FRAGMENTS IN SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

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Written between circa 1995 and 2005. Many of the papers were delivered at international academic conferences. I have noted both these and those that were also published.

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IS CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY 'WORSE' THAN ALL EARLIER SOCIETIES?

This may seem a rather absurd title for an essay, but for me it is a very real question. There really is an assumption in the minds of many people - and I think I am probably one of them - that contemporary society (meaning western and/or global society) is indeed in some profound sense 'worse' than all hitherto existing societies; in other words, that history represents a decline, a descent into worsening conditions of society - recently at least, or for as long as it seems necessary to believe it has in order to justify the claim that society is now at its lowest ebb (morally, politically, culturally, or in terms of threats to physical survival, or whatever).

This is perhaps most often an unconscious assumption in some thinking people`s minds, and therefore not analysed, not dissected nor coherently thought out. It may coexist with other ideas, equally unconscious perhaps, some of which diametrically contradict it in implication - ideas of progress, for example. Nevertheless, I think there is a sphere of contemporary 'objective spirit', or intellectual culture (by no means restricted to the academic realm), in which this assumption prevails, and it is a very important and interesting phenomenon.

Cornelius Castoriadis for example (and this example is an academic one, though I could easily have chosen one that was not), has written an essay called The Crisis of Culture and the State , in which he defines 'crisis' as

"……..a protracted period of wear and tear, of corrosion of the world of imaginary significations which animate society`s institutions and which hold society together. The existence of such a protracted corrosion points to an important deterioration of a society`s capacities for self-repair, to use a biological metaphor."(1)

And he clearly states that "there is a crisis of culture and that this crisis is but an aspect of the crisis of Western societies."(2)

This crisis is therefore general, and if the capacities for society`s self-repair are themselves in crisis, the implication must surely be that things can only get worse and worse, so that if we are not already in the gravest social condition yet experienced in human history, we must be approaching it. So that, although Castoriadis links the following, different definition of crisis with the evolution of a sickness, namely that "a crisis is a moment or a stage when the physician can say: either the patient will pass

away in the next few hours or he will begin to get better"(3), in fact this last notion must surely apply to the condition of contemporary society too.

One very significant area of thinking over more than a century, which has consciously assumed the view we are considering here, is Marxism. Marxism`s thesis of history is that the capitalist era sees human alienation and class exploitation taken to their deepest levels - in the senses of both 'hitherto' and 'possible', due most essentially to the complete separation of the producers from the means of production in Capitalism. From within Capitalism the resolution of its multiple, interconnected contradictions, its Aufhebung, will be a self-emancipation of society from all its major, historically accreted problems, in the form of Socialist or Communist society. This worldview inevitably orientates its adherents towards the belief that society is already in, or in the process of entering into, the 'worst' condition so far in human history. This belief does not however entail an ultimate pessimism, because of the simultaneous Marxist belief, already mentioned, that society might or inevitably will (depending on the strand of Marxism in question), transcend this state of degradation in the future. Far from entailing pessimism, the belief of Marxism in ever-worsening social conditions in the capitalist era is, as Walter Benjamin pointed out, testimony to a strength of conviction in a future state of salvation, in the same way that Jewish millenialism believed that "every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter."(4) As I wrote elsewhere:

".....Benjamin`s Marxian view of history (was) that of a progressive deepening of alienation within increasing technical proficiency. For Benjamin, Capitalism sees the dreaming collective fall into ever deeper sleep. His historical philosophy is analogous to the 'negative theology' of the Kabbalists, for whom history is a continual deepening of disaster; the Messianic vision of liberation is as intense as its opposite in reality. A dialectical transcendence, or *Aufhebung*, of reality is a revolutionary awakening. The era of catastrophe is a negative indication of the 'birth pangs' of a Messianic age, which for Benjamin as a Marxist would redeem the possibilities of technological modernity."(5)

Marxism has reasons to believe that the 'worse' present conditions are, the nearer is the Revolution, since these very conditions create and shape the forces of revolution; thus the deeper the pessimism is on one level the greater the optimism is on another. It is obvious however, that if the faith in Socialist Revolution wanes in strength or completely disappears, though the first part of the Marxian view of history remains in the mind, then the resulting viewpoint is a purely pessimistic idea that contemporary society is becoming, or has already become, the worst society that humanity has yet lived in. I think this is the genesis of the belief in some people`s thinking.

An aspect of Marxist theory that may remain in the mind even when belief in Revolution has disappeared, is the assumption that real social improvement must mean total transformation, and nothing less than that. Partial, 'piecemeal' improvements, are part of what has been derisively termed reformism or revisionism. But for certain exceptions

that are thought to assist the development of revolutionary consciousness and organization, reforms only represent tokenism, a tinkering at the surface of social problems. Those who undertake, advocate, or applaud reforms, are open to criticism for naivety, shallowness, or even a deep immorality, since reforms may serve to delude or distract the working class, and thus delay or prevent the arrival of real solutions - in the form of Revolution and Socialism. Reform may actually help prop up capitalism. Hence, where this mindset remains, even when belief in Revolution has waned, disillusioned pessimism is combined with cynicism, disdain, or loathing for any kind of attempt to improve society at all, since the only real social improvement, through Revolution, is impossible. Some of this mindset is to be found in parts of various 'post-Marxist' movements, from Feminism to the Green movement, as well as in much media commentary and comedy. It is a general cynicism about society, and an absolute scepticism about efforts at, or theories of, social improvement. It allows no basis on which to prefer one government to another, or to welcome any cultural or technological development with enthusiasm. This is not to say the viewpoint is irrational or wrong; it is to point out that this viewpoint is probably new to this era, by which I mean here the last one, two, or three decades. A most emblematic example of this attitude in academic thought, is in the writings of Baudrillard. Baudrillard is scornful about society, about the idea of trying to change it, and about ideologies and movements which imagine they are changing it.

In his essay mentioned above, Castoriadis sees in contemporary society the thwarting of a central aspiration for 'autonomy.' This is the aspiration for society to collectively create its culture, in the sense that a fully autonomous, self-determining community of equals decides upon it. But is this formulation not just another Marxist chimera? Are there not too many things for all people to reflect and decide upon; are not developments too unpredictable, multiple, and simultaneous; are not the results of artistic and scientific creation by their very natures new, strange, and unrecognizable to many people, especially at first?

This suggestion invites the disturbing conjecture that it is not merely the capitalist culture industry with its plethora of things of all kinds and quality, from soap operas to a new production of *Tristan und Isolde*, to chat shows, to a televised interview with the author of a new biography of Picasso, which makes such a notion (of collective self-determination of culture) meaningless. After a certain stage of history, for numerous reasons - technological, moral, intellectual, and demographic among others - it is inconceivable that culture could be an entity of the kind that Castoriadis speaks of in connection with the Athenian polis. That sort of active, positive, informed participation of all free citizens in the total output of contemporary tragedy, sculpture, and architecture, simply could not be maintained in any much larger, more differentiated society.

So how might we relate to contemporary culture in an engaged but also realistic way? The question connects with another point: the often criticized 'anything goes' aspect of

contemporary culture, in which nothing can be recognized as truly great nor anything discarded as rubbish. How can this ethos be distinguished from a genuine, widespread tolerance of the very different tastes of other people? The latter ethic, like that of religious and political tolerance, has surely a very high value.

A similar point about contemporary moral values is made by Paul Heelas in his essay *On Things not being Worse, and the Ethic of Humanity* (6). Heelas argues that far from falling into deeper amorality, the world`s publics are moving more and more towards embracing certain universal values: in particular those that recognize the rights of others to think and do what they believe and want to. Again, what seems to be an empty relativism from one point of view, is from another a healthy, undogmatic ethic well-learned from a grim history. Can a global society - whether saturated in Coca-Cola commercialism or not - in which this ethic is spreading, really be the most morally degraded society in human history?

I believe however, that there are areas in which it is possible to contend that contemporary global society has reached a state which is worse than any hitherto arrived at in human history. The threat to the survival of civilization, or even of human society at all, is greater than in any previous period due to developments in the technologies of warfare and mass destruction. The threats to the biosphere of the planet, due to technologies that overuse non-renewable and renewable resources and pollute the atmosphere, the seas, and the land; due to social lifestyles and existing forms and levels of consumption; and due to population expansion - factors which operate in exceedingly complex interactions with one another - are unprecedented in human history. And I believe it could be argued, though I do not have command of the facts to do so, that the proportions of humanity subjected to starvation, malnutrition, massacres, displacement and similar abject states of misery, is higher in contemporary global society than in any previous epoch - other than during the two World Wars perhaps. But, putting it simply, I do not think it is conceptually meaningful nor conforming to facts of any kind (elusive though all facts are to objective appraisal in social analysis), to assert that contemporary society is the worst society yet to exist ethically, culturally, or politically. Nor is it a perspective at all conducive to constructive and responsible attitutes or forms of participation in social improvement.

Though only a very few aspects of the issue in question have been considered in this short essay, and very briefly, I think I have been able through them to make the main point I wanted to make, which from my point of view is the important thing. It goes without saying that I have scarcely scraped the surface of an immensely complex matter.

(1) Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Crisis of Culture and the State*, in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy. Essays in Political Philosophy* , Oxford University Press (1991), p. 221

(2) *Ibid*., p. 219

(3) *Ibid*., p. 220

(4) Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosphy of History* , in *Illuminations*, Collins/Fontana (1973), p. 266

(5) Tim Cloudsley, *Facing Towards The Past: The Ideas Of Walter Benjamin And Andean Indian Cosmological Conceptions* , in Shadow , Vol. 4 No. 2 December 1987, p. 56

(6) Paul Heelas, *On Things not being Worse, and the Ethic of Humanity*, in *Detraditionalization* , Blackwell (1996)

SOME THOUGHTS INSPIRED BY READING JARED DIAMOND`S *GUNS, GERMS AND STEEL,* AND POSTSCRIPT

(Published in *The Linnean*, Vol.16 No.1, London, January 2000)

Jared Diamond`s book *Guns, Germs And Steel: A Short History Of Everybody For The Last 13,000 Years* , Vintage (1998), is an exemplary effort in the much needed field of inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary thinking about the embeddedness of human history within the world`s natural environment. Not only is it a thoroughly dialectical interpretation of the interactions bewtween nature and human society, but it grasps the complex interplay between two kinds of evolutionary development, each affected by and affecting the other. And though describing things in this way appears immediately to dichotomise reality into ´nature` and ´society` according to convention, actually the book transcends such dichotomisation in the living treatment of its subject.

A sociologist reading this book is bound to be reminded of sociology`s endemic inadequacy in this matter. Sociological theories of history have certainly recognized the importance of 'Nature', within which human history must perforce happen, but they have either drawn upon particular facts of natural environment to explain social phenomena in an arbitrary and ad hoc manner, or they have treated the issue abstractly. As an example of the first is Marx`s and later Marxists` granting of importance to particular geographical features which inclined certain societies toward large-scale irrigation schemes, as in ancient China, which in turn were the foundation for specific features of Chinese civilization and the Chinese state. As for the second, Marx and later Marxists, as well as other major sociological theorists, failed to look at the specifics of geographical, climatological, and ecological realities in the context of given societies. Dealing in generalities they failed to see that the interactions between particular societies and particular natural environments should be treated as scientific questions, not philosophical ones. They made the very mistakes concerning these matters that they rightly accused physical and biological scientists of making in respect of social systems: ignoring the specific, sui generis character of the different, basic or emergent, levels of reality being studied. Just as, for example, sociobiologists all too often know little about the fruits of 150 years of sociological reseach, sociologists study agricultural societies and their histories without studying the sort of material dealt with in Jared Diamond`s book. They do not seem to see that they must study empirical ecological material as ecologists . This is the same as the way natural scientists do not usually see that different methods, skills, and experience from their own are needed to arrive at explanations of empirical social phenomena. Both seem to think 'common sense' or a little mugging up in the `other' kind of discipline will do, which it won`t.

This unfortunate state of affairs is the result both of the characteristic dualisms of western thought (mind/matter, freedom/determination, and arts/sciences among others), and more specifically to the 'project' of the European Enlightenment and earlier, subsequently sustained in nineteenth and twentieth century developments in sociology, which was concerned precisely to emancipate humanity from nature. At the same time as the rigorous scientific study of nature was getting comprehensively under way, sociology was concerned to show that the study of human society must not be reduced to biology or physics; and this insistence was part of a commitment to the belief that human beings could shape their destiny, increase their freedom and happiness, through their conscious and collective actions based on the use of reason. This served to split the science of society off from the science of nature, at the very moment that both agreed human progress rested upon the scientific understanding of nature. But sociologists did not think they needed actually to study this science of nature that they recognized and regarded as so important, whilst natural scientists assumed they could imperialistically study society through their own methods, without further reflection upon the specific ontology of society. One chose ignorance of the other, the other ignorantly thought it could know the first without special effort.

So it is therefore, that in Diamond`s book we realize that we cannot understand the major movements in human history, from hunter-gathering to agriculture, the emergence of civilizations, or modern colonialism and imperialism without, for example, a close study of the opportunities and restrictions offered or imposed in prehistory in different parts of the world by the availability of animal and plant species suitable for domestication. This issue looms far larger either than one could have imagined before reading the book, or can find in theories of historical transformations in modes of production (in the Marxist sense of this term). The book can genuinely be defined as a work of ecological historical sociology , as it is self-evidently ecological and historical, but is also sociological in that all the major aspects or dimensions of human societies come in for some consideration - technology, economic relations, social structure, political institutions, culture and ideology - and are treated as interacting processes within dynamic, contradictory totalities. But unlike most sociology, the social totality is treated as one totality within wider totalities - those of nature, which are also dynamic and undergoing continuous transformations.

POSTSCRIPT WRITTEN IN REPLY TO DR. DARRELL POSEY`S COMMENTS ON MY ARTICLE SOME THOUGHTS INSPIRED BY READING JARED DIAMOND`S *GUNS, GERMS AND STEEL*

I do not recall Diamond ever speaking in his book of ´superior` cultures of the world, still less of cultures thus defined due to their large trade volumes and GNPs. On the contrary, I took the thrust of Diamond`s argument to be very much against such ethnocentric superficiality, as well as being against racism. Nor did it seem to me that he argued it was the fate of Old World peoples to domesticate animals and crops: rather the possibilities were there, unlike elsewhere, which were taken up only when and as circumstances made it necessary or preferable for people to do so. They were never propelled, as I understand Diamond`s argument, to do anything; opportunities arose unpredictably as consequences of prior developments in particular natural environments and in particular societies. For these unforeseen, and entirely non-genetically determined reasons, some Old World peoples developed in technological, economic, military and political terms - but not at all necessarily in cultural, moral, spiritual or aesthetic terms - more rapidly than elsewhere.

This part of Diamond`s argument does not seem to me unusual - rather it is a particular kind of ecological materialism which is not uncommon in archeology and anthropology.

His (to me) distinctive contribution lies in the way he grapples with the biological issues of plant and animal domestication at the biological level - many social scientists cannot do this, as I pointed out in my brief article, just as most natural or biological scientists do not grasp the ontological complexities of specifically human history, as I think Diamond does. I cannot see how an attempt to explain how it came to be that Old World societies conquered and subjugated New World societies - and this is not the same as saying it was predetermined and inevitable that they should do so - is in any way racist. There is no attempt in Diamond`s book to justify the monstrous cruelties of the European invasions or to relish in the catastrophes suffered by Amerindians after 1492. Having said this however, I must admit that I dislike the title Guns, Germs and Steel. It seems a sensationalist and brutal title which is not reflected in the moral tone of the book at all, and I suspect it was urged on the author by the publisher - but it is no job of mine to speculate on this. It certainly put me off the book until I started to read it, however.

I could not agree more with Darrell Posey`s insistence that present day Western-type industrial societies threaten the earth`s life-support systems, and that the big issue facing humanity now is the need to transform these kinds of environmentally destructive social systems into more sustainable ones that interact harmoniously with nature. And I wholly endorse his view that it is from traditional societies, such as those of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon region,that we must learn about sustainability and appropriate forms of human life within the natural environments of the earth. I have made these arguments myself in a number of writings. I simply do not see however, how the book in question can be said to justify globalisation and Western dominance at all.

In respect of two other points raised by Darrell Posey: first that concerning the Maori massacre of the Moriori discussed by Diamond. I am no expert on this issue, but it does seem to me that the question concerning explanations for the Moriori`s non-belief in and non-use of violence could very well embrace both environmental and spiritual explanations, in a typically 'dialectical' and interactive way. As for Pizarro`s "extraordinary deviousness, greed and savagery" in his conquest of the Incas, they do indeed defy imagination! But an attempt to explain how something so ghastly could have happened is not to 'forget' it, nor to give it a spurious scientific legitimation, any more than an attempt, say, to explain the genocidal policies of the Nazis need in any way involve concealment or justification of their crimes.

A REVIEW OF A. M. REA`S *FOLK MAMMALOGY OF THE NORTHERN PIMANS*

(Published in *Journal Of Arid Environments*, 2000)

This is an interesting and informative book, though unfortunately its formal structure, and at times its style, make it difficult to read; its readership will probably be limited to professional anthropologists, or even to ethnobiologists. But in spite of the uncomfortable organization of its material - rather bitty, and at the same time frequently laboured, the book is fascinating. Its outer framework is the author`s perspective on the relationship between nature and different societies:

"Ethnobiology is the synthetic study of the interface between biology and anthropology. It captures something of each of these disciplines, rescuing perhaps the most important aspects of human/biota relationships that often fall between the cracks when biology and anthropology are considered by themselves. Ethnobiology asks questions about how human cultures relate to their biological world. The questions are endless, the focus variable." (p. xix)

Rea argues (perhaps a little unconvincingly, considering that the rich Piman worldview is essentially mythical), that the Northern Piman Indians of the Sonoran Desert and adjacent areas categorized, and still categorize, the living world in ways that are quite compatible with a Western, scientific, evolutionary viewpoint:

".....there may be an implicit arrogance on the part of outside observers that somehow folk science, natural history, or knowledge is inferior to formal science done by Westerners, as if the principles of cause and effect, abstraction, deduction, and so forth were unique to the minds of the academically trained..... the term folk indicates that the knowledge is accumulated field information held by (at least some) members of a tribal or other cultural group and that it is usually transmitted orally rather than quantified or codified in written form. It is not qualitatively different from so-called Western science." (p.xix-xx)

In fact however, one could argue that it is not arrogance to note the differences between the *Weltanschauung* of Piman society on the one hand and Western society on the other. Nevertheless, the book makes it strikingly clear that Pimans divide up the animal world into groups that are often the same as those defined by Western biology: birds and fish, for example.

The book delves into the mystical shamanistic realm in which individual hunters gained strength and knowledge for hunting Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Pronghorn, Desert

Bighorn, and Collared Peccary. The smoking of peyote (pihol in Piman) would at times be involved in this. Sometimes:

"the hunter might run a deer up slope and take it down with a flying tackle..... remember that the Pima hunter on a subsistence diet was relatively tall and lanky, and men were once noted for their endurance in running many miles across the desert.)" (p. 61)

The wives of hunters must not have been pregnant when the men hunted. If they were, misfortune might befall the hunter, or worse, an animal killed during this sacred time might injure the hunter`s unborn child:

"Hunting was private, but the consequences were not." (p. 60)

Bats were and are well known to the Pimans, as the latter harvest Velvet Mesquite pods, which in storage become infested with Bruchid beetles. The latter are in turn feasted on by Pallid Bats (*nanakmel* in Piman).

The Piman taxonomic position for bats is enigmatic. One Piman whom Rea knew well (he dislikes the term 'informant'), said bats should be included in the most inclusive term for 'animal', but wondered whether they metamorphose from something else, as butterflies do. He thought that 'old' Pima would categorize bats as 'birds'. Later he suggested that bats fly, so they are partly 'bird', but as they have no feathers they are also partly 'animal': there is no specific category for 'mammal' in Piman.

Regardless of its anomolous classification, the bat is accorded a definite place in Piman culture. There is a shrine in a certain cave where cane tube cigarettes were left in former times as votive offerings, and there is a song about it which is still well known, and begins:

> "The bat house is singing
> Really beginning to sing....." (p. 129)

The author presents the general nature of his investigation in these terms:

""What does bear mean to a people?" The ethnobiologist would find that it means far more than a potentially dangerous, large, omniverous carnivore. The full cultural meaning takes us into the realm of mythology, symbolism, poetry, song, sickness, healing,and the concept of a being that somehow spans the gap between humans and wild beings.' (p. xx)

And so, another of Rea`s Piman friends explained that if the mythical 'Great White Bat' comes to a boy in his dreams, he will become a transvestite and start cooking, washing

dishes, and making tortillas. People sometimes receive Bat Dance Songs in their dreams, which can help a man grieving over the death of his wife, or help him run faster across the desert. One Bat Dance Song starts:

> "The evening looked red and I came out.
> Into all the houses I went
> And my wings were making a noise
> As I fly around in the house." (p.130)

The introduction of Old World ungulates degraded the environment for Pimans who depended on desert streams for irrigation agriculture. Upland watersheds in the arid and semi-arid Southwest were seriously damaged by overgrazing, beaver trapping, the cutting of wood for mining activities, inappropriate agricultural activities, and road building along the sides of streams. Rivers in the desert lowlands became raging, muddy torrents during storms and bone dry, sandy beds the rest of the year. The forced abandonment of traditional fire drives for harvesting rodents, due to pressure from Hispanic and later Anglo settlers, caused grasslands and marshes to suffer from shrub invasion. Generally, overstocking of cattle and horses has caused erosion, gullying, and the denudation of desert soils. The abandonment of a formerly vigorous physical life of hunting, fishing, gathering wild foods, and farming, and the dietary changes associated with these changes, have had serious deleterious effects on the health of the Pimans.

All in all, this is an informative book, well contextualized within a meaningful, coherent framework. However, as already said, its formalized academic presentation diminishes its value for me, though not perhaps for a rather small circle of specialists who would no doubt expect it.

NATURE, AND THE FORMATION OF MYTH IN THE COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL MIND

Nature 'in itself' is usually understood as unconscious being; where humanity is thought of as part of nature, the word is meant in a different way. In the one sense nature is Other to humanity; in the other, nature is the totality of everything there is. Myths form in the

collective mind as society(ies) change and develop; the role of the individual creative mind in this is evident but imprecisely understood, both throughout prehistory and history, and in the present.

Mythical views of nature may place humanity in phase with nature, or out of phase with it. Myths representing sustainability in the interaction between humanity and nature (in the first sense) can be found in the past and in the present; they have their counterparts in intuitive sensibilities and ideas. Myths of nature, and how they are shaped in the collective mind, are processes intimately linked with the real processes of society`s shaping of nature.

"THE FOUR GRACES" FROM BREMEN: THE INNOCENT EYE

(Published in *Lo Straniero*, Naples, Issue No. 29, 1999)

A Performance given on the 27th August at the IMISE Meeting in Naples, Italy, devised especially for the Anglican Church on the Via Pasquale.

This was a distressing archetypal drama of the soul; the soul is lost and unable to find peace or calm; there is no harmony but the distress is gentle, feminine, not frantic; we move through Indonesian, Buddhist, Russian Christian, modern rock, and computer music in turn, as the scrolls of time are unravelled stealthily by two weird Norn-like figures standing still with disturbing faces that sink you into your timeless unconscious. Restless and unpleasant is the soul`s state, yet not really sunk into evil, nor into hell; behind the roaming, unhappy soul sits the Empress, the Goddess, Turandot-like in her iciness that presides over everything.

ON ART

An extraordinary thing about ´great` or ´significant` art is that it seems to leap out from the time and context of its creation, even though we can analyse its forms, contents, styles, and genres according to the historical and cultural moments of its creation. This paradox has been argued over again and again, from myriad points of view, and I do not intend to repeat those arguments in any systematic fashion. But it remains an astonishing fact to me that Tu Fu, Mozart, certain Mayan stelae, or Leonardo Da Vinci are universal in their capacity to communicate among humanity, even though each is also clearly the product of its specific social moment.

