achieved lend credence to the belief that such a transference would be both fruitful and intellectually satisfying, and this especially in terms of a philosophy of man as primarily a symbolic being.

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APPENDIX I
ABSTRACT OF

The Epistemological and Metaphilosophical
Foundations of the Notion of Structure
in the Works of Claude Lévi-Strauss

The fundamental question that this thesis endeavors to answer is: "What is a structure, and what are its philosophical implications, as it is used by Claude Lévi-Strauss?" In attempting to answer this question the author has based his research on the theoretical works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, leaving aside the monumental work, in four volumes, on mythology, entitled Mythologiques.

It is the contention of this thesis that the reason Lévi-Strauss has been successful in solving such vexatious ethnological questions as totemism, incest taboos, mythological thought, and the function of the structures of kinship is that his discovery of some of the 'fundamental structures of the human mind' is a viable philosophical contribution to the study of man. It is furthermore the contention of this thesis that this is a fundamentally philosophical answer as it deals with the processes of thought and the development of knowledge, and is, as such, an epistemology.

1 M.A. Thesis presented by Richard R.J. Bélec, in 1972, to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ottawa, pages.

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Therefore, the thesis is divided into four chapters dealing with this basic problem, with appendices which are intended to give the ethnological bases for the philosophical questions raised in the thesis itself.

The first chapter deals with Lévi-Strauss' The Elementary Structures of Kinship, and is an attempt to render the meaning Lévi-Strauss has given to 'structure' both comprehensible and comprehensive in its use.

The second chapter, dealing with the text Structural Anthropology, refers mainly to the use Lévi-Strauss has made of this notion of 'structure' in ethnology. Here the attempt is to provide a properly empirical context for 'structure'.

Chapter three deals with Lévi-Strauss' writings in the field of epistemology proper, and tries to ground the preceding accounts in the 'structures of the mind'.

Finally in chapter four the aim is to precise the philosophical import of the notion of 'structure' and to establish, if only implicitly, the possible avenues that might be explored in terms of elaborating a structural philosophy.

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1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Endogamy - the compulsory restriction of marriage to members of the same segment of the population or class. Marriage within a group because of convenience is not endogamy.
- Exogamy - the practice of a person seeking a mate outside his group.
- Marriage - affinal - a marriage with a relative of a spouse
avuncular - marriage of a man with his sister's daughter
cross-cousin - marriage between cousins related through siblings of unlike sex e.g. between the child of a woman and the child of her brother
patrilocal - a marriage in which the wife lives with her husband's tribe
preferential - marriage between two people of specific status, whether it is enjoined or preferred
symmetrical cross-cousin - a marriage in which either type of cross-cousin is acceptable or sought after as a mate, while marriage to the other cross-cousin might not be permitted
by exchange - marriage which involves two men changing daughters or sisters. Each man obtains a wife for himself or for a brother or son.
- Ego - a person whose basic point of reference is maintained in determining and tracing kinship and organizational relationship
- Ethology - a study of animal behavior (Konrad Z. Lorenz)
- Acculturation - the process by which culture is transmitted through continuous first-hand contact with different cultures.
- Paradigm - a theoretical model to explain a type of social behavior

1 Winick, Charles, Dictionary of Anthropology, New York, Greenwood Press, 1969.

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2
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

INCEST

A. Incest may be defined as heterosexual relations between members of the nuclear family, and, by extension, between family members beyond the nuclear family.

1. In sociology and psychology the term is confined to heterosexual relations between members of the nuclear family. In anthropology alone a wider definition has been attempted, one which is either in conformity with local custom within a particular group, or one which is variable depending on local custom. Although it is true that psychoanalytical psychology and sociology tend to deal primarily with western European culture, where the definition of incest is customarily narrow, there are other reasons why such a definition may have special utility or disutility in terms of the specific problems dealt with by sociologists and psychologists. There can be no arbitrary resolution of this difference on a priori grounds.

2. There can be, however, a useful separation within the definition of incest such as will permit the articulation of sociological, psychological, and anthropological endeavor. This has been attempted in the definition set forth. By use of this definition, extensions can be treated separately from incest among nuclear family members until it is demonstrated in fact that these are of the same or different order of phenomena.

3. One special question which arises from this and other definitions usually employed is their specification or implicit reference to heterosexual relations. There appears to be insufficient evidence available at present to rule homosexual relations outside the definition of incest, or to consider it as of the same order as heterosexual relations. But the problem remains to be considered and must not be arbitrarily included or excluded by definition alone.

B. 1. In psychoanalytic psychology incest tends to be treated primarily in terms of its role as a wish which each growing child must cope with and learn to control, and the persistence of this wish in the unconscious. Specifically, the wish is directed by the child towards its parent or sibling of the opposite sex. It is on the basis of the Oedipus complex, allegedly universal sexual desire of the son for the mother and his sexual conflict with the father figure, that Freud has erected a theory of culture and religion. From being considered this fundamental creative and destructive force in orthodox psychoanalytic theory, the incestuous wish ranges

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down to the point of being one among other important problems with which the maturing child must grapple.

2. In sociology, the concern is rather with the actual occurrences of sexual relations than with the wish and is generally viewed against the background of normative family regulations which prohibit this activity. Its occurrence can then be taken as an index of family disorganization, or it can be examined to discover the conditions under which it tends to occur (S. Riemer, 'A Research Note on Incest', American Journal of Sociology, vol. XLV, 1939-40, pp. 566-75). Here as in psychoanalytic psychology, it tends to be defined as sexual relations between opposite-sexed members of the nuclear family.