This little essay is a self-consciously meandering work, not at all an attempt at a polished coherent thesis. I am writing this because I want to explore my own baffled and baffling perplexity about art, not because I begin with a preconceived argument which I can present, without paradox or contradiction, in accordance with any plan. for me it begins under the piano in my childhood home, playing with toys on a red Turkish carpet, and hearing Beethoven`s Egmont Overture, at the age of about five or six. My heart leapt up, I felt transported, the world was suddenly luminous, though of course I could not have put any words to the experience at the time. But I do remember those ascending piccolo arpeggios at its end, very, very well.

Later, when about eight years old, I was unwell, and had to be left at home when all the rest of my family went to the wedding of a very favourite aunt. I was despondent, but my father put a radio by my bed, and looked in the Radio Times, where he found I would be able to hear Schubert`s Ninth Symphony whilst I was alone. I did hear it; and was plunged into a dimension of human life I have never forsaken since, a realm of grandeur, solemnity, beauty and sadness so noble and marvellous that I seem to have been chasing it like a demented hound after a sacred hare all my subsequent life. This is the strange reality I want to drift into in this short essay.

Some years after hearing Schubert`s Ninth Symphony, now at the age of sixteen years, I hitchhiked to Venice alone without my parents` permission. I slept in my sleeping bag in the basement of a house in which a schoolfriend of mine was staying with a family that was rather bewildered at my appearance. One morning I awoke, with sunlight streaming into my dusty, dirty, concrete dungeon, quite alone but not lonely, to hear from my sleeping bag hard upon the stone some music which was inconceivably beautiful, tragic, poignant, and magical. I did not know what it was, but I resolved to find out when I

could. A long time later I recognized the music as Schubert`s Unfinished Symphony. It must have been playing on the radio or record player of a neighbour to the Venetian family whose basement I was sleeping in.

Nietzsche seemed sometimes to think that the function of great art was to allow us to escape from reality, to fly from the world, or transcend it; at other times to think its function was to allow us to face life, to affirm it in the face of tragedy and chaos, to say "yea" in spite of everything. He saw another crucial mystery of art: it is both of this world, absolutely, yet also transcends it, utterly. Hamlet and Macbeth are both everyday humanity, and also quintessential expressions or revelations of something quite beyond ordinary banal experience. How can this be?

ART AND BIOGRAPHY

What a great artist is thinking and feeling whilst creating an extraordinary work of art, is of immense interest although it cannot affect our attitude to the work of art itself in any direct way. Being aware that Mozart wrote his uncompleted Requiem during the last weeks of his life, makes us eager to know how he felt and thought at that time, and whether he knew he was going to die so soon. Such knowledge, if it is possible, influences the flesh, blood, and bones of our response to that amazing, inconceivably great music, to its intensity, love, and 'organized chaos', and to its verbally inexpressible beauty. But of itself, it does not affect our reactions in any precisely definable way - or rather, it only elaborates upon reactions that we already have.

One cannot help wanting to know the mind and psyche of anyone who has created such phenomenal beauty. And the more enigmatic the results of the enquiry become, the more we realise we can never fully understand Mozart(1), or link precisely the person to the music; and so the more obsessive we become in the quest to understand things that we know are ultimately unknowable. It is as if we stare into an abyss in amazement, realizing that all our efforts in understanding have only led us back to our own inadequate foundations for such understanding.

But this incomprehension is also an extraordinary exhilaration. The sense of standing beyond our ability to grasp the truth, which an astro-physicist must feel when faced with the mathematical realities of the cosmos(2), is perhaps comparable to the amazement we experience in the face of Mozart`s divine music.

(1) See Wolfgang Hildesheimer, *Mozart*, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. (1985), pp. 6 & 12: "We will not get close to Mozart. Nevertheless, the urgent, ever-insistent wish to approach him, a recapitulation of all the verified facts, combined with a systematic involvement with the work itself, will enable us to discern the definitive limits of our imagination..... but also the unbridgeable distance between Mozart`s inner life and our inadequate conception of its nature and dimensions..... His autobiographical statements clarify only the fact that he is withdrawing from us, hiding behind his music, and the music, too, in its deepest meaning, is inaccessible to us, allowing no understanding outside music itself."

(2) Cf. Albert Einstein`s remark to the effect that "Mozart`s music was so pure that it seemed to have been everpresent in the universe, waiting to be discovered by the master." Given in Banesh Hoffmann*, Einstein*, Paladin (1975), p. 252

POETRY WRITTEN TO MUSIC

As a poet I find the stimulus for poetry comes from all kinds of experience, internal and external, conscious and unconscious - but other poetry, as well as art and music, are also very important. Music in particular, of all kinds, genres, styles, and periods, exercises an extremely strong power over me. A large number of my poems emerge directly from my experience of music in the Western Classical-Romantic-Modern traditions.

Music is perhaps the freest of all the artistic media to fly in fantasy, to imaginatively explore the enigmatic, ambiguous, and metamorphosing experiences of the soul. The ´language` of music has an even less fixed reference to ´reality` than those of the other arts, and is able to become, therefore, a reality in its own autonomous right. One aspect of poetry has always been its pure musicality, its spiritual and sensuous effect on the mind and feelings as pure sound, as well as through the dimensions of meaning, metaphor, image, and symbolic association. There is truth in the idea that poetry and music were inextricably mingled in ´primitive` and ´early` human societies, only gradually crystallizing out from magical ritual as distinct media. The wish to recreate this primordial unity in a Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* (´total work of art`), is to my mind one of the most exciting ideas to emerge in the nineteenth century.

Poetry that responds to music is therefore an exploration in words of another kind of exploration of the soul. As musical sound itself, it need not try to imitate pure music, but in its resonations between meaning, sound, and imagistic association, it allows the variability of possible subjective reactions to music to be expressed. I have sometimes written several different poems, separated in time, to the same piece of music which demonstrates how the music can be an ´infinite mirror` to even one person`s experience. No doubt the poetry is also able to be like this, eliciting very different responses in different readers.

WHAT AND WHERE IS POETRY FOR ME NOW?

(Published in *Lo Straniero*, Issue No.29, Naples 1999)

I am not drawn to any exclusive or totalising theory or attitude towards poetry, though I sometimes like to think of poetry as a vehicle for contemporary shamanistic visions - for creative-ecstatic trances and imaginative flights into the spirit-world. The shaman-poet in his or her celestial flights and subterranean borings explores both the wondrous and the awesome, the beautiful and the terrifying; confronts spirits, demons, heroes and heroines, and myths. He or she explores the essences beneath appearances in the universe and in experience, whether personal, social, or cosmic.

The idea of poetry ´speaking for` or ´to` any particular group of people has become for me very problematical today. The older identifications - with for example, the working class or the nation - are increasingly improbable and unconvincing, assuming as they do degrees of homogeneity that violate contemporary senses of diversity and pluralism. Yet the new ´cultural identity politics` of ethnicity, gender, age, and sexuality, are to me even more stereotyping and banally simplifying - especially in respect of poetry, which seems destined more and more to enter into the idiosyncratic, the ambiguous, the strange, the indefinable, the enigmatic, and all that is contrary to or flies in the face of expectation.

So poetry has to be content to speak to particular individuals, dotted around in the most unexpected quarters, in a distribution that pays no respect to demarcations based on class, sex, nationality, ethnicity, age, ideology, culture, occupation, or geographical region. And so, in a peculiar and new way, poetry can perhaps become universal, a paradoxical possession of all humanity.

In traditional societies, like those of Amazonian natives or Siberian tribes, the shaman penetrates the feminine, erotic supernatural, as the sun is thought to fertilize the earth with its rays of light. As for the Romantic and Surrealist movements of the modern European world, dreaming is associated with erotic passion and life-bringing miracle, whilst the future well-being of the human community - the tribal group or the whole of humanity, living within Nature - is prophecied about or hoped for, as utopian dream or rebirth. So poetry is love - erotic, emotional, spiritual, humanitarian, and Gaian.

Great poets, from Sappho and Aeschylus to Dante and Shelley, from Lorca and Neruda to Dylan Thomas, fly with plumes of fire into the highest reaches of love and hope for humanity, but also confront our most dreadful and hellish truths.

FLAME

Flame
burning
in the human heart
Shaman
summons
demons of truth
Art
brings fire
from the netherworld
Love
finds angels
in celestial spheres
Flame
of the heart
finds love on fire
Beauty
is art
in the music of spheres
Truth
is round
as the earth`s circumference
Love
as a spirit
is the innerworld flame

(Tim Cloudsley, in **Poems**, Dionysia Press (1998), p. 75)

Shamanistic sessions in a traditional ethnic group such as that of the Yaminahua in the rainforest of Eastern Peru are a kind of primordial creative act. They involve magical incantation, which is the essence of poetry; music, in the chanting; and the visionary experiences induced by the hallucinogenic vine, Ayahuasca. The core of Yaminahua culture is contained in these shamanistic sessions, as well as the core of their creativity , the core of their modes of interpreting the world, and the essence of their visionary answering to the world. This mode of consciousness can be thought of as following through into the multitude of different civilizations, such that in more complex structures

of society, the essence of shamanistic creativity can be seen as splintering into a differentiation of roles: such as those of the priest, the scientist, the philosopher, and the various kinds of artist.

As both a poet and a sociologist, the interpretation of poetry within society is part of my interest. The opening sentence of this essay is partly autobiographical, because for a long time I did see myself as an adherent of a comprehensive theory of existence and of the world. For a long time I thought of myself as a Marxist, though I do not any longer. I think Marx is one interesting thinker among many, and in some ways a particularly important one, because he was I think the only one who tried to develop a really comprehensive theory of history and society, however flawed it may be. His remains the only decent crack at it, and the tradition of Sociology has really all been about either criticising or endorsing what Marx had to say. Sociology has been described as a debate with the ghost of Karl Marx, which is a way of putting this in a nutshell. As a poet, I did for a long time see the role of the poet in society, and what poetry was, in terms of a kind of Marxism. I was never a very good Marxist, from the point of view of other Marxists; I was always far too much of a ´bourgois individualist` as far as they were concerned. I always felt that Marxism was inadequate in the spheres of human imagination, emotion, the role of myth in society and so on and so forth, and that it was never comfortable with things that cannot easily be grasped in a rational, intellectual framework: love, death, and those archetypal experiences without which poetry is a very dry, intellectual kind of thing. Thus for a long time, much of my theoretical work, my writing in the theoretical areas, was - as opposed to my poetry - about how to try to integrate understandings of archetypical experience, emotion, feeling, creativity, and so forth, into a Marxist framework. So this issue involves for me an autobiographical element, as I now no longer find any comprehensive theory either possible or desirable.

All the time now I find new ´general theories` about poetry`s role in society that come up, quite unsatisfactory - indeed more unsatisfactory than that theory which I used to endorse, namely Marxism. But I do sometimes like to think of poetry as a kind of shamanistic activity, a creative-ecstatic activity, in which the poet in his or her celestial flights and subterranean borings, explores both the wondrous and the awesome, the beautiful and the terrifying, and finds spirits, demons, heroes and heroines, and myths; as has already been said, this is what a shaman does. He or she does indeed explore essences beneath appearances.

Concerning the question of whether the poet can meaningfully be said to be speaking to ´the nation`: apart from my general dislike of Nationalism, I find even the more innocent versions of it (sometimes termed neo-nationalisms) worrying. For example, living as I do in Scotland, and not regarding myself as English rather than Scottish, nor Scottish rather than English (since by birth I am a half of each), I find myself in a position of some discomfort vis-a-vis Scottish Nationalism. I find myself just not wanting to be fitted into one or another definition; I don`t like being forced into being either English or Scottish.

Of course I care about Scotland; I care about Britain, I care about Europe, and I care about the world, but when it comes to the identification crises that certain 'small' nations like Scotland seem to be going through at the moment, concerning ´what it means to be a Scot` in the area of literature, I feel that talk about which poetry is relevant to Scottish politics is an intrusion into the sphere of poetry. As a dominating tendency I feel it can be obstructive, however much I may sympathise with the aspirations and concern for identity among Scots, as for the Quebecois, in terms of the political dimensions of a struggle for identity, national self-determination, and democracy. A great deal of literary discussion in literary publications in Scotland for example, takes it as self-evident that poetry is a vehicle for the enlargement of self-identity, or the pursuit of a national identity claim. I find this problematic, firstly due to the sheer volume of literary debate that these concerns take up , clearing the deck for other kinds of discussion, but also because I feel poetry is an exploration of something where you do not know where it`s going in advance, like a shamanistic vision, where the shaman cannot know where he or she is going to go, or what he or she is going to experience when entering into a flight, a voyage, or an epic psychological vision. If it is an exploration of essences behind appearances, then to start off knowing what it is you are going to say, is intrinsically restricting. If you start off wishing to convey a specified political concern, which is necessarily intellectually formulated, I find the problems which I always found with Marxism reappear. Political-philosophical statements are on the whole better made in prose, in manifestos, or in political science, than in poetry.

With respect to the idea of poetry speaking to and for ´the working class`: when Socialism was a real kind of force, when it was something that still gripped, and was believed in, by large numbers of people in various countries, it was still the case that intellectuals and writers of poetry for the most part could not know whether the working classes of their particular countries were going to find anything useful in their poetry. When one looks back on it, it seems really very clear that a writer does not actually choose his or her audience: he or she may begin by wanting to write for the working class, whatever that is meant to mean, but in a complex modern society there is no way he or she can determine who he or she will be read or heard by at all. There are too many processes and stages of mediation going on between the writing down of something on a piece of paper and it ever getting to the eyes or ears of another person - institutions of editorship, the patterns of ownership of publications, the organization of audiences and audience tastes etc. - for the author to be in any real control at all.

Thus writing involves an unpredictability regarding who, if anybody, will read or hear one`s poetry, whilst the fact that writing itself is a kind of open-ended exploration, that it does not go where one may be expecting or intending it to go - it surprises you yourself where it gets to very often - for these reasons claims concerning who one`s poetry is ´for`, have gradually lost any credence at all for me. However, I came to this position only to be confronted by a new wave of cultural identity politics`, with yet another set of preconceived identifications!

ROMANTIC EXILES

(Published in The Millenium Anthology, Vol.2, (Ed.) J. Gonzalez-Marina, Fern Publications, Northants. 2002)

Exiles hate civilization at the same time as making it. So many of the Old Testament prophets, and the great poets, detested the civilizations of which they were products, while they trumpeted the visionary dreams of their fantastic imaginations. E.P. Thompson re-dreamed the wonderful and powerful visions of William Blake and William Morris, as part of his projecting into Britain`s Industrial Revolution great feelings and hopes of heroic striving, and very effectively he did it. But, if one looks at it with a sceptical eye, this involved a large element of fantasy; the idealism that Edward Thompson found in the 'Liberty Tree' of early nineteenth century English popular history, was in considerable measure the product of his own imagination as he stomped about in heroic quixotic vein in 1950s Britain. I revere him, but I wonder now how much he knew the world in which he lived; thank God perhaps, as otherwise he might have been absorbed into the boredom of those rather austere and dreary times. But his dreams were more poetry than history, except in the sense that all 'history' is a partial projection of an author`s mind into an inchoate mass of past material.

I often feel I touch great truths in the world of Shelley`s poetry, within the context of Britain`s first Industrial Revolution. I still believe that in Shelley you can find great jewels of still relevant wisdom, as also in Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, or Morris. I agree with Thompson that it is not narrowly nationalistic to be obsessed with these characters: they are absolutely untypically British. They are simply amazing: some of the best minds ever produced on this 'desolate isle' as Byron described Britain. They addressed certain realities of modern life, under conditions of industrial society, which had appeared for the first time in Britain, but which reappeared successively in more and more of the world thereafter. The depth, poignancy, and intensity of their experience, like that of someone falling in love for the first time, should never be pushed aside. This was a world of hellish pain, most amazing heroism, and absolute, extreme beauty.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AND WALTER BENJAMIN

Baudelaire is obviously the major figure for Walter Benjamin, with whom Benjamin seems to have felt a particularly strong personal affinity, as well as finding him the source for some of his most fascinating musings about the commodity, sexuality, love, and modern bourgeois society. Both of them were isolated, lonely men, possessed of extreme and melancholy sensitivities, yet both in a curious way had immense, almost Herculean courage, at the same time as a slightly morbid self-pity and inability to extricate themselves from self-created misery. Both were also radically honest, prepared to bare open their weaknesses and inadequacies, as well as their inner conflicts, which self-understandings offered much of the material for their analyses and explorations of existence, on the levels of both self and society.

Baudelaire thought of himself as damned, and died at the age of forty-six of syphilis, contracted in an early contact with a prostitute. Benjamin, who called Baudelaire 'a spy in the bourgeois camp', obviously thought he was one too, and shot himself at the age of forty-eight on the French-Spanish border where he had been detained in his flight from the Nazis. (Hannah Arendt wrote a most beautiful, as well as erudite, essay on Benjamin, as an Introduction to *Illuminations*, Collins/Fontana (1973)).

Baudelaire became syphilitic due to his 'weakness for loose women', as he put it in his own epitaph, whilst Benjamin was fleeing from persecution for being a Jew. Whether the curse was due to nature or to individual psychology was obviously less important to Benjamin than their common predicament as poets or writers both lost in, but also fascinated with, 'the crowd'. Exiles they were both, yet both were entranced by the glitter and excitement, as well as being enraged by the horrors, of Parisian bourgeois society. Both felt the seductive allure of the prostitute, as well as anger at the savagery of social injustice, and could not reconcile the two. Baudelaire the bohemian, suffered from a kind of secularised Catholic religious and moral guilt, whilst Benjamin, the supposed Marxist Communist, recreated a sort of non-religious Jewish eschatology for himself, in which he could suffer within a meaningful symbolic framework. Both of them enjoyed, as well as hurt from, their 'loss of a halo'(1) in the anomic, alienated world of modern capitalism, where death comes rushing at you from all directions; and both, while burning with the cynical irony deserved of by modern life, had the most intense yearning for eternal beauty, of the kind believed in in traditions now lost in the mists of time.

(1) This is Baudelaire`s Loss Of A Halo (in Twenty Prose Poems, Jonathan Cape (1968), p. 54):

"'What! you here, my dear fellow? You, in an evil place? You, the drinker of quintessences, the eater of ambrosia! To be sure, I am surprised at you.'

'My dear friend, you know my terror of horses and carriages. Not long ago, as I was crossing the boulevarde in great haste, and as I was hopping about in the mud, through this shifting chaos where death arrives at a gallop from every direction, my halo slipped from my head during a sudden movement and fell into the mire on the macadam road. I didn`t have the courage to pick it up. I thought it less disagreeable to lose my insignia than to have my bones broken. And besides, I said to myself, no misfortune is without its consolations. From now on I shall be able to walk about incognito, commit low actions, abandon myself to debauchery like ordinary mortals. And so here I am, a man just like yourself, as you can see!'

'You should at least have a notice put up about your halo, or ask the commissioner to retrieve it.'

'My goodness, no. I am quite happy as I am. You alone have recognized me. Besides, dignity bores me. Also it gives me pleasure to think that some bad poet may pick it up and impudently place it on his head. What a joy, to give happiness to a man! And, what`s more, to give happiness to a man who`ll make me laugh. Think of X, or of Z! What a joke that would be!'"

GOD`S PLAYGROUND: SPOILING CANNIBALS` FUN(1)

It cannot help but strike the visitor to Poland how easy-going and relaxed the Poles in general are. After such a diabolical history it seems particularly surprising, but of course one explanation is that people have learnt to make the best of life as it comes and not to fret and strive against the inevitable and the impossible. And yet, as has often been observed, it is in Poland over many centuries that crucial battles of the human soul have been fought; in this gruesome century - the Twentieth - it was over the fate of Poland, in

the light of its newly gained national freedom, that the Second World War began, and it was Poland that made itself the weak link in the chain of Soviet-style Communism, and therefore helped and allowed the collapse of that entire system. Above all perhaps, the Polish people (including the Polish Jews), put up massively courageous resistance, at every turn, against Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during the Second World War, in spite of the monstrous destruction of their country, the mass murder and inconceivable suffering of their people - including again particularly of course, the Polish Jews.

But this is all less paradoxical when one considers how the very essence of Solidarity, perhaps the most unified political movement of a nation`s popular majority ever to appear in Europe - the very epitome of a working class struggle supported by an intelligentsia with a conscience, was its combination of calm patience and obstinate resilience. Its genius - and that of its leader Lech Walesa - lay in its reserve, its restraint, in only infrequently flexing its muscles and then only very modestly, a strategy which terrified the 'cannibals' of the Polish Communist Party without provoking or justifying a Soviet invasion. If ever the philosophy of 'passive resistance', as espoused by people like Ghandi or Shelley(2), was systematically applied and shown to succeed, it was in Poland in the 1980s.

(1) This title bears reference to Norman Davies` God`s Playground: A History of Poland , Oxford University Press (1981), and Jerzy Ficowski`s poem How to Spoil Cannibals` Fun , (in 77 Translations by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh, University of Silesia (1995)):

> For a long time I`ve been
> wondering how to spoil
> cannibals` fun
>
> wait until they
> bake themselves
> beneath the golden lid of the sun
> but the cooking would just
> toughen them up
>
> not let them
> eat you
> the program holds no food for thought
> and is not entirely realistic
> when
> they`ve got you on

the tip of their tongues

eat them
how tasteless

then perhaps
turn them off people
how rude

so they sit
in their comfortable jungles
bursting with
humanity

(2) Let me quote from Shelley`s poem, The Mask Of Anarchy , in Thomas Hutchison (Ed.), Poetical Works , Oxford (1970), pp. 340-344:

Then she lay down in the street,
Right before the horses` feet,
Expecting, with a patient eye,
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.....

And the prostrate multitude
Looked - and ankle-deep in blood,
Hope, that maiden most serene,
Was walking with a quiet mien:

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,
Lay dead earth upon the earth;
The Horse of Death tameless as wind
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind
To dust the murderers thronged behind.

A rushing light of clouds and splendour,
A sense awakening and yet tender
Was heard and felt - and at its close
These words of joy and fear arose

As if their own indignant Earth
Which gave the sons of England birth
Had felt their blood upon her brow,
And shuddering with a mother`s throe

Had turned every drop of blood
By which her face had been bedewed
To an accent unwithstood,-
As if her heart had cried aloud.....:

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you -
Ye are many - they are few.....

And at length when ye complain
With a murmur weak and vain
'Tis to see the Tyrant`s crew
Ride over your wives and you -
Blood is on the grass like dew.

'Then it is to feel revenge
Fiercely thirsting to exchange
Blood for blood - and wrong for wrong -
Do not thus when ye are strong.....

`This is Slavery - savage men,
Or wild beasts within a den
Would endure not as ye do -
But such ills they never knew.....'

'Let a great Assembly be
Of the fearless and the free
On some spot of English ground
Where the plains stretch wide around.

'Let the blue sky overhead,
The green earth on which ye tread,
All that must eternal be
Witness the solemnity.....

'Let a vast assembly be,
And with great solemnity
Declare with measured words that ye
Are, as God has made ye, free -

'Be your strong and simple words
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,
And wide as targes let them be,
With their shade to cover ye.

'Let the tyrants pour around
With a quick and startling sound,
Like the loosening of a sea,
Troops of armed emblazonry.....

'Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest close and mute,
With folded arms and looks which are
Weapons of unvanquished war,.....

'On those who first should violate
Such sacred heralds in their state
Rest the blood that must ensue,
And it will not rest on you.

'And if then the tyrants dare
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,-
What they like, that let them do.

'With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away.....

'And these words shall then become
Like Oppression`s thundered doom
Ringing through each heart and brain,
Heard again - again - again-

`Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number -
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you -
Ye are many - they are few.'

MARXISM AND THE 'INTELLECTUAL' IN EAST AND WEST

(Paper for the 4th International Philosophical Symposium "A Dialogue Between Civilizations: East-West" at the Peoples´ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, November 1999. Published in *Lo Straniero*, Issue No.30, Naples, 1999.)

Czeslaw Milosz, in his book *The Captive Mind*, (Secker and Warburg (1953)), considered the predicament of the 'intellectual' in Stalinist Poland, torn in agony between the wish to throw himself into Dialectical Materialism and feel some harmony between himself and the world; and his guilt, and inability to forget his traditions, his childhood religion, his national literature. On the one hand the opportunity to embrace an ideology that promised to unite the peasant cutting his hay, the student poring over formal logic, and the mechanic working in an automobile factory, as had religion centuries before; on the other a duty to retain an independent perspective, that of the unique thinker, true to his or her personal vision. On the one hand a strong wish of the poet or intellectual to find his or her place in the totalitarian regime, engaged in an activity integrally connected, so it would seem, with the whole of society`s processes; on the other hand the 'natural' tendency of the poet to fly free, as a wild visionary unshackled by any preconceptions or binding intellectual obligations.

On the one hand a role for the intellectual that transcends the restricted conditions of an isolated individual; on the other hand an experience of the writer (though Milosz does not put it in this way himself) that is akin to that of the shaman in primitive or traditional societies, who does not know before he or she embarks on any particular flight into the celestial heights or descent into the subterranean depths, which spirits, demons, heroes, or cosmic forces he or she will meet, and with what consequences, and whose destiny it is to remain independent of any kind of centralizing power that would pre-define or prescribe such explorations.

How different the predicament I experienced for most of my life as an 'intellectual'! To me it was primarily a question of trying to unite, and authentically reconcile, the requirement of Marxism that a writer or artist help in the process of resisting capitalist alienation and exploitation, of chipping away at reification and mystification, with the injunction not in any way to forsake the natural destiny of the poet to explore his or her own soul and rebel against all stultifying conformity. If for Milosz, the great example was Witkiewicz, the Polish novelist of the 1930s who refused to swallow Murti-Bing, the allegory of Soviet Dialectical Materialism in his novel Insatiability (1932), for me it was Andre Breton, who with Trotsky in 1938 wrote a Manifesto For An Independent

Revolutionary Art, that betrayed neither revolution nor visionary creativity. In this manifesto, art and poetry are seen as activities whose creative processes burst out from the oppressed unconscious of the individual mind, much as the liberation of the oppressed masses breaks beyond the oppressive institutions of bourgeois capitalist society. This could not have been further from the prescriptions of Zhdanovist Stalinism.

But which example is more significant now, in 1999? The first, though heroic, seems too purely a negative rejection of a lie; the second, though idealistic, seems now almost irrelevant to present problems of social reality and existence.

Let us define 'intellectual' in the way Antonio Gramsci did: as a producer of ideas, in all or any form, such that he or she can be a 'great' artist or thinker, or an ordinary worker and ordinary citizen; in either case a unique member of civil society. For Gramsci, 'workers' are 'intellectuals', 'intellectuals' are 'workers' - they overlap as societal categories, and as subjects of thought. My emphasis here however, is on what might be called the 'committed intellectual' - the poet or philosopher especially, who devotes his or her working life to developing ideas or to expressing intuitions, feelings, and experiences, artistically.

My reference here is the difference between the predicaments of the `intellectual' in Western Europe (and to a lesser extent North America and other 'Western' societies, e.g. Australia and Japan), and the 'intellectual' in the Soviet bloc (the USSR and Eastern Europe, and to a lesser extent other Communist countries), in the post-Second World War period, during the Cold War, especially between about 1950 and 1985. Of course no era is sealed off from continuities both backwards and forwards from it. However, after this period the Gorbachev era saw fundamental changes occur in the situation in the East, whilst Leftism and Marxism declined in significance in the West; on the other hand before it (in the pre-Second World War period, and in the late 1940s), the situation held other complexities on both sides. Reality had not quite yet solidified into the Soviet/Western divide so characteristic of the real Cold War period.

I am not speaking here about Marxism as such, though the latter has been important to intellectuals in both East and West, as a central ideology; officially in the East, and 'unofficially', with an unvoiced hegemony, among many Western intellectuals also. Certainly, not all 'intellectuals' in the West were on the Left, but the majority in many countries gravitated towards it in the period we are concerned with; whilst right-wing intellectuals for the most part marked out their positions consciously in opposition to, or rejection of, Leftism: and Marxism was to a greater or lesser extent the main reference for Left-wing, Socialist, and Anarchist thought.

In the East, intellectuals were either orthodox or dissident, but in either case the official Marxism was the major reference. Unlike for the West, where Marxism was still utopian, allowing the emergence of new thoughts and imaginative projections, Marxism in the

East was a deadly and deadening dogma: Diamat, Stalinism, official Marxism-Leninism. Creators of true flights of fantasy, or of deep thoughts about the human soul, could never be anything but disdainful of this brutish dogma, as was, for example, Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

The appeal of Marxism to intellectuals, from the beginning, was its apparent unification of a scientific understanding of history, with a powerful categorical ethical imperative, and the promise of an all-embracing Weltanschauung that would include the 'aesthetic dimension.' This supposed synthesis within human consciousness, this totalisation of the mind, turned into a stifling, monolithic straight-jacket in the East; but in the West, where it remained oppositional, a utopian worldview that was never the ruling ideology (though elements of its value system and practical recommendations were indeed incorporated into hegemonic culture), there was the possibility of a pluralism of interpretations, which allowed a vibrant, if not altogether healthy competition between rival visions.

In the West therefore, powerful possibilities of the human soul could be piled theoretically or imaginatively into revolutionary politics, philosophy, and ethics; in Surrealism, or in the ideas of Ernst Bloch, or Herbert Marcuse for example. Even if at times Western Marxists were producing abstractions of a thoroughly scholastic kind, devoid of any relation to 'reality' other than as an idealistic, poetic hope (though they were purporting to be in some sense 'scientific') - very little actual power was ever wielded in their name. In the East on the other hand, intellectuals who remained 'Marxist' found themselves in the diabolical trap described by Milosz, in which to keep the New Faith they had to deny their deepest instincts, suppress their real imaginations, and accept irrational absurdities. While Western Marxists could at least try to reconcile, and honestly integrate, genuine feelings, experiences and observations within Marxist theory, Orthodox 'Marxist-Leninists' (or rather 'Leninist-Stalinists' as Milosz calls them) in the Soviet camp could only be hypocritical in the face of an enormous gulf between the truth about reality and the proclamations and slogans of this New Faith; between an apparently ethical doctrine and its utter negation in actual application. Success in career, status, and material means, were all bought at the cost of personal integrity, aesthetic debasement, and intellectual dishonesty.

In both cases, such intellectuals fell into an illusion: a Weltanschauung according to which one theory could apparently encompass all reality and experience, and all the complexities of life could be engaged within one enormous life-philosophy, Marxism. Which only shows that there are, we now realise, many paths to misery. In the East, the State and the Party defined the purposes and objectives of poetry; in the West, poets were theoretically free to pursue whatever ends and experiences they wanted, though in practice many swarmed to movements that predefined the realm of poetry. Since the decline of Marxism`s hold over the `critical` intelligentsia in the West, it has been the new 'cultural identity politics' of ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, or sexuality, that have replaced the proletarian, Marxist, cultural politics of class. Many Western visionaries

have changed the voluntary straight-jackets within which they are held; though real poetry, always and most especially amongst the various intellectual and imaginative products of human culture, seems now destined more and more to enter into the realm of the idiosyncratic, the ambiguous, the strange, the indefinable, the enigmatic, and all that is contrary to or flies in the face of expectation (no matter how much poets as individuals may agree with particular political-cultural movements` aspirations for various kinds of human freedom and justice). But all this had already been clear for a long time to dissident poets in the East.

So, for Milosz in The Captive Mind , the issue was how to reconcile existence for the poet in the tyrannical circumstances of Stalinist Poland, with a refusal to swallow Murti-Bing. Whereas for Western poets like myself, the issue was to reconcile creative inspiration, the free life of the poet, with a kind of Marxism that could embrace the unconscious and the realm of liberation - an aspiration that has now come to seem a mere historical nostalgia for an older avant-garde, with little meaningful practical or spiritual validity for today. In both East and West the mirage of the Marxist conception of Socialism, and the Marxist 'God that failed', were crucial to the lives and work of many 'intellectuals', but in very different ways.

Whereas Western Marxism in some of its forms at least could understand that all knowledge systems, including Marxism, are in the final analysis historical constructs, and therefore relative and partial understandings of reality (though Marxism provided the 'most objective understandings available at this particular moment of history'), Soviet Marxism positioned itself as an ultimate, timeless dogma, unchangeable by human subjects, or by history itself. The first could at least see itself as engaged in an ongoing process of debate and research, while the second was cynically handed down by the Leader, or the Party theorists, with no explanation as to why they should have infallible access to the immutable laws of history and society: a situation made all the more loathsome in that the ruling elite flagrantly flouted the most elementary values of Marxist Socialism at every turn. The first was ultimately an absurd contradiction - according to which criteria could rival versions of dialectical analysis, whether they concerned appropriate political strategies or 'progressive' attitudes to religion or love - be judged?; the second was a typically mystificatory ruling ideology, similar in certain respects to the role of religion in feudal societies - obscuring and justifying reality, whilst mobilizing and threatening the people, and allowing control, coercion, and the 'engineering' of consent towards an oppressive society`s 'status quo'.

Since the fall of the 'Communist' regimes, it has been for Eastern 'intellectuals' a matter of shedding the suffocating chains of Soviet Marxist orthodoxy, and all its associated habits in the culture of the intellect. This has inevitably involved crisis and trauma as well as a joyous sense of freedom and rebirth. For me on the other hand, as a Western poet and sociologist, the attempt to understand poetry within society has been a part of my scholarly interest, as well as being a personal and autobiographical issue. For a long time

I saw myself as an adherent of Marxism, which appeared to provide a comprehensive and systematic theory of existence and of the world, though I do not think of it that way any longer. But I continue to believe that Marx is a particularly important thinker, because he was, it seems to me, the only one who tried to develop a really comprehensive theory of history and society, however flawed and inadequate it may be. His mode of analysing the dynamics of the Capitalist system still has much validity, and remains important if treated with care, and not as some kind of final 'key to history'; whilst many of his philosophical probings into social reality, through for example his concepts of 'alienation' and the 'metabolism between society and nature', are still highly suggestive and useful. His remains the only decent crack at a general theory of human history and society, and the tradition of Western Sociology has really been all about either criticizing or endorsing what Marx had to say.

Sociology has been described as a debate with the ghost of Karl Marx, which is a way of putting this in a nutshell. As a poet, for a long time I saw the role of the poet in society, and what poetry was, in terms of a kind of Marxism. I was never a very good Marxist, from the point of view of most other Marxists; I was always far too much of a ´bourgois individualist` as far as they were concerned. I always felt that Marxism was inadequate in the spheres of human imagination, emotion, the role of myth in society and so on and so forth, and that it was never comfortable with things that cannot easily be grasped in a rational, intellectual framework: love, death, and those archetypical experiences without which poetry is a very dry, intellectual kind of thing. Thus for a long time, much of my theoretical writing, was - as opposed to my poetry - about how to try to integrate understandings of archetypical experiences, the emotions, feelings, creativity and so forth, into a Marxist framework.

The issue therefore involves for me an intellectual autobiographical element, as I now no longer find the kind of single, comprehensive theory of society or history that Marxism aspired to be either possible or desirable. As for many other 'intellectuals' in the West, this necessary transformation and reconstruction of my Weltanschauung entailed a crisis, which has involved, as crises always do, a certain amount of experiential trauma, as well as the opportunity for a spiritual rebirth in the sphere of the intellect.

Many 'deep thinking' people - or 'intellectuals' - in both East and West are now at sea, or lost. For most Marxists, Socialists, and various kinds of Idealist in the West, the collapse of Soviet-style Communism was not a 'disappointment': on the contrary it seemed to open up great possibilities for progress in the world as a whole. The disappointment lay in finding that there was no 'genuine' movement or aspiration for 'real' Socialism waiting hidden and ready to unfold in a new struggle once 'actually existing Socialism' had disappeared. Instead it seemed to be taken for granted in these countries that the Soviet-type system would be replaced by free-market Capitalism.

At the same time, though for other reasons, the idea of Socialism receded as a realistic historical possibility in the West and in the Third World, while Marxism ceased to appear a trustworthy overall theory of global social reality; indeed, it came to be seen that the yearning for any single, over-arching theory of the world is probably fatally mistaken, as it has been integrally entwined with the worst miseries and catastrophes of the twentieth century. But just as the new Capitalism in the former 'Communist' societies is not the yearned-for alternative to 'Communism' - Capitalism with its poverty, increasing inequality, unemployment, social fragmentation, and commercialized 'culture industry' - so, Western-dominated global Capitalism is not the Utopia hoped for in any of the deep traditions of humanistic or spiritual hope from outside the former Soviet bloc either. For all, the need is to start thinking again about how it might be possible to create a better society, but as Dostoyevsky spoke of redemption at the end of Crime and Punishment, "......that is the beginning of a new story."

SOME PERSONAL RESPONSES TO "HINDSIGHT", BROADCAST ON BBC RADIO 4, SUNDAY 10th OCTOBER 1999

A talk in which (quotation from the Radio Times): "Peregrine Worsthorne redresses starkly racist claims he made during the 1960s regarding the 'problem' of a multiracial Britain."

The most important thing I can say in response to this short talk, is that I respect and admire Peregrine Worsthorne for his honest recognition that his views about ethnic minorities in Britain in the 1960s were wrong, and to declare it so openly. I feel sure that many amongst the ethnic minorities of Britain would agree in this, as generosity of spirit is one of their supreme characteristics.

Worsthorne started by explaining that in the 1960s he was the kind of British nationalist who thought Britain was always best, that the history of its Empire was glorious, and that the entry of non-European minorities into British society would threaten its cohesion. He

conceded now that this last idea was racist, and that his view that non-Europeans (and he admitted it was because they were non-white that he had so thought), could not assimilate into British culture, had been similar essentially to Nazi anti-semitism. He was able to see now that multi-racialism, ethnic diversity, and pluralism in British society are not only possible but highly desirable, and once again he deserves to be congratulated on his ability to rethink such a fundamental point of view.

Now, I 'came of age' politically at the very time Peregrine Worsthorne and others were voicing the opinions he renounced in this talk - 'came of age' in the sense of adopting some kind of conscious political worldview after the 'unconsciousness' of childhood and adolescence. My first moral choices on the political level - my 'baptism of fire' as it were - concerned what attitude to take towards such issues as the Vietnam War, and the racist diatribes of Enoch Powell, among other prominent ones. This was at the very age (between about 18 and 22 years old), that people of Worsthorne`s generation had left school and were having to decide what they were going to do in the Second World War. So it was interesting that he mentioned Britain in 1940 - in terms of its strength of identity and its cohesion - as the reality which he had imagined, in the 1960s, would be undermined by the immigration into Britain of non-European ethnic minorities.

It is not surprising therefore, that I, in the 1960s, as an idealistic radical, critical of imperialistic wars, of racism, and of all sorts of (what I then saw as) conformism and bigotry within the Establishment, should have despised the opinions of people like Worsthorne (and this does allow me to disagree with his comment that at the time it had been impossible for him to see that he was wrong), as well as the British government`s support of the U.S. in the Vietnam War. To me it was despicable hypocrisy, after crushing the monstrous evils of Nazism and Japanese fascism, that the Western allies could have used Japanese prisoners-of-war to control and subdue the peoples of Indo-China who had fought with them against those very Japanese; and could have expected those countries to return to being French colonies. That Ho Chi Minh, a great ally of the West against the Japanese, could suddenly be deemed a dangerous Communist once the Cold War had broken out, whose people deserved to be napalmed and have their forests defoliated because of their wish for independence in a form they chose to call Socialist. All this tarnished my earlier adulation, as a child, of Britain`s heroism in the Second World War, and as was typical for many radical-minded young people of my generation, it led to terrible and painful clashes of view with others in one`s social world. But what was strange now, was that at the very moment Peregrine Worsthorne`s talk came on the radio, I happened to be reading Martin Gilbert`s excellent Second World War, (Phoenix (1989)), in whose scholarly, detailed, and rivettingly written account I could once again see - as I had as a naive child - that Britain under Churchill had indeed been supremely courageous and great. Britain alone was fighting the Nazis after June 1940 as an unoccupied power. She could easily have made peace with Hitler, who was eager to do a deal and leave Britain to her Empire while he attacked the Soviet Union - which had always been his deepest desire.

But Britain would not do a deal: though thousands of tons of ships were being sunk every week in the Atlantic, though her air defences were stretched to the absolute, nearly-snapping, terrifying limit, and though London was being blitzed to hell, and though the British Expeditionary Force had been blasted out of France, yet Churchill proclaimed Britain would win the War, and broadcast to the defeated nations of Europe that she would never stop fighting, and issued a sublime clarion call for the new dawn that would break over the tombs of heroes who had resisted the dark night of Hitler.

It seemed extraordinary to me that Worsthorne should now say, as an old man, that he regretted what he saw now as the narrow-mindedness of his former British nationalist outlook; the latter he said had closed his mind linguistically, philosophically, even culinarily for most of his life. Because for me, the opening up of British culture in the 1960s to new ideas, new music, new life-styles and modes of expression, to greater pluralism, diversity, and to internationalism, had been my very life-blood; to my mind it did not threaten whatever was good in Britain at all, it would merely sweep away what was awful. And now, I see no contradiction between admiring, and feeling proud of Britain in 1940 on the one hand, and loving its cultural and ethnic diversity today: to be great is not to stay still, but to embrace new forms for the spirit of greatness. But for Worsthorne, the rejection of his former nationalism seemed to lead him to a rather wistful attitude towards any kind of 'greatness' for Britain at all.

Not Empire surely, but contributing useful and beautiful ideas to the world; not ruling others, but engaging in constructive and creative dialogue with others as respected equals. One interesting, but I believe, unsound idea that Peregrine Worsthorne expressed in his talk, was that for the immigrant communities to 'put down roots' in Britain, the native Britons had had to 'pull their roots out`. That in order to embrace the ethnic minorities from the former colonies, the 'Britain is always best' and 'the Empire was great' themes had had to be dropped. Eliminating a view of history offensive to the ethnic minorities, Worsthorne averred, had meant losing a self-image which had been the crux of the cohesion that underpinned Britain`s heroism and solidarity in 1940.

But surely not! What but good could come from having to re-examine one`s past, to reconsider the values according to which one has been presuming to live! In what sense does that involve pulling out one`s roots? Glorification of an imperial past is surely no basis for the understanding of history or of the world. Thank God the educational system moved on, and if the presence of new ethnic minorities prompted that, then all the better. Could not the kind of solidarity demonstrated by the British people in 1940-1945 be based on values of tolerance, flexibility, and humility, as well as courage and determination? Why on earth should a narrow-minded national chauvinism be a necessary component of such solidarity? Is not the attempt to take a critically dispassionate, non-partisan view of one`s country`s achievements and failings far more likely to contribute to its health and strength in the long run, than a biased, bigoted one?

Indeed, did not the greatness of the British people in their titanic struggle against Nazism - and even in the mind of Churchill, reactionary aristocrat though he always paradoxically remained on many levels, particularly in his passionate advocacy of British imperialism (though amazingly he transcended himself in the War years) - rest in fact upon a belief in one`s duty to fight murderous injustice, to help liberate the oppressed and tortured, to unite with all free peoples to create a more just, humane, and decent world; and not at all to hold onto values of domination, inequality, descrimination, or superiority; in other words to espouse values of internationalism rather than of nationalism?

BRITAIN

Britain, in its cold and freezing air
Can be fair in spirit,
Though often it has not been;

It has a strength, of courage extraordinary
And decency, and need not be
An island of miserable narrowness.

All colours, creeds, and moods, can be Britain,
All ages, spirits, styles, and bearings.
We are a people that always changes;

We are no longer Empire, but freedom
Of the mind.

Tim Cloudsley

THOUGHTS ON HUMAN CULTURE AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1

"There is no wealth but life", declared John Ruskin. But what does one do with such an idea? Well for one thing, one should not follow along with Orthodox Economics, dominated as it is by considerations of human exchange imagined in a vacuum. However one reckons with the utilisation of natural resources, with the production and distribution of goods and services, one should think from the inside of things in nature and in human beings, and work outwards from them, rather than the other way around.

Nor is the Marxist view that the exchange-value of things is related to the amount of labour that has gone into their production any good, since it is impossible to calculate what Marx termed 'compound labour', which is essential to his entire 'labour theory of value'; and anyway that whole worldview ignores the fact that all energy and thus ultimately all economic value comes from the sun, not from human labour. Human labour is actually only a small subsystem within the total system of planetary energy flows.

11

When human beings began, that is, when Homo sapiens sapiens or Anatomically Modern Man arose, all the basic problems of human existence presented themselves. Some of those problems have grown, some have receded, but in spite of all the developments in

society, politics, ethics, and technology, the basic dilemmas and miracle of humanity remain.

There is an immense contradiction between human beings as part of nature, raw in tooth and claw, brimming with instincts and desires, with selfish wills to survival; and human beings as conscious social beings, capable of creating and sustaining that extraordinary and complex construction called (human) society; endowed with creative intelligence, religious awe, aesthetic sensibility, compassion, and morality.

Two of the most basic areas in which 'underlying human nature' does not fit at all well with the needs of organized society, are sexuality and aggression. The latter may actually provide a lesser long-term problem for society than the former, as organized aggression in war, and in state or other authoritarian control over intra-social aggression, can be built into the fabric of societies, whereas it appears, sexual desires have never yet been fitted into social institutions harmoniously. The requirements of biological and social reproduction on the one hand, and of sexual inclinations and emotions on the other, are linked in the human race in quite intrinsically conflictive ways.

The Feminist wish to locate the Original Sin behind these problems in either male biology or male socialization, or in a combination of these, is surely tautological. What is needed is a morally unprejudiced understanding of 'the human condition.'

A glance across the world in time and space seems to indicate that human sexuality, especially in more complex societies, is inherently duplicitous, with deception of self and other deep to its nature. In respect of sexuality, the human mind, with its powers of imagination and fantasy, combined with society`s need for an individual psychology of morality and guilt, is inevitably a tortuous labyrinth of complication and disharmony. The dynamics of individual power, the need for control, desires for self-satisfaction, self-esteem and so on, are constructed or brought out in different ways in different individuals, but it is surely clear that the connections between the biological and social requirements for reproduction, the very corporeal character of erotic lusts, and the very incorporeal character of those human emotions called 'love', are complicated indeed, and inherently so.

It is possible to argue however, that these facts should not lead to pessimistic or mournful conclusions about 'the ultimate predicament of humanity.' Without embracing the details or final conclusions of Sigmund Freud`s theories about civilization and sexuality - these are in any case varied and often incompatible - it is possible to accept some of his essential insights. It is from the tangled mass of unconscious and conscious conflicts and sexual contradictions within the human psyche that culture is largely born, from which human dreams both great and awful derive, and from which art, music, and poetry derive much of their power. It is from these constantly shifting, constantly disturbed dynamics that humanity derives much of its restless, explorative, adventurous spark, its boldness,

its obsessions, its mad religions, its iconoclastic and demented ideals, its dreams and ideas. What would humanity be without all that?

Questions of how human societies might exist harmoniously in their natural environments - that is, sustainably, should really be seen in the context of these considerations, as however much one might agree emotionally and spiritually with 'deep' ecologists and other purists of nature, it is the human race whose continuation on the planet we are necessarily considering. When Man disappears from the world, there will be nothing for philosophy or sociology to consider (nor obviously anyone to do the considering), as was the case before human consciousness arose. There could of course in theory still be astrophysics, geology, biology and so on, but there would be no human minds to undertake such activities.