3. In anthropology, the definition of incest has tended to vary both as a reflection of the very different types of societies dealt with and in terms of the very different types of problems of concern to the anthropologist. The primary concern of the anthropologist has been with the incest taboo -- the prohibition of sexual relations among members of the consanguine family, lineage, (q.v.), or other kinship group -- and with attempts to explain it.

(a) The earliest concern with incest came with the observation that exogamy rules were frequently, though not invariably, supported by the sanction of the prohibition against incest. The incest taboo was seen, by E.B. Tylor, for instance, to have played a critical role in the evolution of culture, for until in-group marriage was prohibited there could be no development of a wider society through alliances created by affinity ('On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, vol. 18, 1889, pp. 264-9). The prohibition on incestuous marriage was thus seen essentially in the context of exogamy, and the boundary of the exogamous group was seen as co-terminous with the group within which the incest taboo operated. In this context incest could be defined as '...illicit sexual relationship between persons within the degrees of consanguinity excluded from such relationship by socially determined regulations' (R. Fortune, 'Incest', in E.R.A. Seligman, ed., Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932, vol. 7, p. 620).

(b) Although most anthropologists agree with the importance of the incest taboo in its relation to exogamy, theoretical explanations of this relationship have varied widely.

-i-. One of the oldest theories, espoused, for example, by L.H. Morgan, was that the incest taboo grew out of the efforts to prevent biological deterioration (Ancient Society, New York, Henry Holt, 1877, pp. 69, 378, 424). Closely related to Morgan's theory and equally dubious is that of E. Westermarck who also saw incest as biologically harmful and prevented by the development of instinctive aversion based on familiarity (The History of Human Marriage, London, Macmillan, 1921, ch. 20).

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-ii- A group of theories stress the potentialities of internal disruption of the family through incest. Among the older theories together with that of Freud, are those of B.Z. Seligman and R. Briffault, the former stressing prohibitions established by both father and mother, the latter, prohibitions established by the mother. (B.Z. Seligman, 'Incest and Descent, Their Influence on Social Organization', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, vol. 59, 1929, pp.231-72; R. Briffault, The Mothers, London, Allen & Unwin, 1927, 3 vols.). Still important is the functional theory of B. Malinowski, which realizes the importance of extended kinship relations but simultaneously stresses the disruptive possibilities of intra-family sexuality ('Culture', in Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1935, vol. 4, p. 630). Finally, W. La Barre has used Freudian theory to explain both the incest taboo and exogamy (The Human Animal, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1954).

KINSHIP AND KINSHIP SYSTEM

A. In contemporary English (in Great Britain) kinsman is an aristocratic word for relative. Kinship in its technical sense follows naturally from the common understanding of words containing the element kin (kindred, kinsman, kinsfolk). The ordinary expression "kith and kin", acquaintance and kinsfolk, sums up the world of intimate relationships. A kinship system is usually taken to refer to the complex of rules in any one society (or section of a society) which, by governing descent, succession, inheritance, marriage, extra-marital sexual relations, and residence, determines the status of individuals and groups in respect of their ties of consanguinity and marriage.

B.1. Two people are kin(smen) when they share a common ancestor or one is descended from the other. The word 'ancestor' here means somebody standing in the social position of a father who had a child who had a child until the present generation is reached; or somebody standing in the social position of a mother, etc. An ancestor is not necessarily a forbear or progenitor in a biological sense, and the tracing of kinship links by genealogies (which are statements about social relationships) is a process different from that of the tracing of blood relationships by the geneticist. The facts of procreation provide men-in-society with certain elements which they use for the expression of social relations. Different societies perceive the facts of procreation differently (in a sense the facts differ); but even if the facts are perceived in the same way they may well be put to different social use. In their eagerness to dispel the wrong notion that the study of kinship is the study of blood relationships, anthropologists sometimes

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fall into the error of denying any connection between the two things. The procreation and rearing of children form a kernel around which a particular society evolves its own system of allocating rights and duties. Biology does not explain why any particular kinship system exists, but the engendering of children is the natural key to the elaborate social edifice known as kinship.

2. Kinship relations are sometimes called relations of consanguinity (q.v.), a term which, shorn of its biological implications, is a satisfactory way of showing that kinship is concerned with descent. The relationships which flow through marriage are relationships of affinity (q.v.). And because kinship and affinity are closely linked the first term is often used to cover the second. Some anthropologists regard the expression affinal kin as a solecism; it may well be, but it is impossible to speak of a kinship system without including marriage and its consequent relationships.

3. In many industrial societies the range over which kinship spreads, both in regard to functions and individuals covered, is (or is commonly thought to be) so narrow that the terms family (q.v.) and kinship tend to merge. But in fact the family is a crucially distinct area of kinship. It is in the family that society reproduces itself. The family supplies members to kinship and other groups. The basic elements in the family are the ties of filiation (that is, the linkage between two adjacent generations), even though a particular form of the family (extended, joint, etc.) may contain several generations.

The constitution of the family is a reflex of the wider kinship system. This system determines, by its rules of marriage, and descent, who may marry whom and the difference in the rights and duties which will accrue to children vis-a-vis their parents and their kinfolk through these parents.