111

According to Jared Diamond in Guns, Germs and Steel it has been the geographical, climatic, and biological environment of the earth, in all its diversity and continuous transformations, which has shaped the evolutionary development of human groups and societies ever since the emergence of Modern Man. Of course it has long been understood that the earlier evolution of Man, from Australopithecus up to Homo sapiens sapiens, was conditioned by these forces. Diamond`s view involves in a way an extraordinary reversion to a pre-dialectical kind of materialist explanation of history and historical process, as it implies that Nature, in the senses meant by pre-Marxist philosophers of the Enlightenment like Montesquieu, or by Feuerbach (in the critique of whose concept of Nature historical materialism was born), is indeed the most important factor in the explanation of human history, though this Nature should not be conceived of as a static entity, as the pre-Marxist philosophers did predominantly; social history in the senses understood by Marxism and by sociology generally is really a sub-process within a naturally determined human history. That is, if human history is still to be seen as a self-developmental dialectical process, this needs to be understood in a way it has not been hitherto; namely that the major directions and forms of this process are inflected and structured by Nature, and that the particular shifting natural environments within which specific 'social formations' and 'modes of production' develop should never be ignored, if social, political, economic, cultural, and technological processes of development are to be well understood. In this connection the idea current in some quarters of Marxist political ecology, that what is required is a theory of society and

history that combines understanding of two contradictions in capitalism - that between capital and labour and that between capitalism and nature - seems to me to be mistaken. The problems with Marxism are not solved by tacking on a new level of contradiction like that. It is not a question of a contradiction acting in a sphere of abstraction between a particular form of society and nature. Nature, in its concrete particularity, scientifically understood, not merely philosophically, needs to be built into a theory of history and society - again, in terms of their specificities and particularities. This means conceiving concrete natural environments and concrete societies: abstractions have their place but they cannot take over from empirical social and natural scientific investigations of concrete spoecificities. Marxism`s 'forces of production' in partcular have to be completely reconceived in terms of the Nature/Humanity relationship and the need for concreteness imagined here. In essence, the point is that human history should not be theorised in a physical vacuum and then inserted into Nature, or particular natural environments. Generally, human history and society are rather less susceptible to 'grand' or 'general' theories than the founders of Sociology, and others, have imagined.

In a mode of argument similar to that of Jared Diamond, Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff in his book *Colombia Indigena* suggests that fluctuating climatic factors conditioned the migrations and settlements of human groups throughout the New World, just as they created the opportunities for people to cross the Bering Straits from Asia into America in the first place. The entire structure of contemporary global human societies and their dominant forms of relationship with the natural environments of the earth, can thus be seen as the outcome of a continuously transforming Nature`s shaping of human history since its inception.

Of course, this is not to suggest that humanity is passive in the face of Nature`s influences; naturally, as a process that is conscious in a certain sense - at least in contrast to the rest of nature, inorganic or organic - and as a creative praxis , human beings in history make themselves, as Marx or Gordon Childe would have it. But this human reality of praxis and consciousness, was activated in the first place and has subsequently been pushed along by Nature`s processes. Even an understanding of the Old World`s conquest of the New World lies within the fabric of this mode of explanation, as the implication of Jared Diamond`s book is that the coming into being of Europe`s political, economic, and technological prominence in the world was neither accidental nor to be properly explained in purely social terms - for example, in terms of the development of 'modes of production' in the Marxist sense. It also was the long-term product or consequence of climatic, geographical, and ecological factors.

1V

A fundamental problem in practising Human, or Social Ecology; or Ecological Sociology, is that it must be multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary to work, yet so much weighs against any such attempt to be so all-embracing. There is the sheer magnitude of knowledge involved in each of the numerous disciplinary and sub-disciplinary areas, in the face of which there is an enormous risk of becoming dilettante due to ignorance of the depth of the various current knowledges. There is also the resistance of academic institutions, journals, and publishers, and of academic culture generally - in spite of the much-voiced academic recognition of the need for inter-disciplinary approaches to many areas of contemporary knowledge.

In spite of these problems, an effort at inter-disciplinary research must be made, because if one works exclusively within the problematics and current debates of any one given relevant micro-discipline, the consequence is that one is only looking at one or another of the trees in the forest, and not at the forest as a whole; which is the fundamental point of Social Ecology.

V

It appears now that the effects of human activity in the second half of the twentieth century have triggered off a chaos situation in the world`s climate. Irreversible, infinitely complex, interacting phenomena such as the 'runaway greenhouse effect', altered ocean currents and wind systems, large-scale disturbances in regional climatic and hydrological regimes like that of the Amazon basin, are clearly demons that will not be easily put back into Pandora`s box. The dire warnings given by ecological Jeremiahs over the last half century have been in essence vindicated, even if, as usual in history, no precisely given scenario of any particular futurologist has materialised.

What then does the future hold? One scenario predicted by some during the last half century has conspicuously not arrived, and that is total annihilation from nuclear war, or Mutually Assured Destruction. This is not to say the danger of nuclear war has disappeared, nor to suggest that the risk of it was exaggerated by those in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. If the Titanic had missed the iceberg that in fact sank it, by a

few inches, then it would not have sunk, but this fact would not have meant there was no danger of the Titanic sinking because it was so close to an iceberg. Similarly, nuclear annihilation was a real possibility during the Cold War, which has not disappeared because the Cold War is over, though hopefully the danger of it is now less than formerly.

In similar vein, fears of total collapse in basic planetary systems, or ecological disaster on a scale that threatens all life, or the whole of humanity, or 'civilization as we know it', have not been vindicated. The world ends, not with a bang but a whimper; though of course, as with the nuclear threat, this does not mean such fears could not be validated at some future date.

But the way the future looks from the present vantage point is a chaotic mess, not an absolute disaster. Overpopulation, poverty, periodic mass starvation; 'small' wars and environmental problems at various levels; massacres on various scales. These can be kept 'under control' just about, whilst science will probably catch up sufficiently with the problems of Gaia to allow various kinds of 'local' technological manipulation or control over climate and weather, pollution, even perhaps loss of biodiversity. This will be rather like the technocratic, 'reformist', cybernetic feedback type of politics - Welfare Statist and Keynesian - that was developed in the West to control, to some extent, the endemic crises of capitalism after the Second World War. These policies should not be thought of as purely 'technological fixes' as some ecological critics term almost any 'non-radical' solutions to environmental problems. For, like the complex of social-democratic welfare state policies that accompanied the development of Keynesian economic policies in post-War Western societies, they absolutely do involve social, political, and cultural policies as well as economic and technological programmes. But they are a type of solution to problems - kinds of techne - which Herbert Marcuse analysed so well, as being a form of transfer of technical methods of control over machines and physical nature to the social sphere. Rather than 'getting' to the roots' of problems in all their complexity, this approach fudges, acts pragmatically, sweeps problems under the carpet as it does not want to deal with them root and branch, that is, radically. For tackling the roots of the problems may actually be against the interests of the very social groups who are in a position to implement policies. However, as with Marxian and other Utopian visions of a radically changed society, totalising solutions to world-environmental problems may in fact be impossible. Though such radical theories may allow a far greater grasp of the interconnected whole of society or nature than do partial, 'empiricist', often mono-factorial and ideologically restricted views (i.e. views restricted by horizons determined by 'class interests' etc.), their proposed radical solutions may be utterly unrealistic, as suggested in my earlier comment about the demons of irreversible climatic change that cannot be put back into Pandora`s box; just as the 'totality of contradictions' making up modern capitalist-dominated global society could not and cannot be resolved by a unitary, totalising Revolution.

But whether in their theories of society or nature in their totalities, or in their theories of changes in total relations within these, such overarching philosophies are always and inevitably inadequate, humanity being quite unable to think better than its limitedly rational mind allows, which means that even its best theories are always fatally flawed in their relations to 'reality' - that infinitely enigmatic sphinx. If any particular philosophy of radical ecology were to become dominant and influential in the future, problems similar to those that beset Marxism historically would undoubtedly beset it as well. For tragically, the more subtle a theory attempts to be, and thus the more all-embracing and comprehensive its ambitions to explain and interpret 'reality' are, the more likely it is to be flawed by some Achilles heal, some inadequacy in a particular area whose implications are amplified as they work through the whole cumbersome theoretical system, no matter how excellent its powers of explanation on certain limited levels may be. For example, the effectiveness of Marxist Political Economy at explainng many features of global capitalism, is undermined within practical Marxist theories of political action by Marxism`s gross inability to understand the nature of social and political movements, being on the one hand hopelessly idealistic, abstract, and mechanically programmatic, and on the other ruthlessly callous and anti-human in its presumptions about how a revolutionary movement should develop.

It is important to recognize however, that many of the ideals and practical suggestions stemming from Utopian theories such as Marxism have filtered into both mainstream political assumptions and mainstream political practices. In most parts of the world standard interventionist government economic policies and welfare systems represent watered-down versions of ideas developed initially in Socialist theories, including that of Marxism. Many of these points will undoubtedly come in time to apply in some degree to environmental and political ecological theories, in similar ways.

But to return to the future of the world`s environment: new natural resources, materials, and energy sources will be discovered or created. Means to tap solar energy on a grand scale will be developed, perhaps with satellites or using the moon as a huge solar energy plant. Humanity will survive, and human society may not become as dull, standardised, or dreary as most Dystopians - from George Orwell and Aldous Huxley, to Max Weber and Georg Simmel - of the twentieth century have imagined it will. What will die, once and for all I believe, if it has not already died for the vast majority of humanity, is that millenial kind of hope for a qualitatively and completely different and better society: that idealistic inclination to want a complete change in the human condition – “changer la vie”, as felt at different times by Taoists, Anabaptists, Socialists, Anarchists, and many others.

This will be a gain as well as a loss: no cliche was ever more true than that 'the road to hell is paved with good intentions.' Passionately held idealistic beliefs and commitments often breed dogmatism, inflexibility, blindness to human and cosmic nature; as well as cruelty, violence, and authoritarianism. But the loss of Utopian commitment will also

eradicate a huge area of the human imagination of poetry and dream. A world without the love and spiritual generosity of people like Shelley, Ghandi, Martin Luther King, or Rosa Luxembourg will be a disenchanted world.

ON POETRY

My poetry follows my whims; follows my life, thoughts, and experience; develops in its contents, forms, styles and purport according to an inner appropriation of experience, literary or other, and this occurs largely unconsciously. Only to a small extent, and relatively unusually, is the direction of my poetry governed by conscious ideas and intentions that existed prior to picking up a pen.

My view into the future is exhilarating but terrifying, as I never know the direction I am taking until I start to write. In retrospect the pattern becomes clear; but from the present into the future, I stare into darkness. There is never any certainty or security about what I might do, if anything at all; whilst contentment about what is already written is minimal for me, except in moments of temporary euphoria. It is like being a shaman who chants spontaneously in the dark, not knowing in advance what he is going to chant nor what his chanting will bring forth, yet who can hear his flow of sound from the past streaming through the night, inducing coloured visions in the retinas of all present. It is only the past light from the Imagination`s flame that can be seen, not the future`s.

Whereas the intellect, the rationally thinking mind - harboured in the left hemisphere of the brain - can plan and preconceive to various degrees the ideas it is developing and the means it will use to express them, the intuition, or the Imagination, harboured in the right hemisphere of the brain and the medulla, has little intimation of the revelatory experiences it is likely to encounter in advance, and thus finds its poetry wondrous, an awakening, an awesome miracle, like the unexpected visions experienced by a shaman in deep trance, or the oracles summoned up by the Sybil, or by mediums, in states of deep meditation. The first is analytical - and sees much less, but has some control over itself; the other is imaginative - and sees much more, but has virtually no control over itself.

Poetry comes from the latter, not the former (from the former comes philosophy, science, and all thought striving for coherence and consistency - though in fact a large element of intuitive inspiration comes into these activities too). Thus, in poetry a large element of trust is involved, a faith that the Imagination is boring into or flying through a visionary world of value, even if it is not easy to understand its 'meaning', which is anyway a difficult notion in relation to the poetic realm. But in retrospect it is often clear that there

have been glimpses of far-off ice-bergs and extraordinary unknown continents, sights as illuminating but as incomprehensible as those experienced through the mists on the first occasion that Columbus`s crew sighted land after crossing the Atlantic. *Dios mio*!

Shelley begins his mighty *A Defence Of Poetry* with the distinction between Analytical Reason and Imagination, which he probably culled from Immanuel Kant. As always, he extracted a core idea from elsewhere and drew it organically into his philosophical worldview, which lived in symbiosis with his poetry - a realm utterly beyond description or analysis, although one can attempt to analyse it. Shelley`s poetry is Absolute Poetry - inspired, oracular, entranced; immaculate, labyrinthine, infinitely complex; hauntingly beautiful, utterly strange, and incomprehensibly bold. It is wild, visionary, and prophetic; uncompromising and sublime. That is why his poetry has been so little understood.

Shelley could only capture from the lightning speed of his inspiration whatever he could write down, creaming off from his visions only what he could take in the time it took him to write it. His poetry he said, was only a pale reflection of the brilliant fire of his real Poetry; it was merely the shadow of Plato`s Sun, inside the cave.

Shelley felt that poetic inspiration was like a wind that fanned a fading coal to glow, and that the poet could no more predict Inspiration than a piece of hot coal could predict when a wind would blow over it. He seemed to grasp poetic inspiration in a way that combined the ancient notion of the Muse, with the even more primordial experience of the Shaman, and then both with the modern concepts of the imagination and the unconscious psyche.

His is the best theory of poetry there is, even though it is very undeveloped. It implies all the main ideas of Coleridge`s magnificent *Biographia Literaria*, and of Keats`s extraordinary *Letters*. It goes far beyond Wordsworth`s *A Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, sublime though that is. It matches William Blake at his best; and taking these names - the Romantic Poets - in combination, you have just about the most powerful aggregate of poetic theory ever developed.

The world of Poetry is ultimately a world of the inexplicable, the transcendent. To be inspired is to be a firefly in the starry sky, a shaman chanting through swirling visions in ecstasy - like making love to the ultimately gorgeous woman. But how dreadful it is when the Poet falls back to the ground, not knowing whether he will perish or not!

Making Ireland British 1580-1650. By Nicholas Canny

(Published in *The European Legacy*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (2005).)

The first chapter of this book is entitled ´Spenser Sets the Agenda`, and it might be subtitled ´The Politics of Conquest and the Enigma of Poetry", for it is about how Edmund Spenser`s magnificent poem *The Faerie Queen* is, and was intended to be, an allegory of how chivalric virtue in the shape of Elizabethan English Protestantism, should defeat the forces of darkness in Ireland, namely the native Irish people and Roman Catholicism. Spenser, in his prose tract View of the Present State of Ireland explicitly advocated the invasion, conquest, colonisation, and English settlement of Ireland, accompanied by genocide and the resettlement of those Irish deemed sufficiently docile to be worthy of life, and then their draconian repression; all in the name of virtue, true religion, and civilization. In The Faerie Queen, Prince Arthur personifies ´magnificence`, which is the ´perfection` of all the moral virtues, for each of which a particular knight is the exemplar. In the form of poetry, this is what Spenser calls ´doctrine by example`; in the form of Spenser`s prose treatise called A View Of The Present State Of Ireland, it is ´teaching by rule`.

Spenser`s ghastly agenda for wholesale murder, the English occupation (called ´plantation`) of Ireland, and making Ireland British racially, linguistically, culturally, and religiously, informed to a greater or lesser extent all of England`s activities in Ireland, from Spenser`s time onwards, throughout the governorship of Wentworth, and into the Cromwellian period. Spenser rejected the ´softer` option of gradual reform and conversion of the native Irish population to Protestantism and Britishness. At times the ´ofter` option became the official line of the English government, but Oliver Cromwell, steeled by the crushing of the 1641 Irish insurrection, attempted a comprehensive ´ethnic cleansing` of Ireland; not for the first, but for the last time.

This programme of Spencer and others, then finally Cromwell, undertaken in erratic surges between 1580 and 1650, provides an historical archetype for a kind of project that was undertaken by numerous colonizing powers in the following centuries, and which is continuously being carried out in many parts of the world today.

Spenser`s inspired and wonderful poetry is wholly implicated in this cruel and bloody undertaking, leaving us in a similar kind of bewilderment as when, in our own epoch, we face the music dramas of Richard Wagner, steeped as he was in an ideology of Aryanism. How we ask, can glorious, beautiful art like this be drawn into such criminal, murderous ideas? How can ´virtue` be understood as part of such intentions? Much as with the agonized beauty of Wagner`s music, we have to accept that Spenser`s poetry is supreme art, though immersed within a miserable inhumanity:

"Ne spared they to strip her naked all.
Then when they had despoiled her tire and call,
Such as she was, their eyes might her behold,
That her misshaped parts did them appall,
A loathly, wrinkled hag, ill favoured, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.

Her craftie head was altogether bald,
And as in hate of honourable eld,
Was overgrowne with scurfe and filthy scalde;
Her teeth out of her rotten gummes were feld,
And her sowre breath abhominably smeld;
Her dried dugs, like bladders lacking wind,
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld;
Her wrizled skin as rough as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would have loathed womankind."

(*Faerie Queene* book 1, canto 8, stanzas 46-47, quoted in Canny p. 16.)

In this passage Spenser describes ´the stripping of the witch Duessa (who represents Satan himself or Satan as personified in the papal Antichrist and his human agents, most unmistakenly in Mary Queen of Scots), as undertaken by Arthur at the request of Una, the personification of Holiness, the virtue to which the book is dedicated. When reflecting upon this passage it is important to bear in mind that stripping, as it was practised in the wars of early modern Europe (and most notoriously, in the Irish insurrection of 1641), was considered more cruel than death because it not only left its victims in danger of death from exposure but deprived them of all potency either in life or death by taking away their status and dignity and exposing them to ridicule.` (Canny, p. 15.)

The cruel twists and turns in this history of invasion, repression, and persecution resemble those of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires in Iberian America, where the colonizing powers sought also to subjugate and enslave the indigenous peoples, yet periodically declared their respect for the ÔnativesÕ who should be regarded as subjects of the Crown like Europeans, so long as they accepted Catholic Christianity and

demonstrated loyalty to the Crown. In Anglo, North America, where the populations of indigenous peoples were far smaller, and often nomadic, simple extermination was more frequently the norm.

As always under such circumstances, the bullying powers suffered from intense fears of being annihilated by the peoples they oppressed.

Spenser and his followers thought the English were a ´super-race`, god sent to turn Ireland into a perfect Protestant land, peopled by English Protestants and Britishized Irish. They thought of themselves as latter-day Hebrews (as also, paradoxically, did the Catholic Irish), destined to find their Promised Land. Previous inhabitants were barbaric bearers of evil, who required to be either extinguished or utterly transformed:

".....if society in Ireland was ever to be brought to a civil condition it would have to be broken down into its constituent parts and then be assembled after the defective parts had been removed and some new elements added.

"..... what Ireland ultimately required was to be refashioned into a perfect commonwealth.....

".....Old English descendents of Anglo-Norman conquerors could no longer serve as instruments for the reform of Ireland..... The compelling reason for this was that:

".....the chiefest abuses which are now in that realm are grown from the English, and the English that were are now much more lawless and licentious than the wild Irish, so that as much care as was then by them had to reform the wild Irish, so much and more must now be used to reform them so much time doth alter the manners of men."

"Therefore () the remedy required that the counsel and involvement of the Old English in Irish affairs be cast aside, that the existing commonwealth be destroyed, and that a new and perfect one be erected on its foundations." (Canny, pp. 44-49, quotation from Spenser`s *A View Of The Present State Of Ireland* on p. 49.)

The Irish people, Spenser maintained in A View, were the descendents of barbaric Scythians. The necessary treatment of this bastard race must be unrelenting until its complete submission had been achieved. In A View, Spenser describes in some of the most chillingly powerful words ever penned in the English language, the harrowing scenes he witnessed in Munster, which had resulted from the campaigns of Lord Grey, aimed at the complete subjugation of the Irish people. But because of the squeamish pusillanimity of the English government, Spenser felt, probably including that of Queen Elizabeth herself, these scenes would have to be re-enacted, as Lord Grey had been recalled just as his strategy was about to yield results, but before he had completed his work:

"The proof whereof I saw sufficiently in Munster, for notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, that you would have thought they would have been able to stand long, yet ere one year and a half they were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves, they did eat of the dead carrion, happy were they could find them, yea and one another soon after in so much as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves, and if they could find a plot of watercress or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time, yet not able long to continue therewithal, that in short space there was none almost left and a most populous country suddenly left void of man or beast." (Quoted in Canny, p. 50.)

There was no point in the crown undertaking such action in Ireland unless it was determined to proceed with it, through all seasons, until all opposition had been totally crushed:

"Once this had been achieved, the subdued country would be placed under military government, with the people obliged to pay rents for the maintenance of soldiers, and this military authority would facilitate the settlement of English colonies on the confiscated property of the erstwhile rebels."(Canny, p. 51.)

In *A View Of The Present State Of Ireland* Spenser distinguishes between the use of the halter which meant the summary execution of rebels and stubborn lords with their idle followings of soldiers, poets, storytellers, and gamblers on the one hand, and the use of the sword which meant using "the royal power of the prince" to "cut off" evil practices. Canny points out that the halter is the flail of Talus in the *Faerie Queene*, while the sword was the weapon used by Artegall to subject people to discipline. Spenser, like most English people involved with plantation schemes in the period discussed in Canny`s book, assumed that the part of the Irish population which could be made amenable subjects of the crown, would be integrated as workers within the plantation communities. But first they must be freed from the tyranny and wicked ways of their lords, so that they would "in short time learn quite to forget (their) Irish nation."

This transformation of the Irish people would in time effect "an union of manners and conformity of minds, to bring them (i.e. the English and Irish) to be one people." The promotion of true religion would be undertaken by "discreet ministers of their countrymen" who "by their mild persuasions and instructions as also by their sober life and conversation, may draw them first to understand and afterwards to embrace the doctrine of their salvation". (Quotations from *A View* in Canny, pp. 51-53.)

Of great interest in Canny`s historical account and interpretation of "making Ireland British", is the fact that ´Britishness` throughout the period considered, in fact meant ´Englishness`. Canny explains:

"Like many of the English who had settled in, or guided policy for, Ireland in the years prior to 1641, the Cromwellians hoped to curtail the influence of the Scots in Ireland. As with Spenser in the sixteenth century or Wentworth in the seventeenth, those who represented Cromwell in Ireland also wished to diminish, or eliminate, the existing interest of the Scots in Ulster, and in so far as the Cromwellians fostered any concept of Britishness it was a Spenserian notion of the Scots, no less than Irish, being required to adjust their lives to English modes. However the Scots had no intention of accepting this inferior role, and everything suggests that the involvement of Scots people with Ireland during the years after 1641 was consistent with their preoccupation with that country previous to that date." (Canny, p. 559.)

Nicholas Canny concludes his account of what he describes in his Preface as a "seeking after a deeper understanding of the place of Ireland in the history of Britain`s overseas expansion..... (in) an excercise in what is now fashionably known as Atlantic History" (p. vii), with this final comment:

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".....the experiment at Making Ireland British had, in every respect, proven a costly failure." (P. 578.)

***The Quest for Food: Its Role in Human Evolution & Migration*, written and illustrated by Ivan Crowe**

(Published in The Linnean, London, Vol. 10, No. 2, (2005)

As a sociologist with a modest background in the natural and biological sciences, I approached this very remarkable book from the vantage point of someone concerned with the relationships between societies and their natural environments. Now a major theoretical input to sociology was for a long time provided by Marxism, but I am not speaking here of its commitments to social revolution, nor of its utopian assumption that Socialism must ultimately be the solution to humanity`s main problems. Rather, because Marxism long provided the only real attempt at a comprehensive theory of the functioning and developmental principles of society, it is worth considering here its perspective on the human quest for obtaining food. Many of the insights provided by Ivan Crowe in his book, and the way he deals with the vast topic treated in The Quest For Food, and its role in Human Evolution and Migration, can be helpfully viewed in this light. Central issues can be fruitfully considered through the lenses of this theoretical framework, although Crowe does not explicitly refer to it.

Obtaining food is, in Marxist terminology and for the Marxist conceptual framework, part of ´production`. It represents the most basic and ultimately the most important sphere of production in any given society, even one in which the majority of producers are no longer directly engaged in it - that is, in ´industrial` and 'post-industrial' societies. For Marxism, human hunting and gathering are forms of production, not merely procurement, as they always involve tools and technologies, or 'means of production' (projectile points, choppers, cutting flints and sickles, bows and arrows, spears etc. as well as baskets, pots, grinding mortars and so on). And they always involve human intelligence, planning, calculation etc., activities which take place in specific, but variable ways within particular societies. 'Forms of consciousness', and specific 'social relations of production', as well as specific 'means of production', are inevitably involved, and these constitute conditions of existence unique to the human species.

A core concept within Marxism which allows these ideas to be grasped is that of 'mode of production', a particular form or forms of which predominate within any given 'social formation'. Complex 'dialectical' interactions between the various 'levels' of social activity - the economic, political, and ideological levels especially - explain and exemplify the functioning and development of that particular social formation.

At the core of Ivan Crowe`s book lies the issue of how food production - in this Marxist sense - has interacted with, influenced, and been influenced by: the growth of human intelligence, physical and physiological developments in phenomena ranging from the human sense of balance in space to the growth of manual dexterity, from the optics of the human eye to the means of creating speech, and to the size of the brain itself. All these were necessarily implicated within cultural and intellectual advances, from ritual, to communication within and between groups, and to art; and these were all embedded within the ways societies recognized and understood cycles in nature - ranging from the seasonal appearances of particular flora and fauna to the movements of the celestial

bodies. All these latter phenomena have been treated within Marxism as 'forms of consciousness' or 'ideology.'

But more deeply than 'historical materialism', which is the term Engels gave to Marx`s research methodology and theoretical framework, this book by Ivan Crowe grasps the societal processes involved in the development of humanity as happening within 'nature', or the 'natural environment'. This is done in a way that allows interacting social and natural processes (the latter including the properties of stone, wood, and other important non-living natural resources; climate and ecosystem changes; the facts of human digestion and metabolism; the evolution of other relevant living organisms and the characteristics of other crucial plants and animals besides Man), to be understood as a single, though vastly homo complex, interactive, dynamic set of structural processes. Thus and only thus, can the emergence, development, and present predicament of *homo sapiens sapiens* be properly understood.

There is no doubt left by the account given by Crowe - and with this Marxism would agree - that the production of food has been the single most important level of human activity or practice in the evolution of our species. This has remained true even with the development of society into its 'modern', 'manufacturing', 'industrial', and now 'post-industrial' phases. But of course, the production of food, or 'the quest for food', implicates and is implicated in all other levels of human, social activity - from 'lifeways' and lifestyles, to tool production; from culture, language, and art, to politics. Thus, the history of the human 'quest for food', entails in a certain sense the whole history of humanity. A complex philosophical and interpretative problem lies in how to reckon with this paradoxical admission that one level out of a complex of interacting levels is most important, dominant, or determinant,yet at the same time accepting that all levels are implicated or entailed in all other levels; since there is ultimately only one unified, unitary totality of human, social existence.

There is no point in trying to summarise a book which is as rich in facts and detailed discussions of very varied phenomena, as is this one. Besides, few of the individual facts or theoretical conclusions to be found in the book are in themselves wholly new: it is in its synthesis, its overall arrangement of vast quantities of relevant data and ideas that its strength lies. It is a book that taps deeply into the fundamental realities of human existence, setting off reverberations and resonations into areas of thought which are dealt with sometimes relatively little, at least explicitly, in the text.

Señores:

UNIVERSIDAD INDSUTRIAL DE SANTANDER
ESCUEALA DE IDIOMAS
VICERRECTORIA ACAEMICA
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SOME THOUGHTS ON TEACHING BRITISH CULTURAL STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AT UIS

(Submission to the Escuela de Idiomas, UIS, Bucaramanga, 2005)

In the first semester of teaching the course on British Cultural Studies at Uis I have been able to learn a good deal about its possibilities and about the capable of studying and I investigation the pertinent information and material English in the library. They are generally very interested in the culture and history of Great Britain and are able to form mature and subtle ideas and opinions about them.

The celebrated British historian and sociologist of culture Raymond Wiliams argued that "culture" can be defined at one extreme as the whole "way of life" of a people, and at another as a complex of significant "works of art", performances, text, or rituals. The term can be used to refer to all the phenomena between these two ends of a spectrum. And so it is in the phenomena ranging from national or regional customs and forms of social behaviour through to the works of Shakespeare, the Romantic poets, and the music of modern "pop" or "rock" bands from the Beatles, to the Rolling Stones, to Cold Play.

We began by looking at the constituent nations of Great Britain; England, Scotland, Wales, and Northem Irleand or Ulster. We looked at how England was the firs of the countries to achieve national unity as a single kidgdom, and that due to its always having had a much bigger population that the other parts of the Brithish isles, England came to dominate these other parts.

This history of conquest, dominance, and absorption of Wales, Scotlandand Irleand by England has played a large parti in the development of Welsh, Scottish and Irish national identities, although the national identity of Britin. Inside England itself, the center of economic, political, and cultural gravity rests strongly in the South-East and London, and the other regions of England bear relationship to this "metropolis" which are on the whole discussions we found it interesting and useful to consider similarities and differences between these features of Britain and comparable features of Colombia. For

although Colombia is not made up of distinctly separate which are also highly centralized in the capital.

The first assignment that the students did with me was to give presentations in class on issues around either 1)the identities of England, Scotland, Wales or Northem Irleand, or 2)regional identities within these constituent nations, or 3)the multicultural character of contemporary Britain, or 4)youth subcultures in recent and contemporary Britain. The students good knowledge of the English language and of linguistics more generally allowed them to produce good accounts of these social and cultural phenomena.
Regional, class, and ethnic dialects of English could be considered. The question of multiculturalism allowed interesting comparisons to be made it the situation in Colombia. For although there are many "indigenous" Indian peoples in Colombia, the modern Colombian nation is essentially a mestizo, mixed "race" or people. There is great cultural variety in Colombia, but it is not like that of the "ethnic minorities" in a country like Britain: with the Asians of the Indian subcontinent, and black people from the Caribbean and Africa, forming the biggest minority groups. There are certainly Chinese, Arabic, and other such communities in Colombia however, as well as the "black" comparisons to be made once again with Britain.

And if we keep the longer history of the British Isles in mind, we can see that the "white" British populations is not by any means a "pure" race. Over more than two thousand years the British people have been formed out of the mixing of Celt, Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danish, Vikings, and Normans to name just some, before the more recent entrance of Asian, African, and other non-European groups into Britain.

The issue of youth subcultures in post-World War II Britain is of particular interest to young people in Colombia, as in many parts of the world. The post-war reinvention, or cultural reconstruction of "youth", gave rise to a succession of movements or group cultures including Teddy Boys, Mods, Rockers, Hippies, Skinheads, and Punks among others. A combination of social rebellion, a new degree of affluence among "teen-agers" and explorations of "style" and "lifestyle created a new space for youth to express and affirm novel identities and aesthetic and erotic tastes. Fashions in clothes and music were always integral to these subcultures, and were taken up in various ways by youths in other parts the world.

The contemporary situation of youth styles in Britain is no longer, in the opinion of most commentators, expressed in distinct subcultures. Processes of mergence, mixing, and crossing-over have replaced the relatively discrete, homogeneous groupings of previous decades with a number of eclectic styles. This is probably more similar to the place of youth cultures and styles in a country like Colombia today, which because it lacks the original histories and underlying "causes" for these movements in style resembles the present "post-youth sub-cultural" situation in Britain more than the earlier "pristine" subcultures. Interesting discussions could be had about the meaning of such styles in

Colombia, as the "borrowing" of styles from Britain (or from the United States) is never a simple imitation, but rather demonstrates a different kind of creativity around the adopted styles within a very different cultural reality. Similar styles of fashions in clothes or music may be associated with either similar or very different beliefs, commitments and behaviours in the different countries.

All these topics allowed discussion of questions of "identity"; of how individuals and groups define who they are. Regional, social class, and ethnic identities are present in most countries in the world, as are identities surrounding age, sex and gender. The complex relationships between physical or biological differences on the one hand, and cultural constructions on the other , allow for analyses of and comparisons between different countries, in ways that open out understandings of general human conditions and circumstances at the same time.

In the second assignment that the students will do form me, I have asked them to investigate the cultural context and significance of a particular creative individual, group, or movement in the past history, or the contemporary scene in Britain. Students have selected topics as diverse as Shakespeare, the British Romantic poets, musical groups or singers like the Beatles, Robbie Williams, and Cold Play. These are still to come, and will no doubt be at least as stimulating as the assignments already completed.

References:

The following web site are recommended to the students on this course as sources of information. As already stated there are very few books relevant to the course in the Library.

- Cultural Studies http:/enwikipedia.org/wiki/Culturalstudies.com
- Cultural Studies http:/elt.britcoun.org/plvlinks.html
- The periods of British
  http://www.britania.comhistory/periods.html
- The history net. http:/www.historynet.com
  The BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/
- http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/folklore/folklore.html
- http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/culture

SOME REFLECTIONS ON MY EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING COURSES IN THE ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS AT U.I.S. IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF LEARNING

Nov 11 de 2006

Human beings have taught other human beings, the latter learning from the former, ever since they evolved specifically human intelligence, language and culture. The earliest formal kind of teaching and learning, so far as Western Civilization is concerned, was that practiced in Ancient Athens, in Plato´s Academy. Plato´s theory and practice of teacher and learning consisted of the dialogue, an extended conversation between a teacher an a pupil, through which the pupil was induced to think through problems of knowledge for himself, through his teacher´s undogmatic approach to knowledge, and his subtle, not heavy-handed, guidance.

The modern twentieth century theories of learning we have been considering in the CEDEUIS course called PRINCIPIOS DE APRENDIZAJE, particularly those of Pieaget, Vygotsky, and Ausbel, have a course moved on a long way since Plato formed his pedagogical ideas. But they are still concerned, partially whit thinking through how students lean and how they learn to learn, in formal educational settings. I shall nor be concerned to summarise any of their theoretical ideas in this short essays, but rather I shall attempt to make certain observations on my experience at teaching in the Escuela de Idiomas at U.I.S., over the last three semesters, drawing on some of the above thinkers ideas as I do so.

I teach courses on British Cultural Studies, The Mass Media and communications, and World Literature in the English Language. In each of these my students are obliged to their class presentations in groups, which are made in front of the other students in their class. The other students are encouraged to interrupt the presentations with questions and comments where they wish, and to engage in group discussions at the end of each presentation.

The value of this approach, of which experience makes me very aware, is well explained and brought home by Vygotsky´s emphasis on the social-cultural nature and learning, and on the need for collaboration between students in the learning situations. Not only do students choose the topics and themes of their presentations jointly, but they work on the them together. Subsequently the issues and ideas they present to the rest of the class are the subject of discussion in the class as a whole. Cooperation and social interaction are therefore intrinsic to overcoming problems of ideas in what Vygotsky termed the “zone of proximal development”. Guidance from me, the teacher, is part of the process at every stage, as I am involved with each group´s working on its chosen presentation, and am present to intervene at appropriate times during the presentation themselves and during the class discussions after the presentations.

The courses I teach involve understanding ideas, cultural forms, social phenomena literary texts, movements, and meanings. Though studying these involves a balance between reception and discovery, signification and repetition, to use Ausubel´s terms, the emphasis throughout is very much towards discovery and signification. To understanding and interpret forms of culture I n Britain or any other country, to study ideas about the role and function of the mass media in modern globalizing society, and to investigate the importance of literature whether in English or any other language, are a creative, in ventive, imaginative process not matters of memorizing pre-given, established fact alone. Though of course there are objective phenomena to be grasped such as historical dates, place names, important personalities, and particular literary works etc. – in each of these courses the overwhelmingly more important aspect of the students´ efforts are concerned with forging their own particular understandings. This is not so say that are no agreed conclusions to be reached, no consensuses to be arrived at as a result of serious study of these disciplines, nor to say that idiosyncrasy of individual opinion is to be encouraged for its own sake. But it is to say that no two persons understanding of cultural, social, or literary phenomena are likely to be identical. This fact distinguishes the cultural, social, and human sciences from the "hard" sciences of physics, chemistry etc, though this distinction should not be made too rigidly.

Although the process of teaching varies very much from one situation to another, and the style and emphasis of methods depends greatly on the nature of the course being taught, the character of the students in question, and the level of knowledge at which teaching and learning are taking place, yet nevertheless there is great relevance to be found in considering psychological theories of learning, in relation to any particular pedagogical situation that is being considered.

SOME THOUHTS ON ECOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY IN THE AMAZON AND ANDES

In the Amazon, small-scale societies based on hunting, gathering, an shifting cultivation have been made up traditionally of nomadic groups, flexibly undergoing fusions and fissions Survival is experienced as the consequence of a direct, interactive metabolism between the social group and nature. The following is how Philippe Descola describes

this type of society in connection with his analysis of the Achuar, a native group that lives in both the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon:

"The actuar are a perfect synthesis of those enigmatic inclinations peculiar to many societies of Amazonian Indians. They are a near charicature of zero-degree social integration…. The lack of those institutions (sometimes) regarded as the sociological axes of classless societies – chiefdoms, village communities, un lineal descent groups – does not seem to hamper the Achuar…. Internal conflict is permanent, but it does not follow (a) fine segmentary logic ….

"In view of the extreme atomization of these quasi-autarkic households engaged in endemic feuding, it is obviously tempting to evoke the prosocial condition in which, according to the well-known formula, "every man is Enemy to every man" …. In point of fact, their residential atomism is tempered by a supralocal structure…. The "endogamous nexus" ….. consisting of from ten to fifteen households scattered over a relatively well-defined territory, whose members are clsosely and directy related by kinship and affinity… the highest rates of endogamy being found in those with the highest demographic density; many exogamous unions stem form the abduction of women in the course of raids on neighbouring nexus…. A clear military victory of one nexus over the other does not imply territorial annexation …. This endemic feuding has important demographic consequences, since …. One out of every two male deaths can be attributed to war …. This brings out the highly labile character of a system of social relations organized around factionalism and institutionalized feuding".

It is essy to see how such social groups would die off or reduce in population if nature were taken from unsustainably and were degraded locally. The cosmologies of such traditional Amazonian societies tend to be pantheistic, non-dualistic, and expressive of Heraclitean fluxes and transformations, with continuous movement occurring between the supernatural world of spirits, demons, gods an ancestors and c ulture heroes and the empirical (to the Western mind) world of nature and humanity. Michael Harner speaks thus of the non-dualistic view of reality within shamanism generally, and within Amazonian native shamanism in particular:

"….. shamanism (can be) characterized in terms of Carlos Castañeda´s distinction between ordinary reality and non-ordinary reality. It is useful because it does not introduce when one is in non-ordinary reality things will seem quite as material as they are here."

Time is cyclic, repetitive, yet burgeoning and spontaneously determined in rhythm and rate from within processes of organic development, rather that by external law-like mechanism. Matter and spirit are drawn upon by human groups from nature and supernature, the returned to them in ritual and psychic identifications; the spirits of animal hunted an eaten are released back into the forest of nature and supernature, in

balance, and for a "steady state" economy of energies within the metabolism between humanity and nature.

In the Andes by contrast, small-scale local, settled, agricultural communities became integrated into large-scale civilizations occupying large territories, through complex state apparatuses, classes, occupational specializations and bureaucratic administrations. Very varied ecological niches and ecosystems were brought under human control to produce for human need.

Complex agro ecosystems have been created to direct energy flows toward humanly constructed ends. A centralized religious-cosmological system has integrated the regional variety of myth and spirit-world into a more or less unifying system, which included a hugely complex astrological-calendric cosmology based on close observation and measurement of the movements of the c3elestial bodies. This cosmological system harmonized religious ritual throughout the wider civilization or empire, coordinating the agricultural and pastoral tasks that varied in content and timing between different localities, underpinning the mechanisms of exchange, and movement of products between different communities and classes.

LETTER FROM COLOMBIA

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Colombia is famous and celebrated as the country that has the greatest geographical and ecological variety, and the largest biodiversity in relation to surface area, of any country in the world. In the Andean region the climate and ecology often change greatly after travelling only a few kilometers, whilst the Amazonian rain-forest region is one that affords immense variety of flora and fauna. But it is the Andean region – meant in the broadest sense, which includes the immense valleys and plains that lie within it – that has been most determinant with respect to Colombia´s destiny historically. In Colombia the Andes split into three distinct and mind-bogglingly rugged ranges – the *Cordillera Oriente, Central,* and *Occidental* – that have always made, and still do make, communications and transport between regions extremely difficult and demanding.

Colombia, as the north-western cornerpiece of the South American continent, linking North and Central America to South America, might look from a glance at the map, as a ´gateway' to South America. But in reality it is more like a huge great blocking wedge.

Without wishing to espouse a geographically determinant theory of human history, it is quite obvious that the geographical make-up of what is today called Colombia has always been a crucial influence upon the socio-historical characteristics of the region. That is to say, Colombia´s geographical features do not by themselves explain Colombian pre-history and history, but without reference to the former, one could not properly understand the latter. Put simply, geography may not be sufficient to explain the curious character of Colombia´s central problem - its violent multi-polar conflict - but it represents a necessary factor for the latter´s comprehension.

In pre-hispanic times, that is, before the arrival of Europeans in that region of South America today called Colombia, there never existed – according to archeological evidence – any form of society with a fully developed state, covering vast territorities, as there did in Peru for example. When the Spanish arrived in Peru, the Inca state ruled over one of the world´s largest ever empires. Before the Inca period there had been at least two other huge empires in what is today Peru and Bolivia – the Tihuanaco and the Huari. Significantly however, the Inca empire pushed its northern frontier only as far as the present-day border (roughly) between Colombia and Ecuador.

In the territory of present-day Colombia there were numerous pre-state societies, or chiefdoms, many of which developed superbly sophisticated art and sculpture in gold, stone, and pottery. These include the Muisca, the Guane, the Tairona, the Tumaco, the San Agustín, the Quimbaya, the Sinú and the Nariño – of which cultures the descendents of some still live in ´indigenous communities´. Why did one or another of these chiefdoms apparently never conquer or merge with at least some of the others, as the Incas who came from a valley in the Cusco region of Peru did, blow by blow, until they ruled an empire as large as the Romans had done? I don´t think this question has yet been fully answered. The explanation cannot be put down simply to the enormous geographical, climatic, and ecological variety of Colombia as such, for in Peru too there is enormous variety and the Inca empire precisely drew its strength from its domination of many ecological niches, allowing it to make use of and re-distribute a large number of distinct foods and other resources. I think the answer must be a function of the sizes of the particular areas which different pre-hispanic chiefdoms occupied in Colombia. Perhaps none of them occupied a sufficiently large and/or agriculturally productive enough area to sustain a population sufficiently large to support an army that could both defeat in battle and occupy a neighbouring chiefdom long enough to allow them to assimilate them to their dominance. There were wars between groups, sometimes chronic and long-term, but never apparently the permanent dominance of one major group over others. The Muisca for example, lived on the fertile plain of Bogotá, but did not move beyond a system of alliances between chiefs which included periodic conflict, in order to

develop a state, and still less did they conquer and occupy on a long-term basis other chiefdoms or other groups of chiefdoms. It must be something to do with the ratio between the size and/or productivity of ecozones, the populations they could sustain, and the size of armies necessary not just to win particular battles but to absorb other chiefdoms occupying different ecozones.

When the Spanish arrived in what they were to call Nueva Granada, they found the territory very difficult to penetrate, so that the conquest of Nueva Granada was slower than that of Peru and various other regions of Spanish South America. It is significant that Pizarro founded Lima, the later capital of Peru in 1534, while Jiménez de Quesada did not found Bogotá, the later capital of Colombia, until 1538. Four years was a long time in that frenzied period of conquest. The fact that the founding of Lima (far further away from the Caribbean, from where the Spanish launched their invasions of the mainland, than is Bogotá) came before the founding of Bogotá is testimony to all this. Even after their conquest of Colombia - which always remained incomplete, most jungle areas scarcely coming under Spanish rule - the Spaniards could not integrate the territory of Nueva Granada effectively.

Of course this was largely because the Spanish never intended to create ´nations´ in any case; different regions had stronger political and economic links with metropolitan Spain than they did with one another. But that situation – common to all the Iberian American colonies – was made even more chronic in Nueva Granada than elsewhere.

So that, when Simón Bolívar and the Independence Movement he led broke, through war, the ties of Nueva Granada with Spain, conflict between and within the different regions of now-named Gran Colombia broke out immediately nearly everywhere. Bolívar died in despair in 1831 as Venezuela and Ecuador split off from Gran Colombia, and the Colombia that remained began to engage in internal wars that erupted and re-erupted throughout all the nineteenth century. What was unleashed was much more than mere regional conflict; many social groups that had been squashed into the colonial hierarchy for nearly three centuries were now able to burst out and find their differences with the others. Colombia was showing itself to be a “Fragmented Country, Divided Society” as the historians Marco Palacios and Frank Safford significantly subtitle their recent history of Colombia. Similar conflicts certainly did arise in other parts of the no longer existent Spanish-American empire, but not to the degree witnessed in Colombia.

After the life-times of Bolívar and the other Independence leaders, throughout the rest of the nineteenth century perennial violent conflict was institutionalized between the Liberal and Conservative Parties. This was not class conflict, even in extremely mediated form. Each of the two entities had its ruling elite, and supporters in all social strata. There was no real difference in economic ideology or policy between the two parties; both relied on laissez-faire market principles yet both resorted to protectionism and support for domestic production at certain times and in certain spheres. They had significant

differences over the preferred role of the Catholic Church in the state, civil society, and education, and over whether Colombia should be federal (the Liberals) or unitary-centralist (the Conservatives).

But these differences cannot explain the savagery and physical brutality of the constantly resurgent violence, at every level of society and in many regions. It was like two symbolic orders permanently at war for little purpose; as in Jonathan Swift's satire two nation-wide gangs mirror-imaged and periodically fought each other.

The activities of the two parties with their local organizations reflected the lack of effective central state power; instead much of society´s life was organized into these two pyramidal hierarchies constantly in conflict. (This however did not prevent extreme factionalism among the political leaders of both parties, who frequently entered into tactical alliances with the other party.)

This very complex history can obviously not be followed closely into here; what is necessary to garner from it however, in order to understand the later twentieth century and the present-day tragedy of Colombia, is the conflictive fragmentation of the country into regions; the fact that the state has never administered the entire territory of Colombia; the habits of violent conflict that do not logically correspond to real, meaningful political or ideological struggles, and do not entail struggles between distinct and identifiable social groupings. Rather, violence goes round and round in the killing and torturing of victims in ways that are almost arbitrary from any viewpoint that would seek a progressive improvement in Colombian society. It is in these respects that there is continuation from the earlier Liberal-Conservative violence into the nineteen sixties and the post-sixties conflicts, up to and including now, which have not been, and still are not true ´civil wars´. The subtitle of Daniel Pécaut´s recent book on FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) reads: "A Guerrilla War Without End Or Without Ends?"

In 1948 the assassination of the radical Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán sparked off a chaotic period of conflict known as *La Violencia*. The earlier crazy, undirected Liberal-Conservative violence was released again. This terrible phenomenon is one of the seed-beds for the era of guerrilla and paramilitary violence, or perhaps one should say the ´mould´ into which the latter fell. For although the origins of FARC in the 1960s lie in peasant struggles – claiming or reclaiming land from large private haciendas, and in peasant self-defence against attacks from landowners and government forces – FARC was not the same from its inception nor did it develop in ways similar to classic revolutionary movements. The peasant self-defence groups from which FARC evolved were at the start of the 1960s fighting less the state than other self-defence groups, taking with them the traditions of La Violencia as well as those of the so-called ´mafia violence´ of the 1950s, through which individuals and groups struggled murderously against one another for business and economic gain, especially in certain coffee-producing regions.