C. In formal analysis a primary distinction is made between unilineal and non-unilineal kinship.

1. The first is a kind of kinship in which the tracing of descent in one line (either through males exclusively or through females exclusively) to a common ancestor is an entitlement to membership of a discrete group (clan, lineage, etc.). Such a group is accordingly either patrilineal or matrilineal. In some societies both groups exist, so that an individual is at once a member of his father's patrilineal group and his mother's matrilineal group (double unilineal - sometimes called dual or double descent systems). Unilineal descent does not of course exhaust kinship; in a patrilineal organized society a man must also have kinship relations through his mother, and mutatis mutandis in a matrilineally organized society. In a double unilineal system, while both parents are severally members of the same group as their child, he has kinsmen (e.g. his father's sister's son or mother's brother's son) who are not members of either of his unilineal groups.

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2. In societies lacking unilineal organization we may find what some anthropologists call descent groups (bilateral descent groups and ramages). If an individual traces descent from an ancestor through any link and forms a group with other people descended from the same ancestor, he may be a member of several such groups; and these groups taken together will have overlapping membership (bilateral descent groups). If there are groups in which an individual may claim membership through different kinds of kinship tie, but he is at the same time forced to choose only one of these groups, we find a kind of discrete (non-overlapping) descent group which in certain respects resembles a unilineally constructed group (ramage). On the other hand, in some societies we find no descent principle at all. In such cases kinship is organized exclusively on the basis of a circle of relatives traced outwards from an individual (kindred). A formalized kindred is definable in terms of the degree of cousinship to which it is traced. A kindred which is bounded by third cousins, for example, will include an individual's eight sets of great-great-grandparents and their descendants. No two individuals, unless they are full siblings, can have exactly the same kindred. This kind of grouping is not a descent group because the members of it as a whole fail to share the common ancestors. My cousin on my mother's side, for example does not share ancestry in common with my cousin on my father's side (unless certain marriages have occurred). Kindreds of this kind have a symmetry which springs from the reckoning of relationship by degrees of distance, no account being taken of the sex of the individuals through whom a relationship is traced. Sex for sex, a relative on my mother's side is structurally equivalent to one occupying a similar position on my father's side. It is for this reason that such a system can be easily described in the language of English kinship, uncle, aunt, and cousin denote positions which are balanced on either side of a given individual.

Because in a kindred an individual traces relationship through both parents, a kinship system which has no groupings other than the kindred is sometimes called bilateral (or cognatic) whatever the nature of the descent system. Moreover, formalized kindreds may be found in unilineally organized societies.

The terms multilineal and omnilineal are sometimes used for systems of kinship which are not unilineal but these words, by implying the existence of lines, suggest too much. There are no lines in a kinship system which knows no formal grouping other than the kindred.

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D. Formal analysis is merely a first step in the understanding of kinship systems.

The qualities of any one system can be judged only in terms of, first, the extent to which kinship relationships and alignments correspond to other forms of relationships and alignments, and second, the nature of the rights and duties by which particular kinship relations are defined. For example, two societies may be classified formally as having patrilineal systems, but while in one of them patriliney may define the framework of groups on which the society as a whole rests (so that political, economic, and religious activities are closely interwoven with kinship, patriliney permeating society in toto), in the other case patrilineal groups may be confined to local organizations, the wider institutions of society being based on non-kinship criteria. Certain parts of pre-Communist China showed localized large-scale patrilineages of a kind which resemble patrilineages in a number of primitive societies, but the study of kinship in China cannot by itself take us very far in understanding the political, legal, economic, and religious framework of Chinese society as a whole.

Again, the rights and duties between an individual and a specific relative are not likely to be exactly the same even in systems which formally resemble one another closely. A man's relationship with his mother's brother in matrilineal society A may well differ in some significant respects from the corresponding relationship in matrilineal society B.

The nature of a particular kinship system can be comprehended only when what is implied in kinship is measured against what is implied in other modes of organization in the same society; the study of descent, rules of incest and exogamy, kinship terminology, residence rules, rules of succession and inheritance, and preferential and prescriptive marriage allow us to characterize a kinship system as an internally consistent entity; we have then to move out of this system to gauge how far it is significant in placing people in their society, in shaping the relations between them, and in affecting their modes of activity (political, legal, economic, and religious).

In studying works on kinship written at different times during the last century the reader must grasp their underlying theoretical preoccupations. Much of the earlier work is concerned with the evolutionary sequence of forms of kinship and marriages, great reliance being placed upon kinship terminology. Contemporary interests in the subject and modern systems of analysis are exemplified by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, C. Lévi-Strauss, G.P. Murdock, and E.R. Leach.

APPENDIX II

META-ANTHROPOLOGY

A. Meta-anthropology is the philosophical and historical study of the philosophical presuppositions and postulates of scientific anthropology in general and cultural anthropology in particular.

B. The term meta-anthropology was introduced by D. Bidney to indicate a sphere of interest in anthropology which deals with the philosophical presuppositions of scientific anthropology. Just as the editor of Aristotle's works used the term metaphysics to refer to that work which came after the Physics and was concerned with the ultimate concepts and principles presupposed or postulated in his physical theories, so the term meta-anthropology is used to refer to the analysis of the foundations or presuppositions of anthropological theory. Thus the term is not merely another name for anthropological theory; it refers to a special kind of theory, namely, the theory concerned with such problems as the nature of the reality of culture, cultural causality, and the significance of cultural determinism and its bearing on the modes of human experience and evaluation. The meta-anthropologist seeks to show the relation of anthropology to the philosophy of science in general and to indicate how the general theories and approaches developed in the philosophy of science may apply or may be uncritically assumed in anthropology and the other social sciences as well.

C. It is merely an accident of history that the term metaphysics has come to take over the whole sphere of ontological thought, thereby obscuring the fact that ontological postulates constitute an indispensable element in the philosophy of each of the sciences. Thus the prefix meta, if joined with the name of any one of the social sciences could serve usefully to refer to the philosophy of the given science, i.e., to the analysis of problems concerning the relation of the phenomena and processes of a given science to the mind of the knower and to reality as it exists independent of the knower. As against the positivistic view that the prefix meta indicates a pre-scientific state of a discipline, it may be claimed that the prefix can be legitimately used, as in the case of meta-anthropology, to designate the theoretically postulated aspect of each science and that the discipline so designated deals with those ontological and epistemological postulates necessary to render the theory and method of the science intelligible. Thus there are legitimate areas of investigation that might well be entitled metasociology, meta-psychology, etc.

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METHODOLOGY

A. Methodology is the systematic and logical study of the principles guiding scientific investigation. It must not be confused with (a) substantive theory since it is only interested in the general grounds for the validity of theories, not in their content; (b) research procedures (general modes of investigation) and techniques (specific fact-finding or manipulating operations) themselves, since the methodologist evaluates procedures and techniques as to their ability to provide us with certain knowledge. Finally, methodology as a normative discipline differs sharply from the factual study of scientists at work as conducted e.g. by the sociology of knowledge, history of science.

B. 1. The term methodology in its original and proper usage refers to the systematic study of principles guiding scientific and philosophical investigation. Traditionally this discipline was seen as a branch of philosophy, more particularly as a branch of logic. Since philosophical methodology failed to answer many questions of practical importance to social scientists, they tended to become their own methodologists. As a consequence methodology in the social sciences became or came to be seen by many as a 'bent of mind' (P.F. Lazarsfeld & M. Rosenberg (eds.), The Language of Social Research, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1955, p.4) rather than an independent discipline, and the term came to be applied by some in a loose fashion to anything having to do with procedures or techniques of investigation. Today it is sometimes applied in a colloquial sense to the totality of investigative procedures and techniques customary in a specific science (an informal plural of 'method') or the set of research techniques used in one piece of research. In this second, informal sense the term methodology refers to the subject matter of methodology used in the original sense.

2. The definition of methodology emerging from the work of German post-Kantian philosophers exercised considerable influence on contemporary usage through M. Wever, A. von Schelting, and T. Parsons. Methodology is seen as a separate discipline studying the different methods of gaining scientific knowledge. It differs, however, from other approaches to the study of science in that it does not concern itself with the actual processes involved in scientific research, as the psychology of cognition or the sociology of knowledge might do. Instead the methodologist examines systematically and logically the aptness of all research tools, varying from basic assumptions to special research techniques, for the scientific purpose. Methodology is in

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this sense a normative discipline. Yet it does not impose values on empirical science from without but discovers its inherent norm. F. Kaufmann (Methodology of the Social Sciences, London, Oxford University Press, 1944, p.240) expresses this point in modern terms: 'Methodology does not speak "about" empirical science in the same sense as empirical science speaks about the world; it rather clarifies the meaning of "empirical science"'.

3. Within this concept of methodology some writers emphasize strongly the general, more philosophical pole, others the pole of special problems of actual investigation. T. Parsons tends towards the philosophical pole when he says that methodology does not refer 'primarily to "methods" of empirical research such as statistics, case study, interview, and the like. These latter it is preferable to call research techniques. Methodology is the consideration of the general grounds for the validity of scientific procedures and systems of them. It is as such neither a strictly scientific nor a strictly philosophical discipline'. The Structure of Social Action, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1937, pp.23-24).

MODEL (Theoretical Model)

The term model, or theoretical model is an expression occurring within the sciences and in accounts of the working of the sciences. It designates any one of a range of things which form a kind of continuum:

1. It may denote an actual physical model, i.e. an artifact such that its parts, their relations, and its workings are suitably analogous to some other system, so that by observing the artifact, by producing changes in it and seeing their consequences, inferences can be made about the system of which the artifact is a 'model'.

2. It may denote a merely conceptual model, i.e. the envisaging or the specification in words of an artifact as described in (1) without actually building it.

3. It may denote the envisaging or the specification in words of a system simpler in various ways than some other system of which it is a model, simpler but not otherwise dissimilar. It may be simpler, for instance, in there being fewer variables and their values being known with precision. A model in this sense is similar to the kinds described under (1) and (2) in that simplification and greater determinateness are generally involved, but it differs from them in that the relations of the real system are not so to speak reproduced in some other medium, either

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in reality or in the imagination. A model in this sense is merely the indication of a simpler and more accurately determinable state of affairs, with the intention of facilitating deduction of further consequences which can then be tentatively reapplied to the more complex and elusive real system. By describing a system by means of definite postulates which specify the properties of the model, and thus in a way give rise to it, it becomes possible to deduce further consequences from the postulates and about the model by rigorous deduction.

4. There is a tendency to call any theory whatever a model, in as far as any theory tends to possess at least unwittingly the features intended to characterize models in the sense (3).

5. By a similar argument, it has been maintained that any proposition whatever, whether theoretical or not, either is or represents a model.

There is no sharp line in the transition from (1) to (5): merely imaginary models may subsequently have artifacts built for them, unselfconscious theories may lead to deliberate simplifications for purposes of analysis or vice versa, propositions may become theories, and so on. Nevertheless, it is probably more useful to restrict the expression to the first three kinds of theoretical model.