FARC has always claimed that the immediate trigger for its birth was an attack on a ´zone of peasant self-defence´ called Marquetalia by government forces, as part of its U.S.-sponsored counterinsurgency offensive in 1964. However, FARC as an organization was formally constituted only two years later, in 1966, from a bloc of peasant self-defence groups.

Today, in the problematic areas of Colombia, multiple groups with shifting frontiers engage in various forms and degrees of conflict, between themselves and with the government. FARC, splintered paramilitary groups, and narco-traffickers fight one another in one area whilst cooperating where convenient or necessary elsewhere – over the production, shipment, and marketing of drugs. Paramilitary groups however tend to avoid direct conflict, preferring the massacre and displacement of civilians in FARC-controlled areas as a means to shrink the size of FARC´s dominions (though it is also true that FARC deliberately target civilians in their ´military campaigns´.

Paramilitary groups formed both to counter the growing power and size of FARC, but also to eliminate trade unionists, civil rights activists, and various categories of politician or journalist (amongst other people) that displease their paymasters. And like FARC the paramilitaries control zones of extortion from drugs, gold, oil, and coal production. Paramilitaries have often acted in covert cooperation with government forces and politicians. Yet at the same time it is frequently alleged that government-appointed military leaders are involved in arms sales to – guess who? - FARC.

FARC is rigid and unchanging about its objectives – which are nothing less than total power over all Colombia. It sees itself as the legitimate, armed government-in-waiting. Negotiations with FARC by the government have hitherto not yielded anything positive. This history is extremely complex, yet it seems clear that agreements have meant no more to FARC than temporary means to gain advantage, though it is also true that paramilitary murderers have also rendered peace agreements nil. But in any case the vicious circle of war-need for finance-extension of territory for extortion and drug production-need for more war, etc., probably makes cease-fires or peace agreements structurally impossible for FARC.

FARC seems to recognize no significant social or political changes that have occurred in Colombia since it was formed nearly fifty years ago. In this respect it displays a depressing likeness to the many ´failed´ or ´degenerated´ so-called socialist regimes that have subsisted or collapsed throughout the world over this whole historical period. Its ruthlessness makes it loathsome to the majority of Colombians living outside the regions of its rule, which include nearly all Colombia´s city dwellers (who of course watch everything on television, daily). Examples: FARC have been known to execute individuals found to be HIV positive. They frequently kill women who are believed to have had amorous relations with government soldiers. They kidnap any individual they

think will be useful, either to extort money or to trade them with the government for imprisoned FARC people. They often kidnap leftist politicians who favour the government talking with FARC and who oppose attempts at a military solution. Similarly with members of left-wing organizations which in any way disagree with FARC. The increasingly rare, yet essentially unchanging political declarations that emanate from FARC bear little relation to their actual activities and practices. There are few of FARC´s strategies more terrible than the deliberate displacement of hundreds of thousands of residents from areas that lie under FARC control, because their presence does not suit, for whatever reasons, what FARC sees as its interests.

Large swathes of FARC-controlled territory in the jungle have been colonized by FARC advancing together with landless peasants – territory which has never experienced the administration, the legality, nor the normal services provided elsewhere by the state. Sometimes FARC expels indigenous communities, so that it is as if a FARC-ruled domain has been planted in what was previously a political vacuum. In such areas FARC normally controls a coca- or poppy-producing agricultural economy, and decides which peasants will be allowed to grow the crops. Such favoured families are frequently obliged to provide a son or daughter for FARC´s army. FARC controls the sale of coca and other drugs to drug-traffickers; knowing that the drugs trade at this period of Colombian violence(s) is responsible for a huge proportion of the enormous annual numbers of homicides. Besides that, the profound cultural corruption that ensues from people´s seduction to a psychology of easy money can hardly be overstated.

Territorial control is an objective in itself for FARC, and is inseparably connected with extortion and the obtaining of sources of finance. This reality, common to FARC and the paramilitaries, is surely quite different from classical peasant revolutionary model in which ´liberated areas´ are established.

I think the hope must be that existing socio-historical forces currently eroding FARC will continue to do so, and that it will gradually break down and disintegrate. Increasing desertions, evident demoralization, the shrinkage of FARC-held territory and thereby the reduction of revenues from drugs and extortion; as well as a decrease in conviction and credibility on the part of both FARC people and outsiders, all tend to point in the direction of a slow contraction. These processes are far better ways to see FARC´s demise than a bloody militaristic defeat. Cunning acts to free hostages from FARC captivity without violence, such as President Uribe´s government has successfully pulled off recently are highly desirable, both practically and morally.

Yet FARC´s fortunes could change, as they have done before. Yet I think the decline of FARC is the single most important hope in Colombia today because of the huge areas over which it still dominates and because of its terrible effects upon Colombian society as a whole, as also upon a genuinely ´socialistic´ attitude of mind; that is, upon hope for a better society. For where civil society actually functions in Colombia, it is vibrant. If

FARC were no more, immense resources – human and material – would become newly available. Drug gangsterism and continuing paramilitarism might perhaps become easier to respond to effectively, and generally a ´civilized´, peaceful kind of left-wing politics might be more able to emerge. These are matters difficult to predict, but it does seem that a progressive politics in Colombia really cannot mature until the state administers at last, and has responsibility for, all Colombian territory.

Progressive changes might occur if some of the hopeless, socially fruitless multi-polar conflict presently occurring in Colombia could be reduced, which could only lessen the self-destructive, corrupt realities of Colombian society. Already existent humane and intelligent forces – idealistic political values that have gestated in the Colombian collective mind ever since the struggle for Independence - combined with enormous pent-up popular urges for greater equality, justice, and social welfare provision, might bring about social improvement, whilst simultaneously the popular understanding of the historical reasons underlying Colombia´s colossal, tragic problems would grow. That would in turn begin to unravel the evil twisting spiral of violence and general distrust that has engulfed Colombia, blocking its immense potential as a beautiful country possessing marvellous cultures, for so long – far, far too long.

THE CREATIVE MIND OF COLOMBIA

Many of the major poets of Colombia, such as José Silva, Barba Jacob, Leon de Grieff, and Raúl Jattin, hated living in their country, and wanted to escape; by suicide, or by simply going elsewhere. Dogmatic, conformist, stupid, cold and imaginationless they found Colombia: and in some strange way bore out the idea that this land is the Athens of South America, precisely perhaps because of the fact that there seemed to them to be a huge gulf between the creative and imaginative brilliance of a few individuals in Colombia and the dead, indoctrinated idiocy of nearly everyone else.

One has only to read the history of the Catholic Church in Colombia – in the Colonial Period and subsequently, especially during the so-called *Regeneración* – to realize how closed-off Colombian society has frequently been, and you only have to read a history of *"Los Estranjeros En Colombia"* such as that by Rodrigo García Estrada, to see how few outsiders there have ever been here since *La Conquista* – and usually only a few crazy individuals; that is, no large-scale immigration – to understand that Colombia is in many ways a self-enclosed "Imagined Community" that has never easily coped with "foreigners", at whom people stare, not in unfriendliness nor wishing to exclude "the other" consciously, but rather in an absolute bemusement.

From that, emerged:

> "Una noche,
> Una noche,
> a la una,
> a las dos, de la mañana……"
>
> (José Asunción Silva)

How unkind such judgements might seem to be. Are not Colombians very welcoming and kind, so sociable and expressive? Perhaps the point is that one must distinguish "phenomena" from "noumena", the "thing to be understood" from the "thing-in-itself". All this it seems, makes up an ever-growing mystery within the Colombian Imagination.

And when you think of the stupendous landscape(s) within which Colombians live! But that is part of the point: the separations caused by the immense geographical and ecological variations are part of the reason for a strange kind of mind that stretches from the first "Colombian" poet, Juan de Castellanos, with his endless, dragging, never tiring "longest poem ever written", with all its fascination and information-providing richness, to Jattin`s weird meanderings in steamy Cartegena, around and within his mother, and how she had been when he was in her womb, and how she was before he was ever conceived! – before he strayed out into a trafficky street, stoned, and got himself killed, in what must have been a partially desired escape and entrance into oblivion.

ALIENATION OR FULFILMENT?

Many people today, in all parts of the world and from all social strata, groups, nations, etc., suffer a terrible depression - which goes beyond all the usual reasons for sadness or

despair that life heaps upon them - and this ensues from viewing the immensity of humanity´s problems - the destruction of the planetary environment, increasing human population, desperate and growing inequalities and material misery for so many, failure to grapple with problems of injustice, war, and so on. In the face of all this, what sense can one have of a commitment to an alternative; what is the movement one should be part of and help in, to change the direction of an ever-growing disaster? "Impact your world!" the best-known journalists on CNN assert as part of the channel´s publicity to boast about its wonderful and committed News presentation. How cynical; they know there is a widespread wish to do just that, but how does watching CNN help one to do it? Karl Marx´s concept of alienation – one of the most powerful ideas to emerge from nineteenth century European thought – was concerned with the way that human beings, individually and collectively – have externalized their powers of thought and action as history has unfolded, have become estranged from their own selves, individually and socially, such that modern global society is more and more fragmented, atomized, and chaotic: no one controls their own life, no society controls the direction of its development or decides for itself its existence, its future. It´s all out of control: driven by forces brought into being by human beings – technology, economic systems, political processes etc. but not directed by them. We are mere ping-pong balls on the ocean waves, albeit that these are ultimately of our own making. The contrasting, ideal human condition would be - abstractly conceived – one where human beings – again individually and collectively – were able to direct their lives according to decisions consciously made in their minds. For this to be possible, human beings would have had to become unalienated from their selves and their essential powers, and would have had to become reintegrated (or, simply, integrated - the assumption that once people were unalienated and integrated before the Fall, is perhaps a religious left-over; or perhaps a continuation into Marx´s thought of notions about the harmonious 'noble savage' who lived or lives in 'primitive society'). The different faculties of the psyche would need to be harmoniously reintegrated, in the way that Schiller spoke of the all-rounded individual in his Aesthetic Letters – his ideas were of immense importance to Marx in his intellectual development. An harmoniously integrated human being would be one who, as in C.G. Jung´s redemptive psychological theories, balances with minimal internal or external conflict, the different aspects of the human personality – cognitive intellect, intuition, sensation, and affective feeling, and thus also (to use Freudian terms) the ego, the superego, and the id. Such a person would approach the tasks and challenges of life – and Marx was quite clear about this – like an artist, who seeks fulfillment in the challenging and exhausting, but ultimately satisfying struggle to create him/herself, and his/her world. Such would be the fruits of a profound overcoming of the alienated social and technical divisions of human labour. All easier said than done. To approach life with these ideals often only intensifies a person´s alienation and separation from the dominant, alienated reality, often causes even deeper misery than does conformity to the dull norms of existing alienated society. I certainly cannot present any definitive solution to these dilemmas: except to suggest that the issues here raised should be thought about igorously

and profoundly by all movements or organizations that strive to change the world in the directions of greater justice, happiness, and fulfilment.

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WHAT TO DO IN A CRISIS OF CAPITALISM?

This is certainly not the first crisis of Capitalism that the world has experienced, nor even the tenth – far from it, but what is extraordinary about this historical social-economic system is that every new crisis is popularly presented, or represented, as unique, something *sui generis*, when in fact the basic characteristics of capitalist crises have always had a great deal in common. Basically, there is a disjunction between profits, wages, level of investments, and consumption among other things, which periodically become out of sync, so that the preceding winding-up spiral turns into a descending winding-down spiral: reduction in investments, increasing unemployment, cuts in government expenditure, reductions in wages and living standards. This time around, financial capital has had a particularly large role to play, but I will not enter into any kind of detailed, specialized economic argument about this – just turn on the television or read any remotely intelligent newspaper to tune into some of the debates about that.

The extraordinary thing is the way that Capitalism engenders amnesia about the past – although there is constant reference to "the worst recession since the Second World War", or "previous recessions" etc., there is a studied ignorance at work in the media, among politicians, and in the opinions of those pundits that the media invite to speak on them, about the cycles that Capitalism goes through, and always has gone through, since its inception as a dominant economic system, first in Europe, and then gradually throughout the world. There has been no simple repetition in these cycles, nor any even-spacing in historical timing, but any serious study of history shows that there are such cycles, however they are to be interpreted.

Some political theories (certain versions of Marxism among them) have considered that the system could best be changed during an upward ascent of the economy. Here there is some stability in social life, optimism of public mood, with education and cultural activities expanding whilst much more favours the transformation of a complex society´s structure.

Others (again, some of them Marxist) have considered the opposite to be true; it is in crisis, disaster, collapse, and misery that people - especially the poor and the working

classes – are compelled to take sides, decide what to do, join up to a movement committed to a radical change in society.

Today I think we can see that reality is not so black and white as these conceptions suggest – if it ever was. Economic growth takes the sting out of the popular sense of injustice, exploitation, and inequality, whilst crises can fuel fear, anger, and tendencies towards sectarianism and hatefulness, psychological confusion and intense insecurity. You can´t win with Capitalism. Max Weber´s "iron cage" of capitalist rationality showed itself to have more sharp barbs than even he explicitly imagined.

If we look today at the debate within the United States of America - if "debate" is what the manic screaming campaigns on the one hand can be described as - we see on the one hand the far right-wing Republicans, who seem to have entirely monopolized the field on their side. Cut government expenditure, let loose into Hell all dependents on Welfare, cut the deficit, only finance America´s wars generously, and let the "free market" do its perfect work. How many times have we heard that before?

On the other hand, we hear a softened, timid, muted and vague Democrat argument, from President Obama and those around him, of a mild Keynesian kind, that cannot even dare to speak its name. On neither side of course, can there be a straight acceptance that American Capitalism – though far from over yet, is up against huge structural changes in the world-balance of economic power, particularly due to the rise of China, which are having, and will continue to have, immense implications in both global political and cultural fields.

None of these considerations touch directly upon the crises of climatic change, pollution, overpopulation, water shortage, extinction of species, resource disappearance, and ecological disaster in general within the biosphere and the planetary system. Any economic system can, has, and will be able to cause all these things, but at the moment it is Global Capitalism that is doing the destructive work, and in spite of much fluffy talk, is doing next to nothing to alter the general juggernaut towards ultimate destruction (in spite of the moaning of Fox News and the far-right Republicans who yell out their complaints that absurd ecological arguments are combining with Barack Obama´s socialist policies to destroy American, Christian, free society.)

It is obviously the responsibility of every thinking person to openly present realities – historical, economic, political, moral, and ecological, whenever it is appropriate to do so. This is of course extremely difficult given the way the Mass Media are organized – globally and locally.

SHAMANISM AND POETRY

Shamanism is the most ancient religion of humankind, the original, archetypal, primordial, many thousands of years-old-kind of spiritual belief system. Where Shamanism existed in the past, and where it still exists today, it represented and still represents the essence of the social group in which it lives. It was perhaps universal among humanity in the past, and continues today in some small-scale hunter-gathering and horticultural societies, whose futures are imperiled. In these the essence of the society´s culture is congealed or concentrated into the shaman, and the shamanic sessions that he or she leads.

The shaman is able to fly into celestial realms, into the sky and down under the earth, where he or she meets spirits, ancestors, and all kinds of forces, as well as the spirits of animals and plants to negotiate with them tomorrow´s hunt; and the harvest; and he implores these spirits to make themselves available for the hunt and harvest for the survival of the human group now and in the past. In this Spirit World, entered into with Ayahuasca or other hallucinogens, the shaman and the group with whom he enters visionary flight, try to to cure sicknesses physical and psychological, confronting good and bad spirits, which cause illness. For the human group, for individuals, for the fertility of nature, the Sun and Rain are masculine, the Earth feminine. This is practical, economic, religious, and artistic – the shamanistic chanting is both music and poetry. The shaman is a priest, a doctor, a psychiatrist, a poet, a musician, who enters into the female supernatural world in visions, as part of the macrocosm of nature. The *vara sonajera*, *Pene del Sol* of the shaman is connected with curing, ensuring fertility, ensuring food and water, and well-being in the deepest senses, galvanizing the group with new spirit and the vitality required for confronting life´s difficulties – as do religion, art, and poetry; all these were primordially connected, but they came to take on specialized roles: the roles of the shaman came to be split up, in later, more complex, larger, complexly differentiated, class societies, ultimately with a state.

The artist, poet, or musician is the modern shaman: art explores the cosmos, and experience in the world and in life – the hell, and the triumphant visionary ecstatic flight, and enters problems, and transcends them, in a new spirit for life. The shaman becomes a philosopher, a priest, an astrologer, an astronomer; observing celestial bodies to discern the seasons for sowing and harvesting crops, and an artist, poet, writer, musician, and in time, a scientist. He becomes split into many specialized roles.

The poet is one part of the ancient shaman, gradually emancipated from his other roles. Art and poetry are no longer totally connected with religion as before, or the history of the tribe, praising the chief or the king as a bard, but rather more and more the modern "poet" who can "write what he wants" now, such as the Romantic poet. He surpasses the poet patronized by lord or king, and more and more depends on an anonymous, fickle, market "taste". The Romantic poet, with visionary imagination enters the essence of Nature, breaking the "veil of familiarity" (Shelley), seeing the divine essence and wonder in the beauty of Nature, and in visionary prophecy perceives what *should* be in the human world – like a curing shaman, in an ecstatic vision of humanity and nature. What is seen in visionary clarity is a human society of justice, equality, and love. He or she sees beneath the surface, into the essence of what *should* be, among humanity, living in harmony with itself and with Nature and the Universe.

THE REAL TRUTH IS YOUR OWN

The Real Truth is your own, though it may be hinted at within the treasured sources of many "Great Religions": Judaism-Christianity-Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, Taoism, Chan Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. There are also the sublime inspirations from inumerable other religions and spiritual traditions from all continents of the world. In all cases the wondrous, genuine hints, over time, can become sclerotized into timelessly fixed norms and rituals, Temples and Churches with their orthodoxies, dogmas, priestly hierarchies with their obsessions about Death, concern with power, horrible fantasies of death, carnage, punishment and destruction(when taken as holy writ and literal prophecy rather than as poetry) as in the Revelations, or in the Aztec need to sacrifice thousands of people to Huitzilopochtli; dreadful nightmares imposed upon the hitherto probably fairly "normal" majorities, by dark and abnormal sadists who thirst for domination over others` souls. Something similar is sometimes done with the canons of Great Poets, but to a far lesser extent than with religions.

The Asian and Oriental sages like the Buddha, Lao Tzu and Confucius have been subjected much less to the kind of abuses performed upon Jesus or Mohammed. Rather similarly, if you listen to an Amazonian shaman telling a myth or legend of his people, as he tells it to you, you are free to take the myth as a timeless reality and a sacred situation, or hear a legend as a story that takes on deep meanings for the group from which he comes. These are all pregnant with vitally important implications, but it is not demanded that they be taken absolutely literally. Whereas at times, on pain of death, with the myths of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Christ within Christianity, or the legends of

feeding the five thousand, or the raising from the dead of Lazarus, it has been demanded that they be taken completely literally and in only one way. The Eastern religions seem to have always been relatively more open-minded than the Semitic religions, tolerating a range of interpretations of issues around which some debate is possible. Similarly the commandment THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD AND THAT GOD IS ME AND I DEMAND TO BE EXCLUSIVELY WORSHIPPED (whether by one nation or by the whole world) has been the central dogma of the "Semitic" religions, whilst in Hinduism there are numerous gods and goddesses with different attributes, though unequal in power, rather as in the Ancient Greek pantheon. Although these have often emanated from the incorporation of deities from outside the Vedic scriptures into the Vedic fold, they really are deities, not beatified human beings like the Virgin Mary, the saints, or the angels.

Words like God and the Supreme Being are not in themselves terrible, they simply passed beyond any great usefulness centuries or millennia ago by becoming, especially the first, nearly impossible to think or communicate with, except perhaps at certain occasional moments. This is surely what Nietzsche meant when he proclaimed "God is Dead!", but he wanted to be prevocative. (He still believed in The Ground of Being after all.)

Around two and a half centuries ago, English/British poets like William Blake, William Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats started instead to use words like the Divine, Eternity, Beauty, Truth, or the Spirit of Beauty, but these are no less in danger of infection, unless they are used only under the deepest impress of spirit, soul, and emotion, not as words spouted from a pulpit or in a gloomy classroom, or in a public talk or essay (though that might depend of course).

"The Real Reality", The Divine Cosmos, Anenome, Love: these are *ours*. They *are* us, as individual human beings. There is no split between "us" and "the world", between us and the Divine, us and the Truth, us and the Universe. This last word brings us to the crux of the issue in terms of evolution and time: that is, from the Big Bang onwards (we can say absolutely nothing about "before" that event, though whether the Theory of the Big Bang stands or falls makes no difference to the essential mysteries surrounding the questions: how long has "The Universe" existed, will anything go on "forever", and so on). Accepting provisionally the Theory of the Big Bang however, from that event onwards, "we" have been and are completely part of the Creative Process. Our elementary particles came and come from that instant, the chemicals we are made up of came and come from the stars and particularly the sun in the Creation of the Solar System: we were and are implicated also at every stage or moment in the Origins of Life in the sea, and in biological evolution. With our salty blood, our short tails, our vestigial and unuseful appendices (but apparently now not completely so) we have been and still are located right within that gory, glorious process; and all this is clear without mentioning DNA.

So “we” *are* of Nature: how could it ever have been thought otherwise. Likewise with the way we think, or try to think; how we feel, or imagine we feel; how we intuit, sense, and mystically merge with the Divine - the Miraculous Universe of which we are part, always, both at moments when we feel that way and those when we do not so feel (the “spark of God is within us”). Our modes of “knowing” or “unknowing” have developed and still are developing in immensely complex evolutionary, cultural, and individual ways, which are quite as difficult to understand as are the “things” they try to “know”.

To describe what we are talking about here as “memory traces” has some metaphorical value, but to take the notion too literally would be unsatisfactory. In the first place “memory” conceived of in the conscious sense can scarcely be very ancient; though if we consider “memory” in the cultural, prehistorical, and paleological senses - stretching back through thousands and indeed millions of years before *homo sapiens*, and even further before *homo sapiens sapiens* had arisen: might we, asleep in our nightmares or dreams of paradise not be variously terrified by the noises of an enormous, harsh, extinct screeching bird or a howling, bellowing land animal, or charmed by the sweet delights of a forest wood bird, such as Wagner`s in “Siegfried”? The concept of “trace” is revealed here, as in the case of our salty blood. So EVERYTHING goes way back to the “beginning” at least. As in Mahler`s Third Symphony the eschatology leads from absolute origins to salvation in spirit and consciousness.

When the windows of the individual soul are opened to wonder, through the ears and eyes, the sense of smell, and the senses of the body, the imagination can be excited to extremes, or to serenity incarnate. Then the co-penetration of man and nature is an intense and visceral state of the soul. One is oneself, we are ourselves, in the reality of United Being. That condition is what some consider as “knowing God”, but for me such a phrase implicitly divides “knower from known”, and often implies or dictates the particular places, conditions, times or rituals in which this “knowing” normally occurs, just as it de-mysticises and de-ecstasizes the indescribable, utter bliss experienced (inexpressible except in some music or poetry - unsurprisingly, since that divine bliss/”knowledge” is from where the latter partly comes anyway). The loss in understanding contained in a phrase like “knowing God” is due to using the cognitive word “knowing”, a loss which is almost inevitable since, except for thinkers like Giordano Bruno who was burnt at the stake, or Spinoza, for which thinkers, as pantheists, God *was* Nature and vice versa, “knowledge” in Western thought has predominantly come to refer to “rational”, “scientific”, “literal”, and “conscious” processes.

Thus there is an experience of One Wholeness that allows the idea that “I” and “God” are indissolubly unified and merged, such that music and poetry can be *literally* divine, not only metaphorically so, whether we feel at any particular moment in or out of “Communion”. This awareness is at the basis of English/British Romantic Poetry, Taoism, and Chan Buddhism. It is not surprising that the description above of what I called “the reality of United Being” is so erotic, as is so much of Shelley`s “poetry of

nature", for it is precisely the suppression of erotic ecstasy throughout so much of Christian history that links it to the separation of man from nature, and soul or spirit from body, as also the divine from the profane or mundane. The puritanical de-sensualization of the divine went and still goes hand in hand with the dead mechanization and technicist transformation of the earthly and the physical into the Galilean-Newtonian worldview, and the emptying of Creative Life on every level of pre-human and human "creative evolution" into a de-sacralized Nature. Though someone might say ""God" evolved with us", or "we evolved with God," because we are intrinsically parts of the same miraculous but also in some sense scientific "law-abiding" process, and that might be getting at the same thing, I nevertheless would generally still prefer a wording that avoids the word "God".

MOZART´S GRACE

Mozart´s Grace. By Scott Burnham (Princeton University Press. Princeton and Oxford, 2013, xi 189 pp.

(To be published in "The European Legacy" in 2015)

Scott Burnham speaks about a unique beauty, as if one were making love to an Eternal Idea, in Mozart´s music – like a throbbing human heartbeat, which is somehow also cosmic. The idea that "Mozart composed the most beautiful music we can know" has been "commodified", Scott Burnham thinks, in the idea "of a so-called "Mozart Effect" (in a book by Don Campbell), a kind of spiritual balm that enhances the growth of house plants, increases the intelligence of children about to take tests, and generally leads the troubled modern mind to a semblance of serenity." (3)

Yet perhaps not all the talk of special curing qualities in Mozart´s music is nonsense. The discovery, for example, of an enhancement in spatial-temporal mental imaging and functioning in human subjects, and research that purports to link such performance-improvement to distinct neuro-physiological processes in the brain; or the calming of seizures, amongst other troubles, is not absurd, though in general I share with Burnham the wish to speak more intuitively and unpurposively, rather than rationally and scientifically, of the way Mozart´s music miraculously and mysteriously enters into the very essence or innate fabric of erotic, cosmic, delicious or excruciatingly melancholic,

love. Thus Burnham concludes his marvellous book with certain jewel-like phrases as these:

“It is as though he transforms the ever available lightness of consciousness into music. For Mozart´s music captures the mobility of consciousness, as a fluid, human medium; the gracefulness of consciousness, in its weightless maneuvering; and the grace of consciousness, as a crucial endowment of identity, the gift of self-awareness…
“There is a strong sense that Mozart´s music lives knowingly in a world of beautiful appearances, a consoling realm for fallen spirits who have lost the key to things as they are. …The beauty that results is as real as a rainbow.” (167-8)

As a soupcon from the author´s oeuvre, let us consider what he writes at the beginning of the chapter called “Grace and Renewal”. This can be well grasped even if at the moment of reading it one is not listening to the music discussed.

“If man is the melancholy animal that knows he must die, so too is he the hopeful animal that knows renewal. As a basic rhythm of life, renewal is available with every onset of spring, every sunrise, every breath. In much Western art music, the potential for renewal is composed into the musical experience: an intramural renewal is enacted every time a recognizable tune returns within a movement.

“The Andante from the Piano Concerto in G Major, K453, offers an enchanting entrance into this aspect of Mozart´s art. Its opening five-bar utterance returns four times in the course of the movement. Each of these returns is prepared differently, and each leads to a different place. The utterance itself possesses a kind of self-contained simplicity that allows it to act as a miraculous foil to all the musics that surround it… It´s functional presence is hard to pin down: it has been hailed as a frame, a motto, an incomplete question, an inscription, a proposition.” (117)

In a Note to this as interesting as the main text, we read: “Cuthbert Girdlestone heard it as an incomplete question, with a presence like that of “an inscription carved over a portal and repeated at intervals inside the building.” Joseph Kerman calls it a proposition, “balancing two senses of the word, that of proposal and that of invitation. For Charles Rosen, it is a “frame” for the form, for Susan McClary, Elaine Sisman, and Richard Taruskin, a “motto.” (179)

This whole idea resembles the poet William Wordsworth´s poetic expression that there can be “spots of time” in experience - immaculate moments – Eternal Nows in the language of Zen Buddhism; moments where Mozart transcends, excels, even himself, in such moments of heaven – in sacred, mystical experiences, in a communion with cosmic love, or nature. Thus “Tovey once said this: “Mozart has uttered one of those sublimities which are incomparable with each other and with everything else, except as touchstones for one´s own sense of beauty.”” (5)

This book is not about Mozart´s life, nor his character; nor is it a biography, nor about the socio-historical-cultural context in which his extraordinary and tempestuous existence took place ("nature´s unique gift to humanity" as Wolfgang Hildesheimer puts it) – though each of these aspects inevitably creep into it. It is about his music, in particular those moments in which Mozart soars beyond even his own perfection. About this Scott Burnham refers to Mozart´s "Grace", which points to the complete lack of "service music", or fill-in space, of which there is never a squeak nor gesture. He wrote "exactly the number of notes that he required", to paraphrase an unconfirmed remark that Mozart is supposed to have made.

The fact that Mozart was always so young, a prodigy-genius from the beginning, places him in a completely special, unique condition. Quite apart from his perfect musicality, his loving musical and dramatic sensitivity, his innovative bold creativity, he expressed a sympathy and "love for humanity": mercy, forgiveness, gentle kindness, and an urge for justice. But for Scott Burnham there is something else, that he calls "Grace". I do not disagree with this wonderment, though perhaps I would choose another word. For Mozart´s music is often bursting with intensity of feeling; and it is then heart-rending, as in the first movement of the 39th Symphony, with its savage, brutal, ascending pain, its crying, jarring, "difficult" intensity. "Grace" might seem to mean something lightly delicate and Apollonian – did not Goethe compare the slow movement of the 40th Symphony to a Grecian Urn? Of course it all depends on what Goethe meant by that. But I rather disagree with Burnham that Mozart´s music is never "searing"; that is, with sorrow and desperation reaching excruciating Dionysian beauty: though yes, it is always on a certain level "controlled".

But let us consider closely this word "Grace" that is so central to Scott Burnham´s thought about Mozart. In the Chambers Concise Dictionary of English, the relevant definitions are "easy elegance in form or manner: what adorns and commends to favour: favour: kindness: the undeserved mercy of God: divine influence: eternal life or salvation: v.t. to mark with favour: to adorn."

In addition to Scott Burnham´s examples I would include the Adagio of Mozart´s first Symphonia Concertante, with its utter melancholy and simultaneous "enantiodromatic" joy. Is the throbbing of the strings in this Adagio a freezingly painful sadness or a warm, glowing heartbeat, as it seems softly to wind up again and again? Mozart wrote K297B, at the age of 21 years, in Paris, *before* his mother died; and nor yet had the girl he thought he loved rejected him (whose sister he later married). He found Paris a rather cold place, and was lonely. Perhaps he was dreaming of Aloysia, who can say. It seems he later forgot about this masterpiece, when at last he began to list his works.

Was Mozart really caught short at the age of 35, simply burnt out, or the victim of some terrible illness or illnesses, or was his life a kind of single, fast meteoric "creative arc", an

almost mystically pre-ordained destiny, which began at the age of four, as Hildesheimer suggests? Or as a teacher at my school once said to me: “Mozart was finished”, such that it was a total completion, not something cut short. The Requiem sounds so perfect, with the dying Mozart apparently dictating and puffing out his cheeks to sing the final parts of this unbelievable, miraculous music to his 22 year-old pupil Sussmayer.

Scott Burnham´s idea that there is in Mozart a parallel to Kantian Enlightenment philosophy is very interesting. “With this uncanny melding of the deeply personal and the transcendently suprapersonal, the inner-worldly and otherworldly, we are verging on the realm of what some have called post-Kantian subjectivity.

“The occluded core of this modern construction of subjectivity is the noumenon, the opposite number of the phenomenon in Kant´s transcendental analytic, the supersensible thing-in-itself, forever unavailable to human cognition.”(114) Schopenhauer would later assert that music, like no other medium, can give voice to this noumenal realm. Marshall Brown spoke of Mozart´s “revolutionary self-absorption”, manifested in the slow introduction to the “Dissonance” Quartet, in which the music seems to access some preconcious realm, some deeply interior space. These are evocations of the supernatural, or of preternatural dissonances. “These rapturous moments sound as oblique refractions from some other dimension… and intimate an altered, heightened consciousness”. “Frequently”, quoting Maynard Soloman in another Note, the author affirms that Mozart´s greatest beauties ”exist in brief compass, concentrated in fleeting, self-contained passages whose overwhelming effect is magnified by their unexpected emergence and subsidence into a less rapturous context”. (178) This Mozartian divinity Burnham contrasts with an infinite recreation in earlier music, such as in the Baroque, of the same, unchanging Divine Truth; more external, less interiorized. An expression of certainty comes to be replaced by something more disturbing and passionate, as Robbins Landon has commented; and Mozart´s contemporaries realized this, some not liking it. The Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg, who was poor Mozart´s ignorant and unkind employer, was one of these.

This passionate interiority was of course pushed yet further with Beethoven, and the contrast between the two as discussed in this book is fascinating. Deep lovers of Mozart will tend to agree with Burnham. Mozart´s early Romantic sensibility, whereby we can hear in his music “intimations of this new, interiorized self, still deeply suffused with a sense of what has been lost, namely, the transparent and innocent harmony of Enlightenment faith” has an affinity, if one really listens to both, to the music of Shelley´s poetry, for as Burnham says “To lose that innocence is to find a new kind of beauty, the melancholy beauty of ironic intimation, the sound of the unreachable noumenon.”(115) On the contrast between Mozart and Beethoven, Burnham has this to say:

"If the Commendatore´s death brings on the supernatural as the sudden absence of overbearing sound, the very beginning of the opera´s overture achieves a related effect with the sudden onset of such sound. For many listeners, the opening of this overture is one of the great shockers of the Viennese Classical era, right up there with the beginning of Beethoven´s *Eroica*. The harmony textbook is no help here, for it instructs us only that we hear a tonic followed by a dominant, as in any number of declamatory symphonic openings. …how could such everyday ingredients create the effect of this opening, which is not just arresting but materializes with paralyzing immediacy, like the head of Medusa?..." (40-41) How this is done is then explained immaculately and in detail.

"…there exists in Mozart a symphonic dissonance quite literally as bold as the *Eroica´*s most famous dissonance, and it is found in the slow introduction to Symphony No. 39. After an exquisitely wrought sequence over a pulsing pedal point on the dominant B-flat, the B-flat and its insistent rhythm switch to the upper registers. This has the intensifying effect of bringing the action closer.

"Although Beethoven´s dissonance (from the middle of the first movement of the *Eroica*) is an exact transposition of Mozart´s, it does not arise as the hottest link of a linear sequence but rather as an astonishing *non plus ultra*, a showstopping dissonance after which the scene must change. Beethoven´s dissonances in the Eroica seem to precipitate themselves more as verticalities, and they can come on with the visceral force of blows; Mozart´s are always more linear, as in the heightened sigh, or other types of tragic intensification." (81-83)

C. Robbins Landon wrote about the extraordinary quality of "enantiodromia" in Mozart´s music, taking up C.G. Jung´s idea of the "coincidence of opposites", which has its precursors in Heraclitus, Plato, and Hegel. It can sound joyful at one moment, sorrowful at another; sparkingly light at one moment, tragically ironic at another – and very often both poles at the same time. This simultaneity of opposites relates also to the "partial identity of subject and object" in Hegel´s philosophy, as well of course to the all-pervasive insight of Heraclitus that we never enter the same stream twice or, that is, in the same way.

Strikingly, yet unobtrusively, Scott Burnham moves from one example to another in one work after another, in no kind of chronological order nor even in an order of genres (he attempts, as he says, no attempt at comprehensive coverage at any level). It is as if, quite rightly, he sees no importance in the developmental sequence of Mozart´s music: it is all *Mozart*, whether written when he was eleven, sixteen or thirty-five years old, and in whatever form or genre; for, like no other composer, Mozart wrote equally perfectly in all genres, instruments, or voices available to him in his lifetime, as well as inventing some new forms, such as the Piano Concerto, and composing for a celestially strange instrument like the Glassharmonica, hardly known beyond Mozart´s miraculous piece for it. Scott Burnham´s charge is to explain exactly how, musically, Mozart achieves his

emotional, spiritual, metaphysical, playful and erotic effects. Of course other brilliant musical analysts such as Donald Tovey and Alfred Einstein have attempted this before, and like them Burnham has brought together his own personal and unique experiences of Mozart from a lifetime of love and ecstatic appreciation:

"I find myself standing alongside all those who have been tempted to give voice to their enchantment with Mozart. As I recede for good into this happy company… I invite you to savor its knowing innocence, how it opens both outward and inward, leaves a finger´s touch on the heart…" (168)

Beauty held in suspension; beauty placed in motion; beauty as the uncanny threshold of another dimension, whether inwardly profound or outwardly transcendent; and beauty as a time-stopping, weightless suffusion that comes on like an act of grace. These are the "categories" that Burnham uses to grasp the uniquely beautiful and utterly otherworldly qualities of Mozart´s music.

Such are the mysterious qualities of beauty and enchantment in Mozart – "commodified" according to Burnham´s interesting characterization of the idea of a "Mozart Effect" – though that idea does hold some truth, as I have already suggested. For it echoes the notion that Mozart in some sense reaches the fundamental structures of the Universe, as if "the master plucked his music ready-made from the Universe," as Albert Einstein so wonderfully put it, or as if there is "here pure sound, conforming to a weightless cosmos, triumphant over all chaotic earthliness, spirit of the world-spirit", as Alfred Einstein so magnificently put it (quoted in part in Burnham (2)); or, as Wolfgang Hildesheimer so touchingly suggested, Mozart was "an unearned gift to humanity, nature´s unique, unmatchable, and probably unmatchable work of art." The "music of the spheres" – in mathematical, Pythagorian, ethereal harmonies etc. of the "cosmos" and of "life" – in physiological rhythms, the very Forms, in the Platonic sense, of emotions, the very being of sexual ecstasy, are yet other metaphors and images that strain towards the same "personal attempt to describe what is striking about the sound of Mozart" (4); in order to understand better something that always remains ultimately ineffable, certainly unreachable through words. A secure self-confidence on one level, a soft, sensitive vulnerability on another – Mozart´s music is at once untouchable and touching, and Burnham´s wish is to "listen closely and describe their effects as I hear them". (5)

There is in Mozart´s music an excruciating kind of lovingness, beauty (Scott Burnham is not ashamed of using this word as it is not the same as "prettiness"), and sorrow simultaneously. Yet these words hardly touch the mystery, miracle, of Mozart. Who was he? What is surely clear, is that he lived raw, on the edge: his "classicism", "perfection", was not some kind of withdrawn phenomenon but the immersion of an absolutely unique "genius" plunged into the maelstrom of existence, in ecstasy, amazement, terror, and spiritual and emotional, indeed erotic, passion. Mozart lived just before the idea of "genius" in the modern sense had arisen (and nor was the ancient Greek idea of an

inspiring demon-spirit who was part of and always behind a man commonly understood in Mozart´s time or place). The concept of an especially creative, wildly and impossible-to-understand, irrationally and incomparably miraculous soul – applied in retrospect to Leonardo da Vinci, J.S. Bach, and later to Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner and so on was not around in the still alternatively stiff on the one hand, or on the other trivial cultural world of the Austrian capital of the Empire at this time. The vocabulary for Mozart was still that of "talent", as Hildesheimer so ably shows.

Scott Burnham quotes Karl Barth: "It may be that when the angels go about their task of praising God, they play only Bach. I am sure, however, that when they are together *en famille*, they play Mozart and that then too our dear Lord listens with special pleasure."(1) Hildesheimer responds to this statement by suggesting that instead of such heavenly fantasies, "one ought perhaps to have done something for this divine musician during his earthly life… the greatest genius in recorded human history."

As Daniel Bahrenboim put it in a snatch I once saw of a TV interview with him: "There are bad composers; and there are great composers. But then," he said, with a marvellous gesture of his right hand, "and then there is Mozart."

Tragedy is everywhere in Mozart, as is also ecstatic happiness and supreme, absolute joy; but these do not seem necessarily to correspond chronologically to the moments of his life in which he wrote the music in question. (Hence the point above about developmental sequence in Mozart´s music.) It is all most strange. It is as if his being was a preconceived totality, moments of which were plucked out in the process of his composing his perfect, divine music; yet he obviously lived real miseries and normal happinesses in ordinary linear time as well.

No one, I would think, could write music like that of Mozart without having experienced emotions similar to those which he expressed. I cannot believe that he lived in some kind of hermetically sealed-off abstract world from which he could turn out miracles simply as some kind of removed, creative god. What sickens some people, is that the calm sweet beauty that flows over us like a kitten´s purring, or drowns you in pain, doubt, or fear, is sometimes talked of in ways that ignore what he actually went through. Yet the utter originality of genius does not negate the effects of influence from others, for Mozart above all (such as from JC Bach and Michael and Joseph Haydn). At every point in Mozart one hears echoes of other sounds, and already existent musical forms, raised up from deep within to an extraordinary transcendence; as well as anticipations and precursors of later "great" music - from Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann and Wagner; to Bruckner, Mahler, and even Schoenberg.

THE FALL OF THE US EMPIRE. Global Fault-Lines and the Shifting Imperial Order. Vassilis K. Fouskas and Bulent Gokay. Pluto Press 2012

(To be published in "Studies in Marxism" 2015, Great Britain).

A central tenet of this book is that "globalization/financialization cannot survive under a dollar-based regime of accumulation, and that it threatens the fundamentals of US global supremacy established in the 1940s." (xv) The book is a review of the gradual and painful decline of the Anglo-American political economies since the late 1960s, which have been beset by the rise of other capitalist caucuses around the world, especially in Asia. The roots of the present crisis, the authors argue, are to be found in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and are "consubstantial" with the relative economic decline of the United States as the key imperial power in the capitalist world order. The global financial crisis hit the Anglo-American heartland in 2007, and continued into a crisis of the "real economy" and of the "political classes that are trying – unsuccessfully – to manage it." (xv)

The two main policy responses to their structural crises on the part of the US and the UK were "globalization and neoliberalism, which did not succeed in reversing the course of their downturn." Crucially, these very policies not only "weakened their political economies further," but supported the rise of other economies – particularly China, Russia, and India – which have embraced capitalism. After all the decades of fighting against the possibility of a different kind of economy and society than capitalism coming into being, the West now finds itself, in resentful resistance, threatened by the capitalist East: "US-led policy undermines the very dominance of the United States in the world socio-economic system."(xvi) In a way, this last assertion is a huge supposition wrapped up into the concept of contradiction. But this is rather how the book is; in parts very good but in others drawing on such a width of theoretical explanation that it risks not really being able to explain very much at all.

This systemic transformation can, according to Fouskas and Gokay, be theorized to a good extent in terms of Trotsky´s concept of ´uneven and combined development´, but that theory retains some Eurocentrism in their view. A more radically appropriate concept is André Gunder Frank´s ´global fault-lines´, which no longer "assumes that the

developmental impetus for the universe derives always from the West."(xvi) The forces behind the power shift to the global East, which is neither linear nor symmetrical, rest upon developments that have taken place since the 1970s: these include the collapse of the USSR, financialization, and neo-imperialist US strategy after ´9/11´, constructed around the fabricated ´war on terror´ myth. "Continuous destruction of the environment" is also included in this list, but it is difficult to see how that is behind the shift of capitalism to Asia – this destruction, described briefly quite well and realistically in the book is scarcely a cause of the shift as it is hardly taken very seriously in any of the major capitalist centres of the world. The issue of resource depletion *is* a factor within the ´totality´ of processes involved in this transformation however, and that is well discussed in the book.

The issue of environmental destruction is a vexed one, even for the arguments of these authors, as at times they seem somewhat to celebrate the global capitalist shift to the East as something almost liberating, though they also state that: "The continuing degradation of the ecosystem at least from the 1970s onwards, speaks volumes about the inability of the ruling classes around the world to control… global fault-lines… These are constraints/vulnerabilities not just upon the United States, but upon all global powers and the world system as a whole. The world system may not have the capacity to sustain another full-fledged major developmental impetus led by China and India, so the prospect of a democratically and regionally/locally planned world economy, oriented towards satisfying social need rather than maximizing profit… arises as the only feasible alternative."(xvii)

Indeed, and would only the latter come soon into being! But feasible or not, if capitalism persists anywhere in its present forms for very long, the consequences for human society and nature on our planet will be still more disastrous than they are now. The authors say "the world economy needs… an environmentally friendly socialist project". Agreed; but then they say: "Global fault-lines… work in favour of socialism and green politics, emancipating new radical forces and social subjects." (146) I wish I could see these last as hopefully as they do: "A socialist alternative (that) is more efficient, more humane and more ecologically sustainable… assumes that society is an inclusive social compact that builds structures around the human needs of the many, rather than the profits and privileges of the few. It would also have the potential to deal meaningfully with the world environmental crisis, because it relies on neither the growth imperative, nor the externalization of the costs of pollution…" (151) The examples given for such new radical forces include the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the US, the resistance to Austerity in Southern Europe, and the struggles for some kind of democracy in North Africa and the Middle East. As for China, for which no specific anti-capitalist movement is cited, it is true that there have been considerable advances in some workers´ incomes and rights in recent years, but in general China is undergoing a gruesome capitalist industrial revolution and is facing immense problems of its own, including pollution, an ageing population, and a fall in exports in the context of the global crisis.

As Fouskas and Gokay see it, “globalization and neoliberalism as clusters of policy led by the Anglo-American core” (xviii) began in the wake of the Bretton Woods system´s collapse in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was a politically conscious decision taken by the Nixon Administration in response to the pressure exerted on the dollar-gold link by “the other two caucuses of capitalist accumulation… Japan, on the one hand, and France and Western Germany on the other.”(3) But from 1971 to 1991 growth and profitability were very low. Despite a temporary pick-up during the Clinton era, the authors show quite convincingly that globalization and neoliberalism failed to reverse declining profit rates in the West or to resolve the over-accumulation crisis resulting from the earlier phase of Keynesianism and the fixed exchange rates regime.

The crucial conceptual apparatus for this treatise is that of global fault-lines, which is also an analogy or metaphor taken from geology: “Crisis has not come out of the blue. It is the outcome of deep-seated contradictions… of the global economic system. It is not a ´failure´ of the system, but is central to the mode of functioning of the system itself. It is not the result of ´mistakes´ or ´deviations´, but rather it is inherent to the disintegrative logics of the capitalist system… This is a discussion of shifting tectonic plates in the world economy… Just like the movements of the tectonic plates that originate in the Earth´s radioactive, solid iron inner core, the vast shifts in the structures of the global political/economic system are the outcome of changes that have been taking place beneath the surface of economic life over years, if not decades.” (148-9)

The authors want to emphasize that they are not subscribing to a unipolar determinism in some kind of undialectical (positivistic?) one-directional causality: “Social and class struggle… (are) ramified in the spatial contours of the social and technical division of labour and capital as the West and East penetrate each other´s domains and social power structures.” (8) In other words, to paraphrase Marx, men make their own history but not in conditions of their own choosing. In line with the authors´ notion of a post-Hegelian and post-Marxian totality (one might consider Lukács) across historical time and space, socio-economic reality is something “whose elements and instances (political, economic, cultural, ideational, societal, geopolitical, geographical and ecological) are discursively interconnected.” (xviii) But if so, is it the case that other options have been or are available to Western Capitalism or not? This is the old “structure/agency”, “determination/creative activity” chestnut again: how many degrees of freedom have there been or are there within the dominant determinations, with respect to any of the vital issues discussed in this book?

The general mode of Marxian analysis adopted by Fouskas and Gokay integrates well with their assertion that: “Every major capitalist crisis has both long-term structural/systemic roots and shorter-term precipitate causes… We argue that the historical/structural roots of the current crisis are to be found in the expiration of the model of capitalist accumulation for the core countries in the West in the 1970s, whereas

the short-term precipitate causes are to be found in the contradictions of financialization/globalization. Both sets of causes, seen as social and political processes, cross each other." (15) It is worth bearing in mind not only Marx, but also Braudel in this kind of consideration.