MOIETY

Moiety denotes (a) a social group which is one of two divisions within a society or (b) a sub-type of this broader category. The strictest definition includes only social units which are one of a total of two mutually exclusive divisions within a society, membership in which passes through males -- patrimoiety -- or through females -- matrimoiety; marriage between members of such a group is disapproved if not totally forbidden upon penalty of death. Dual organization has been used as a synonym in both Britain and the United States.

APPENDIX III

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

To refer to the problem as traditionally seen by anthropologists, it can be noted that translation of kinship terms is a rather naive and crude way of discussing kinship, and has been abandoned by anthropologists for several years now. A more common means has been to list the terms of a language and with each term to give a series of genealogical categories to which it can apply. For instance, a term might be said to designate father, father's brother, father's father's brother's son, mother's sister's husband, etc., or in abbreviation Fa, FaBr, FaFaBrSo, MoSiHu, etc. This method of definition is what is called a kintype notation- but the problem is that the definition almost always trails off with an "etc.", and this "etc." obscures a number of implicit assumptions about the manner in which the term is applied. More often than not it is but a guess about which kinsmen are likely to be categorized. The major goal of a formal analysis, a formal semantic analysis, as performed through structural linguistics and structural anthropology, is to make such assumptions explicit, and the dangling "etc." must be accepted as an admission of an incomplete analysis. Also in some societies people can even assign a kinship term to anyone they meet, whether or not they are able to trace any real genealogical relationship. If a single term can be used for an unlimited set of kintypes, then no kintype notation could fully characterize the meaning of kin-

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ship terms, anymore than a finite list of sentences could fully characterize the infinite potentials of a language.

To escape this simplistic listing of kintypes, one promising approach is to look for general dimensions of semantic contrast or opposition that can serve to distinguish classes of kinsmen and sets of kinship terms. Since kinship terms are applied in an area that reflects rather obvious genealogical and biological phenomena, such as parenthood and marriage, it is reasonable to look for semantic contrasts that reflect our biological nature. However, these semantic contrasts or oppositions can be along different axes; they can be between male and female, although some systems are a good deal less consistent in their use of this criterion than in English. Except for cover terms like ancestor or parent, our only sexually ambiguous term is cousin, although it is not in French, while some other languages have many terms that are used equally for both men and women. Another widely used distinction is that of generation, that is parents, uncles, aunts, are distinguished from siblings, and the latter from sons and daughters.

The approach then is to look for whatever dimensions of contrast (genealogical or not) serve to divide the set of kinship terms into reasonable subsets, adding more

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dimensions, exhaustively (cf. Mythologiques) until every kinship term is distinct from every other. These dimensions of contrast would be defined by means of non-linguistic criteria (sex, generation, membership in a kinship group, and so on) and hence would be semantic rather than grammatical, but collectively they would permit a speaker to decide which term would be appropriate for any particular kinsmen. Nothingless than this, of course, could serve as an explicit formal analysis, or as an adequate guide for a speaker who must choose terms as he speaks.

However, it should be obvious that the logic of such a structural analysis of oppositions is virtually identical to the logic of familiar types of phonological analyses. In phonology the universe of possible vocal noises is divided by certain distinct features which cross each other in various ways and in so doing serve to segregate the noises of any particular language into mutually contrasting sounds. In kinship analysis, the universe of possible kintypes is divided by a different kind of distinctive feature and these two cross each other in various complex ways and so serve to segregate the kin-types used by any particular society into mutually contrasting sets. Both phonology and this type of semantic analysis refer to the linguistic phenomena (contrastin words or

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contrasting sounds) to extralinguistic criteria -- generally to articulatory features in the case of phonology and to differences among kinsmen in the case of kinship analysis.

To discuss semantics and phonology and other linguistic phenomena, it would be well to ground the linguistic references to an important aspect of Lévi-Strauss' own work in Structural Anthropology where he says that,

...Structural linguistics will certainly play the same renovating role with respect to the social sciences that nuclear physics, for example, has played for the physical sciences. In what does this revolution consist, as we try to assess its broadest implications? N. Troubetzkoy, the illustrious founder of structural linguistics, himself furnished the answer to that question. In one programmatic statement he reduced the structural method to four basic operations. First, structural linguistics shifts from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to study of their unconscious infrastructure; second, it does not treat terms as independent entities, taking instead as its basis of analysis the relation between terms; third, it introduces the concept of system -- "Modern phonemics does not merely proclaim that phonemes are always part of the system; it shows concrete phonemic systems and elucidates their structures" --; finally, structural linguistics aims at discovering general laws, either by induction "or...by logical deduction which would give them an absolute character." 1

Lévi-Strauss sees kinship terms, like phonemes, as being elements of meaning, but they acquire meaning only if they are integrated into systems.² And furthermore, maintains Lévi-Strauss, "kinship systems, like phonemic systems,

1 Lévi-Strauss, C., Structural Anthropology, op. cit., p. 31.

2 Ibid., p. 32.

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are built by the mind on the level of unconscious thought."³ And another statement by Troubetzkoy which reinforces this statement or interpretation: "The evolution of a phonemic system at any given moment is directed by the tendency toward a goal. . . This evolution has a direction, an internal logic, which historical phonemics is called upon to elucidate."⁴ But Lévi-Strauss cannot be accused of being overeager and impetuous in his methodology and he does not simply transpose the linguist's method to the field of cultural anthropology in a jejeune fashion.

As he says himself,

. . .however, a preliminary difficulty impedes the transportation of the phonemic method to the anthropological study of primitive peoples. The superficial analogy between phonemic systems and kinship systems is so strong that it immediately sets us on the wrong track.⁵

In structural linguistics the linguist, to obtain a structural law, analyses phonemes into distinctive features, says Lévi-Strauss, and these are then grouped into one or several parts of oppositions. And he continues cautiously to say the anthropologist might be tempted to do the same thing, breaking down analytically the kinship terms of any given system into their components, and he

3 Ibid., p. 32.

4 Ibid., p. 32.

5 Ibid., p. 33.

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cites the example of father in our society, which has positive connotations with respect to sex, relative age and generation; but, he says, it has a zero value on the dimension of collaterality, and it cannot express an affinal relationship. Thus it is the relationship that is sought. And it is at this microsociological level that one might hope to discover the most general structural law, he says, just as the linguist discovers his at the infra-phonemic level, and the physicist at the infra-molecular level.

However, Lévi-Strauss poses himself, three objections to this.

He says a truly scientific analysis must be real and simplyfying and explanatory. To take these in order then. The distinctive features which result from a phonemic analysis have a "real" or objective existence from three points of view: psychological, physiological and even physical. It is simpler, because they are fewer in number than the phonemes which result from their combination. Also, in terms of being explanatory, they help us to understand and reconstruct the system.⁶

In kinship analysis it is not really "real", but abstract and conceptual. Also the system achieved through this procedure is infinitely more complex and more difficult to interpret than the empirical state or data, and finally

6 Ibid., p. 34.

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the hypothesis has no explanatory value. Says Lévi-Strauss "it does not lead to an understanding of the nature of the system and still less to a reconstruction of its origins.

And, as noted earlier, concerning a structural analysis of kinship terminology rather than attitudes, Lévi-Strauss asserts, following Kroeber, that the difference between linguistics and anthropology is clear in that kinship systems use language directly, while the linguistic analysis is one, further step extended. Also it is evident that language's function is communication and structural linguistics discovered it as a system, and here Ferdinand de Saussure is the progenitor. On the other hand, it is evident since Lewis H. Morgan, says Lévi-Strauss, that kinship terms constitute a system, but up to now what was unknown was their function, and this is where it could be asserted that Lévi-Strauss has made one of his major contributions to ethnology. As he says himself, regarding a "too literal adherence to linguistic method", which,

reduces most structural analysis of kinship systems to pure tautologies. They demonstrate the obvious and neglect the unknown. 8

The anthropological duality then of these two "orders of reality" are interrelated but the examination of attitudes as opposed to that of nomenclature allows for an analogous use of the linguistic method. The individuals in a system of kinship feel bound by prescribed behavior in their

7 Ibid., p. 34.

8 Ibid., p. 35.

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relations with one another, and these various behaviors range from respect to familiarity, rights to obligations, and affections to hostility, and this system of attitudes is both psychological and social. As says Lévi-Strauss, we can guess at the role played by systems of attitudes, that is,

to insure group cohesion and equilibrium, but we do not understand the nature of the interconnections between the various attitudes, nor do we perceive their necessity. . . as in the case of language, we know their function but the system if unknown. 9

The initial problem for ethnology, which inspired this search for a method and explanation, was sparked by the inadequacy of the explanation for the avunculate in primitive societies, and Lévi-Strauss reviews the problem with reference to several societies where there is or is not an avunculate but the kinship attitude still maintains and he finally concludes that in order to understand the "avunculate we must treat it as one relationship within a system, while the system itself must be considered as a whole in order to grasp its structure."¹⁰

He continues to assert that

...this structure rests upon four terms (brother, sister, father and son) which are linked by two pairs of correlative oppositions in such a way that in each of the two generations there is always a positive relationship and a negative one. 11

9 Ibid., p.35-6.

10 Ibid., p.43.

11 Ibid., p. 43.

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He then proceeds to demonstrate his argument, and also to give it logical substantiation.

This merits precise attention, and so to quote it in full.

Now, what is the nature of this structure, and what is its function? The answer is as follows: This structure is the most elementary structure of kinship that can exist. It is properly speaking, the unit of kinship . . . in order for a kinship structure to exist, three types of family relations must always be present: a relation of consanguinity, a relation of affinity, and a relation of descent -- in other words, a relation between siblings, a relation between spouses, and a relation between parent and child. It is evident that the structure given here satisfies this threefold requirement, in accordance with the scientific principle of parsimony. But these considerations are abstract. 12

12 Ibid., p.43.

APPENDIX IV
STRUCTURAL LINGUISTICS

For the Genevan, Ferdinand de Saussure, the linguistic sign does not unite a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image, this latter being sensory, the psychological imprint of the sound as it were, or the impression that it makes on our senses.

The combination then of a concept and a sound image equals a sign, and the concept is what is signified, and the sound image is what signifies. And language as such is arbitrary based on convention. By arbitrary, de Saussure meant that it is unmotivated -- the signifier, to make it clearer, has no natural connection with the signified. A common example would be that there is no necessary connection between 'tree' as a sound, 'tree' as a concept, and the existential reality 'tree, nor is there one for 'arbre'. As such language furnishes the best example and proof that a law accepted by a community is a thing that is tolerated and not a rule to which all freely consent. Speakers in a language community are largely unconscious of the laws of language, but despite this, language is not completely arbitrary being to some extent ruled by logic.

Furthermore, linguistic change, or evolution, results in a shift in the relationship between the signified and the signifier, and these signs are governed by a general principle of semiology. That is to say, continuity in time is coupled to change in time. As such therefore, there are two axes under which or with which to study languages,

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the axis of simultaneities and the axis of successions. In the first time is excluded, in the latter changes are included. This is the foundation for the Saussurian use of synchronic and diachronic.

Modern linguistics up to de Saussure had been completely absorbed in diachronic linguistics, that is to say comparative linguistics, and the introduction of synchronic linguistics was a change not of kind but of degree. It was a different optic, and as Comte once said, it is the size that makes the phenomenon; it is in effect where you look.

De Saussure used his example of a game of chess as an artificial realization of what language offers in a natural form. There is one difference however, and that is at the level of intention. Language as such premeditates nothing, while the player in chess intends a move. To remove the limp from the analogy, one would require an unconscious player, in the sense of playing unconsciously, not in terms of being in a comatose state.

Synchrony then has only one perspective. That is, the speaker's.

The diachronic perspective on the other hand is twofold. It is prospective, that is it follows the course of time, while also retrospective, that is, it goes back in time.

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Now, language as a social institution might be regarded as being governed by analogous prescriptions. Social laws have two basic characteristics: they are imperative and general, that is to say, they are extensive, covering all cases, and come in by force. The synchronic law, on the other hand, is general but not imperative.

A law of synchrony, to clarify this point, is like a principle of regularity, no force guarantees the maintenance of a regularity when it is established on some point. While diachrony supposes a dynamic force through which an effect is produced, a thing executed. Diachronic facts force themselves upon language, for example, demographic changes, imperialistic invasions which change a language, great exoduses, natural catastrophes, and so on are some examples, but these are in no way general, but accidental and particular. Synchronic facts are in no way imperative, but the synchronic truth is just as absolute and indisputable as the diachronic truth.

Therefore, synchronic linguistics is concerned with the logical and psychological relations that bind together co-existing terms and form a system in the minds of the speakers. Diachronic linguistics will study relations that bind together successive terms not perceived by the collective mind but substituted for each other without forming a system. The aim of a synchronic linguistics is to set up the fundamental principles of any idiosynchronic

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system, the constituents of any language state. The general properties of the sign then are an integral part of synchrony. Their signification is therefore of
1
import.

1 de Saussure, Ferdinand, Course in General Linguistics, eds., Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, Albert Riedlinger, trans. by Wade Baskin, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1959.

THEORIES OF INCEST

The first type of explanation discussed attempts to maintain the dual character of the prohibition, dividing it into two distinct phases. This explanation maintains it as a social reflection upon a natural phenomenon. That is to say, "the incest prohibition is taken to be a protective measure, shielding the species from the disastrous result of consanguineous marriages."¹ That all societies from archaic to primitive possessed such eugenic second sight is doubtful, and this justification did not appear until after the 16th century. Plutarch, on the other hand, proposed three hypotheses, all sociological in nature, none referring to eventual defects in the descendants.

In primitive tradition the consequences are commonly expected for those who break rules, and are in no way especially confined to reproduction. And Lévi-Strauss poses an interesting question which merits its full citation.

Furthermore it must be remembered that since the end of paleolithic era man has increasingly perfected, cultivated or domesticated species through the use of endogamous reproductive methods. If it is supposed that man was conscious of the results of such methods, and also that he had judged the matter rationally, what explanation could be given as to how in the field of human relationships, he reached conclusions running counter to those which his everyday experience in the animal and vegetable kingdoms continually served to prove, and upon which his very well-being depended? 2

1 Lévi-Strauss, C., The Elementary Structures of Kinship, op. cit., p. 13.

2 Ibid., p. 13-14.

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And he quotes Dahlberg whose studies conclude that "as far as heredity is concerned these inhibitions³ do not seem to be justified."

The second type of explanation is represented mainly by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis and the antinomy between the natural and social characteristics of the institution is eliminated and it is seen as more than the social projection or reflection of natural feelings. Ellis stresses that the repugnance for incest can be explained by the negative effect of daily habits upon erotic excitability, while Westermarck follows him but with a more strictly psychological explanation.

Lévi-Strauss' criticism is succinct.

To explain the theoretical universality of the rule by the universality of the sentiment or tendency is to open up a new problem, for in no conceivable way is this supposedly universal fact universal . . .⁴ Psychoanalysis . . . finds a universal phenomenon not in the repugnance towards incestuous relationships, but on the contrary in the pursuit of such relationships.⁵

The point Lévi-Strauss is really making in all this is that "there is no point in forbidding what would not⁶ happen if it were not forbidden." And in effect, with the prohibition of incest it can be seen that "society⁷ expressly forbids only that which society brings about."

3 Ibid., p. 15

4 Ibid., p. 17

5 Ibid., p. 17

6 Ibid., p. 18

7 Ibid., p. 18

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The third type of explanation sees incest as a strictly social institution in origin, with its expression in biological terms being accidental and of minor importance. This third type has two groups of advocates. The first include the ideas of McLenna, Spencer and Lubbock, and the second those of the great sociologist Emile Durkheim. The first derives the general law from special and often sporadic phenomena among primitive tribes, and this tendency is expressed most conscientiously and systematically by Durkheim, who can act as representative of this third type of explanation.

Durkheim's hypothesis then is based upon the universalization of facts observed in a limited group of societies; it makes the prohibition of incest a distant consequence of rules of exogamy; and thirdly these rules of exogamy are interpreted by reference to phenomena of a different order. In effect, they see the prohibition of incest as a survival from the past but yet this cannot account for its universality.

Posing the problem between man's biological existence and his social existence, Lévi-Strauss asserts that the prohibition of incest is a link between the two, and yet more than that,

. . . it is less a union than a transformation of transition. Before it, culture is still non-existent; with it, nature's sovereignty over man is ended. It sparks the formation of a new and more complex type of structure and is superimposed upon the similar structures of physical life through integration, just as these themselves are superimposed

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upon the simpler structures of animal life. It brings about and is in itself the advent of a new order. 8

That is to say,

. . . considered in its purely formal aspect the prohibition of incest is thus only the group's assertion that where relationships between sexes are concerned, a person cannot do just what he pleases. The positive aspect of the prohibition of incest is to initiate organization. 9

Therefore says Lévi-Strauss, considered as a prohibition, the incest taboo merely affirms, in a field vital to the group's survival, the pre-eminence of the social over the natural, the collective over the individual, organization over the arbitrary.

In his discussion of various types of societies as to their marital prescriptions, that is whether they are endogamous or exogamous, Lévi-Strauss asserts that

exogamous and endogamous categories have no objective existence as independent entities. Rather, they must be considered as view points, or different but solidary perspectives, on a system of fundamental relationships in which each term is defined by its position within the system. 10

What is at stake here is the strategic importance of the notions of exchange and reciprocity, for exogamy, like the prohibition of incest, is a rule of reciprocity, and they share the same fundamental characteristics. The prohibition of incest is instituted, so stands the thesis of the book, to "guarantee and establish, directly or indirectly, immediately or mediately, an exchange.

8 Ibid., p. 25

9 Ibid., p. 43

10 Ibid., p. 49

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The basic reference for the notion of exchange and reciprocity harks back to the proleptic contributions of Marcel Mauss in his classic Essai sur le Don. In this work, Mauss elucidated the primitive society's notion of reciprocity and exchange where the goods not only have a denotative but are pregnant with connotative value.

To quote Lévi-Strauss, who writes,

Goods are not only economic commodities, but vehicles and instruments for realities of another order, such as power, influence, sympathy, status and emotion; and the skilful game of exchange (in which there is very often no more real transfer than in a game of chess, in which the players do not give each other the pieces, they alternately move forward on the chessboard but merely seek to provoke a counter-move), consists in a complex totality of conscious or un- manoeuver in order to gain security and to guard oneself against risks brought about by alliances and by rivalries. 11

There is a subtle evolution however in Lévi-Strauss' thought on these questions because the transition from nature to culture is responsible for further oppositions. As the incest taboo is cultural, so is alliance and exchange and consciousness of something while at the natural level, which will be a major point later in his writings, and this is the structural unconscious which founds this transition.

Reciprocity therefore which both founds symbolic thought and society, according to Mauss, now assumes the more linguistic orientation of communication and of sign in the sense presented by de Saussure and Jakobson. However,

11 Ibid., p. 54

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in this transition from nature to culture, the primary
change occurs in the status of women¹² from stimulant to
sign and as such the establishment of the institution of
incest occurs.

12 Ibid., p. 63.

APPENDIX VI

DEFINITION OF A SOCIAL FACT

To better the explanation of this problem Lévi-Strauss refers to the field of genetics and its comparative contributions to the structural enterprise, and he discusses the analysis of genes and chromosomes by geneticists, and as he states,

...the Mendelian idea that the hereditary characteristics of individuals result in a perpetually renewed combination of elementary particles, does not merely provide a convenient method for statistical prediction. It provides a picture of reality. Likewise the 'distinctive features' used by the phonological linguist to explain the characteristics of a phenomenon, have an objective from the psychological, physiological and even physical points of view. ¹

Further he elaborates his perspective by a discussion of the algebraic method in mathematics, and contrasts it to the geneticists' method, with the mathematical mode being purely ideological,

and its legitimacy is to be weighed in terms of the result, rather than by how faithfully the real process, resulting in the situation studies, is reproduced in the mathematician's mind. ²

What is at stake here is the definition of a social fact.

¹ Lévi-Strauss, C., The Elementary Structures of Kinship, op. cit., p. 109

² Ibid., p. 109.

APPENDIX VII

"MAGIC AND RELIGION"

Structural Anthropology, being a collection of articles written for various purposes and ends, lends itself but with difficulty to an easy rendition of exposition. Here the focus is on the third section, which deals with "Magic and Religion".

Here Lévi-Strauss examines the complex structures of shamanism or the art of sorcery from an ethnological perspective

Lévi-Strauss makes reference to the psychoanalytic tenet of abreaction, where the patient intensely relives the initial situation from which his disturbance stems, before he ultimately overcomes it. In primitive societies the shaman is a professional abreactor in that he attempts to relive the experience of the patient for him. The purpose of course is to symbolically induce an abreaction in the patient, and in so doing, lead the way to an escape for the primary dilemma.

The problem here is the psychopathological explanation of a sociological phenomenon, or reduction of the shaman phenomenon to a psychologism. This problem Lévi-Strauss inherited from Marcel Mauss who searched for a sociological explanation of symbolism, of the symbolism of the shaman-patient dyad.¹

¹ Lévi-Strauss, Claude, Structural Anthropology, op. cit., p. 174.

APPENDIX VIII

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