Another major issue involves the whole Marxist concern with "the falling rate of profit". The authors show convincingly that there has been such a long-term fall in what they call the "productive economy" in the "Western caucus" over more than fifty years; but that makes one wonder: was not Marx´s own thesis about this meant to speak about capitalism as a whole, rather than merely one part of it, in time or space? Was it not meant to address a supposed fundamental tendency of the whole system, conceived abstractly, which nevertheless pertained to empirical reality? If that is the case should we not be talking not only about the West, but about global capitalism: if so, how does that work out if we consider the entire capitalist world, no matter how "globally fault-lined", and where does it leave us over the question of "productive", "financial", and "financialized", capital?

In the authors´ view each of these three are distinct kinds of capital. The issues here are complex, and cannot be easily discussed in a brief fashion. Fouskas and Gokay argue essentially that productive capital concerns investment in the "real economy". This is and has been a highly convoluted and controversial area both within Marxism and outside it. It is related to the original analysis in Marx, which pertained not only to capitalism, but implicitly to any socio-economic system, or mode of production; it is underpinned by the labour theory of value – an essentially unprovable way of conceiving societies as systems of human interaction or "metabolism" with nature through ever-changing forms of labour-process. In respect of capitalism, the idea was that productive labour produces surplus value, whilst unproductive labour, even if "necessary" (such as in transport and distribution), is paid out of surplus value. The problematic distinction between unproductive and productive labour was highlighted by Marx himself in "Capital" in an amusing passage that refers to schoolmasters, who apart from belabouring the heads of pupils, are effectively productive labourers in a privately-owned school and unproductive labourers in a state or non-privately owned one. If the labour theory of value is jettisoned – and Fouskass and Gokay do not mention it – is not the concept of a real economy rather difficult to maintain in any kind of rigorous way? The authors outline the very many ways Marxists have defined it, including their own distinct way.

Financial capital on the other hand is banking capital which has direct links with production, manufacture, and industry (and the issues raised above return here) whereas financialized capital is money concerned with making more money through speculation and, even more dangerously, through debt.

The interactions between geopolitics, war, military intervention and economic/financial logic are discussed in numerous places, but rather briefly. I did not feel these immensely

complex issues were resolved, but perhaps they cannot be. For example, was the 2003 invasion of Iraq driven by the needs of US capital – especially finance capital as in the view of some neo-Marxists – or was the war cripplingly onerous and erroneous for US neo-imperialism both economically/financially and militarily/geopolitically (as the authors say the Vietnam War was), in spite of the personal profit reaped by Dick Cheney and others? Was it perhaps driven more by neo-conservative ideology, or even to put it crudely, by a "kick arse" impulse of the Bush regime (Saddam had "tried to kill my Dad")? Similarly with the example discussed in the book – the US base built in Kosovo in the wake of Milosevic´s capitulation, by Kellogg Brown & Root, a company of which Cheney was managing director, and which was also interested in a trans-Balkan oil pipeline. The authors state: "The merging between US politics and its energy interests and militarily undertakings is obvious." (71) Yet in a Note they write: "We do not wish here to give the impression that the war between NATO and Yugoslavia in 1999 was because of US energy and military economic interests in the Balkans. This is certainly one factor… the US could not allow Serbia, a client state of Russia, to be in its underbelly as a hostile force." (165) But is it perhaps possible that the Clinton administration genuinely wanted to prevent a real mass murder and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo (by Serbia surely, not Yugoslavia!) which had not been prevented in Bosnia nor Rwanda; and that opportunists jumped on the bandwagon to make a fortune?

It is difficult to review comprehensively a book like this in a restricted space, as it is so involving and multifaceted that one could easily write something about it almost as long as the original book! That is obviously not a review, and so I commend all those who are interested in this most important subject matter, to read the book itself.

LETTER TO AN EDITOR

Dear……,

Thank you for sending me the latest Issue of the Arts Magazine. I must now say certain things to you about the inclusion of my poetry in the Magazine, very reluctantly, as the last thing I want in life these days is any kind of irritation or misunderstanding with anyone.

I would like to start by saying that for nearly twenty years I have very much enjoyed ……. Magazine and the other associated publications you have edited, and have much appreciated your inclusion of my poetry, short stories, and sometimes short essays.

I have enjoyed the kind of "Platonic communication" made possible with you and the other contributors to these, and I much appreciated coming to Northampton last summer and meeting you; you were extremely kind and hospitable and showed me around a town that I did not know before.

The problem is, quite simply, that I cannot accept having my writing changed by an editor. I have never experienced this before – whether in books, magazines, or in electronic anthologies on the internet – and where sometimes my prose, whether academic or creative has been changed even in the slightest way, I have found it intolerable and have not accepted it. An editor has the right to choose or reject any writer`s submission, but not to change it, and this is particularly the case with poetry. That is the opinion of every poet or editor of poetry with whom I have communicated throughout my entire lifetime or career as a poet.

The problem started for me in Issue 44 when you altered, after nearly twenty years of respectfully reproducing my poetry without alteration – my poems "Itzamal", "More And More And More", and "Tone Poem", by changing the capital letters of the first line to letters in the lower case. You expressed very clearly in your editorial to Issue 47 that in your view this was an antiquated style. I disagree with that judgement, and would like to suggest to you that if you consider the tradition of Spanish poetry, from Quevado to Lorca, up to the present moment, it is indeed the case that each line does not start with a capital letter. If on the other hand you consider English poetry, from Spenser to Shakespeare, to Milton, to Byron, Shelley and Keats, to Gerard Manley Hopkins, to T.S. Eliot and Hart Crane, you find they all used this manner, and if you look in any contemporary English language poetry book or magazine or on-line anthology you will find that a great proportion, if not the majority of the poetry also maintains this. It is not a question of antiquated style, it is a matter of poetic traditions. I think, though I don`t know why, that English poetry maintained the convention from Greek and Roman poetry, whereas Spanish poetry did not. Originally, it seems to me that the idea of a capital letter at the beginning of each line stemmed from the perception that the *line* is the unit of poetry, not the sentence. This is not a question of grammar; I believe it originated from the bardic or shamanic "breath", the expanse of an oral "line", which when written down used the capital letter at the beginning of each written line to indicate that energy. But really, that is not the essential point; this is how I write my poetry, and have done so for about forty years (actually, beforehand when younger, I had not used this method, and I think I have sent you some poems from that early period, which you could choose to publish if you wanted to.) Other modern poets do not do this (i.e. use capital letters in this way), and that is their aesthetic choice just as mine is. I choose to work intuitively with the interaction between phrase, sentence, and line, and my punctuation also responds to that rhythmic, musical, associational and meaningful interplay.

I accepted the changes that you made over capital letters at first, very unhappily, because I did not want any kind of rift with you and the magazine. I thought that so long as

nothing else was altered in my poetry - which is always extremely deeply considered by me in every detail - I could bear it. But then you started changing my punctuation, altering the lines, creating verses where I intended none, thereby interfering not merely with the intricacies and complexities of my poems, but altering the meaning and sense, and in some cases creating sentences without an active verb. I will give some examples now:

"I Took A Plunge Into Ocean Deeps", in Issue 46, is completely changed from the poem I wrote, and gave you permission to reproduce, from my book *Poems*, published by Dionysia Press. You have put a full-stop after "fear" in line 4, then started a new sentence and a new verse in line 5. At the end of line 12, you have replaced the semi-colon with a full-stop, and have started a new verse with "And consciousness……." At the end of line 17 you have changed my comma to a full-stop, and again have created a new sentence and a new verse with "Sun, and perfumes……." Combined with the replacement of my capitals at the beginning of all lines these changes have ruined the poem as far as I am concerned. My original poem echoes passages of Shakespeare`s "Tempest", in which the sinking and bubbling down and drowning of people ship-wrecked is a kind of endless, revolving process, resulting in a man arriving, thrown, onto a beach, unconscious and nearly dead, to open his eyes in order to behold a beautiful girl. Your changes have broken that poetic idea.

"Now Is The Time When The Sun Burns Red", in Issue 47 is similarly spoilt. You have replaced my comma at the end of line 5 with a full-stop, and again created a new verse with "Swirling in inchoate……." You have changed my comma at the end of line 9 with a full-stop, spoiling the unrolling flow of my poetry, and have done the same at the end of line 12, now yet again creating a new verse where I did not want one. You have broken the next line into two, as I did not write it, and have put a full-stop after "motion" in line 15. "Newly-spontaneous……." in the next line, that refers to the last phrases in a continuous flow of poetic ecstasy, now starts a new sentence and verse, ruining the whole idea of the poem. The same thing is done at the end of line 17, where you have replaced my comma with a full-stop, and started the next line with a new sentence and a new verse. These last four lines have no active verb; this is not what I wrote, and the same applies to other constructions you have created from this and the previous poem (in the latter the second and fourth sentences and verses you have made, have no active verbs).

In Issue 49 you have again created new constructions which I do not like, out of my original poems. In "Bruckner", you have put in a comma after "mystical", and after "dissipation", and after "pain", and after "bones", and after "soil", which I did not intend and did not want, just as I did not want a full-stop after "yearning" (or I would have written one). The kind of written shaping you have imposed upon my poem is one that I do sometimes use, but did not want in this particular case.

It is similar with “Aida And Radames”, also in Issue 49. The reshaping, the imposition of commas and a full-stop where I did not want them have altered, negatively, the emotional flow and the music of my poem.

I often use commas (as well as verses!), as you must have noticed among the quantity of poetry that I have sent you over the years: where I do not it is because it is not appropriate to my poetic concept in that instance, because for example, I want the reader to sense the continuity and/or the breaks in the mood/flow/narrative/music of the poem for him or herself. The words in such cases swim around in a cosmic sea, joining and rejoining according to the poet`s (that is, my) imagination and that of the reader.

This whole matter has upset me considerably and so I have decided to lay out my position to you. It is up to you to accept what I say, or reject it. I would like to continue contributing to Dandelion but I am absolutely clear that I will not have my work changed. That is not a price I am willing to pay in order to see it in print in whatever form. To me it is a matter of artistic integrity.

If you will agree not to alter my writing I will send you a cheque for 30 pounds immediately. So far you have not altered my prose; if your position is that you will continue not to interfere with my prose but insist upon changing my poetry, please tell me this clearly, so that I can decide whether I want to continue on that basis or not. To me it is a great shame that you have not been able for some time to find among the multitude of poetry that I have sent you poems that you like as they are, without feeling a need to change them; after all, I write in a great variety of styles, and constantly change and experiment.

I do hope all goes well with you – how I understand your lamentations about the winter blues in Britain! But now it is summer……

My best wishes, Tim

A VISIT TO CUBA

(Published in Perspectives, No 37, Dundee, Scotland)

It would take a while to narrate all my impressions and thoughts from Cuba. The first thing you notice is an officious attitude in the airport when you arrive in Havana, by contrast with Bogota for example, where immigration people are business-like but friendly and pleasant, even smiling from time to time. Not so in Cuba. Then once outside, having felt like a schoolchild awaiting his judgement from a master, you get in an old battered banger of a taxi and drive on a near-empty road to the city. Not that I would complain about scarcity of cars - there´s far too much traffic everywhere in the world - but there is a feeling of being cut-off, isolated, slightly as North Korea must feel. (Later I came to understand that new cars are not available to buy even if someone has the money. Only politicians, diplomats, or sportspeople can get a new shiny car.) Indeed Cuba seems in danger of degenerating into a North Korea, with so many people in uniforms and great equality because (nearly) everybody else is poor. Several taxi-drivers I talked to said they had professional degrees such as in engineering but could earn more as taxi-drivers. Wages and salaries are abysmally low - if you give a tip of a dollar to a waiter that is probably more than he otherwise earns in a day.

And there is a run-down feeling everywhere, except in certain very attractive old parts of Havana and elsewhere. The immediate refrain often heard is that "they´ve got no money", but this does not convince me - there is a lack of initiative and sense of being able to do what is obvious. In one hotel in a place called Holguin where there was a cultural festival our group went to participate in - which was fabulous by the way, culturally Cuba is most interesting, but one wonders whether it digs any deeper into the wider population than in "capitalist" countries - I entered my room (without being shown to it as is customary in most parts of the world) - touched the curtain-blinds, which immediately collapsed, so I had no curtain against the morning light for four nights, when after constant begging someone at last fixed it!

I wanted to approach Cuba without preconceptions, but on the whole it confirmed my long-held belief that "socialism" needs MORE democracy than capitalism, not less! It requires flexibility, imagination, grass-roots involvement, not a rigidly ossified state regime, and it is scarcely possible to have democracy where only one party exists, and one man rules for fifty years (then passes on power to his brother). There is always the feeling, from the police, to people working in banks and hotel receptionists who love to keep you waiting, that anyone with a little bit of power can treat others shoddily. Not everyone - of course many people were very nice, even among the groups mentioned. But it is very different from generally friendly Colombia, or Peru. One of the reasons is that as someone who has spent considerable time in Cuba later told me: “the Comité de la Defensa de la Revolución has a centre based on every block of every city in Cuba spying

on people and noting everything they do which is not in line or is considered “mentally-impaired behaviour.” People live in perpetual low level fear. This includes getting angry or losing your cool in a bank or shop or office. You can get fucked over even when you have not done anything but an important person doesn´t like you. You have to cow-tow to anyone in authority.”

I wish I had known this before I went.

There is of course no doubt that Castro´s Cuba´s problems largely emanate from the United States and it´s appalling policies towards their small neighbour. (Some people even claim that the great difficulties in using the internet are due not so much to the government´s restrictions, but to US electronic sabotage, which is perfectly possible.) After the other Latin American territories became independent from Spain and Portugal, Cuba dragged on as a Spanish colony for nearly a century, during which time slavery actually INCREASED. The US position was quite explicit: they would wait until the right moment, and when Spain was weak, the "mature fruit" would fall into the arms of the US, as part of its "manifest destiny" within its own backyard. After its "independence", Cuba became a playground for Americans enjoying sex, rum (the very best, it must be said) and a free haven for the mafia. The US fury at Cuba´s revolution contained and still contains immense malice. But this does not justify everything in favour of Cuba´s government. I met people who thought the impasse between the US and Cuba NOW, is a case of 50:50 blame. Castro is a bloody-minded and stubborn character. The whole thing has been like the Cold War in general: dogmatism, opportunism, dishonesty, oppressiveness, lust for power on both sides: each side working up anti-enemy frenzy in their respective populations in order to justify and conceal their denials and suppression of real democracy and rights on both sides. Cuban television has a lot of documentary-type programmes about the bad Bay of Pigs times featuring Fidel and other commandants of the Revolution holding forth interminably.

It was great to see no commercial billboards around, advertising shampoos, cars, or cans of soup, but on the other hand the political slogans nauseated me, for example: "La Patria! We will win!" (What exactly?) "All for the Revolution" with far-sighted photos of Fidel and Che, and worst of all one that preached "The last word has been said, now we must work!"

As I said, the festival of ten days that I was directly involved in, reading poetry and giving the odd talk was very good. There was deep appreciation and interest, which made the whole thing worthwhile. Some other poets and art exhibitions were great too, but especially I loved the music! Salsa-like jazz is what it was, but also so many other influences, this is an incredible island for music, very sophisticated and wild, amazing.

So it is not surprising that as a female friend of my brother´s that I met in Havana said: "El Cubano tiene resentimientos." The problem is a long-term one, exacerbated by the

regime deciding long ago to expand tourism, which has now been for some time the major economic earner. But package holiday tourists are protected in their enclaves, and if there are any problems their tourist agencies deal with them. Not so for me.

The whole resentment thing is made yet greater by the fact that the country has two currencies, one convertible for foreigners, the other unconvertible for Cubans. I found the whole thing very difficult to understand, and this led me into terrible problems. Before going into this however, it is worth pointing out that the majority of Cubans cannot participate in the convertible currency, cannot even enter hotels and many restaurants (until recently this was a legal matter, now it is simply financial.) Some of the foreigners in my group and outside it did not seem to understand this, and were lauding constantly the wonderful socialist system in Cuba, which provides, though they knew nothing about it, for a universal health and educational system.

Anyway, though many people undoubtedly love Fidel (though what that really means on a psycho-social level would be worth considering), many do not - people I met because I strayed outside the fold of the "encuentro" into "ordinary" bars etc. There I heard of much discontent, of corruption, poverty, sickening resentment at tourists with their dollars, the suffocating, mad bureaucracy that stops you doing anything or makes you wait and wait (I found this from the first moment, even when trying to get a Cuban sim card for a cell-phone, or for example later hearing from one nice person I met who wanted to send a book to me in Colombia, that it would be very expensive to send it and would require a special plastic covering necessary for something fitting the category of a "book"; and oh how complicated to send any money to Cuba from outside!), and the impossibility or great difficulty of travel, doing anything or going anywhere.

Two terrible things occurred to me in Cuba, due to which I will never return there. In Holguin I was due to give my financial contribution to the organizer of the group I was part of called "Poetas del Mundo", about which matter I had tried to find out from him, from the Cuban Embassy in Bogota, and from many other sources before going how I could best pay this when in Cuba. When there, I simply withdrew money with my Bank of Scotland Visa card whenever it was possible or convenient, to pay it off. It was not explained to me that I had to pay the whole lot before we left Holguin (we were going to other places together afterwards), and the Chilean poet who organized the visit did not explain that the money needed to be transferred to a Cuban state agency. On the last night, I was asleep, when six policemen burst into my hotel room, handcuffed me behind my back, and frog-marched me to a police station. After several hours all the idiots involved had understood that it was all insane, I had no intention of cheating anyone. I was let free, my shoulder badly hurt, amid vague assertions of apology and error, especially from the “cultural agent", whose closeness to the police had resulted in my arrest; though he also reminded me that I was "in his country". (I told him I felt as if I had been grabbed by the Gestapo).

To me that was fascism, not "socialism". What disappointed me most was that some of those "poets" did not react to it as an outrage against justice.

I must interpose that between these problems I much enjoyed many aspects of Cuba, of the "encuentro", and of many people I met there. The bad things did however rather spoil the general experience. The history of Cuba is most fascinating, and I came across a good number of interesting books that illuminated me on this. There are also some remarkable museums in Havana (if you are lucky enough to find them open).

Well just to finish this account, I am rather interested in "failed socialism" just now, whether in Cuba or Colombia or anywhere else. The basic reason for the general failure, so it seems to me, is that "socialism" started at the wrong end of the earth, not, as Marx hoped, in the most "developed" countries.

Anyway, after the exhausting "encuentro" I returned to Havana. Unfortunately I was no longer with the group "Poetas del Mundo", and went to a hotel where I was completely alone. When at the reception - I still cannot understand why exactly, perhaps because I expressed some irritation at their apparent lack of interest in the service I was inquiring about - I was assaulted by what I later realized to be hotel Security Guards. They dragged me from the hotel, manhandled me, stole the cash I had on me, then left me alone, shouting “go back to your own country!” As now I had no money, I went to an ATM, but perhaps because I was so shaken up I reacted slowly, and it was all in pitch dark; the machine snuffled up my card. It was Friday evening so I had to wait till Monday morning to retrieve it. The hotel would not let me stay without paying in advance - even though I offered to give them my passport, my cell-phone, or anything else they wanted to hold from my personal belongings - and threw me out the next day into the street. Only after a long ordeal, for which I am far too old - at 19 one can survive such "adventures" - I found somewhere to sleep - with the kind help of an immigration officer who rescued me from my dilemma - with a family who were kind enough to wait two days to be paid, and I reclaimed my card from a lazy rude bank staff the next Monday. (The day after my being beaten-up, the real police were called to the hotel, who did nothing about my assault, but took me to a run-down, overcrowded, peeling-walled hospital, for my bruises to be most unsympathetically examined.)

If that is Socialism, I don´t want it - but it is not!

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

It has been said, by Pablo Badillo O`Farrell, that there is a difference between political science and political philosophy, and his argument is a very interesting one. Whereas political science is the study of actual, real, empirical, and historical politics and political systems, *political philosophy* is a mode of thinking already to be found among the classical Greek philosophers (and, it might be added, among thinkers within many other civilizations and cultures.)

Political philosophy is therefore, as philosophy, both *ontological* and *ethical*. It is not political theory, as that investigates theories of and within politics, in a manner more abstract than political science, but still in a form that directly concerns reality.

Political philosophy is something else. It is not utopian theory, though it may involve itself in the latter. It is the *philosophy* of politics; and this treatise wants to talk about sociology in a philosophically analogous way. It is *not* a treatise about sociological theory as such, nor about any particular body of sociological findings. Nor is it about how sociology should or might attempt to be scientific. Nevertheless, it respects all these last

concerns, and will refer to them. Nor is this a treatise on utopian social theory, though it will frequently speak about that also.

This is a short treatise in what I have chosen to call the Philosophy of Sociology. It is about *what sociology is about* as I see it. It is about what sociology has been, might be, or should be. It is about what sociology has done, can do, and might do to help improve human society, but it is not a utopian, nor a revolutionary, nor a prescriptive tract. It is just simply what it is; and it reflects certain of my thoughts, ideas, and speculations at this stage of my life as a sociologist.

Is what I am calling the philosophy of sociology the same thing as social philosophy? It would be, if social philosophy bore the same relation to sociology that political philosophy (as defined above) bears to political science. But usually the term social philosophy is not used to refer to the sociological analogue of political philosophy.

Social philosophy, it is true, is also as old as Ancient Greece, Ancient China, and other pre-modern civilizations. But, as Nicholas Timasheff defined them, social philosophy and sociology differ essentially one from another according to the level of abstraction on which they work. Both attempt to describe and explain reality through the observation of facts and the derivation of generalizations from such observations. But whereas sociology is an empirical science, which supposedly forms its interpretations strictly and directly from these facts, social philosophy is concerned with the explication of the social totality or of social totalities. Now, such a simple distinction as this is impossible to sustain rigidly, since the relationship between ´facts` and their ´interpretation` is more complicated than this conception suggests, as Timasheff himself points out, though he nevertheless points to something important. Sociology is about real society or societies, past, present, or future; social philosophy is about ´society` as a general, abstract reality, or about ´societies` on very general levels. The philosophy of sociology obviously therefore overlaps with and is involved with social philosophy, but it is not identical to, nor synonymous with it.

SOCIETY

At the beginning of my career as a sociologist, and throughout a large part of it, I felt Durkheim was the least interesting or important of the three *Founding Fathers of Sociology*, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. This opinion of mine began to change with my gradual comprehension of the profound manner in which Durkheim had

understood how difficult it is to change a society in a planned, willed, intended way. He objected to the political theory and philosophy of Socialism, *not* because he was a reactionary, nor because he was addicted to his position within bourgeois society, but rather because he felt the Socialist project relied on a mistaken belief that it was possible to change society in a complete, radical, calculable and predictable, and thus *pre-planned* way. Societies are too complex, he believed, and too difficult to understand in exact ways – let alone to change according to exact plans and intentions – for such a notion to be convincing. Any given society has come into being over centuries and even millennia – how could one imagine they understood it so well that a consistent, practical strategy of reorganization could be developed, that would transform it fundamentally, according to some *plan*?

The brutal transformations of indigenous Amerindian societies through European conquests for example, do not provide counter-examples, as the former were changed over centuries in ways that were utterly outside of any espoused or planned intentions conceived of by the original conquerors. Yet those same conquerors had very definite ideas about what forms of society they were striving to create in the Americas. The same could be said of the Wars of Independence undertaken in the early nineteenth century in Latin America, whose outcomes bore tragically slight resemblance to the utopian visions of their leaders.

The long-term consequences of these latter revolutions were completely different from the dreams and intentions of their leaders, such as, especially, Simón Bolivar. In the twentieth century, the fiasco produced by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia is perhaps the greatest instance in human history of a utopian project that turned into hell and nightmare.

Perhaps Durkheim learned most essentially from the French Revolution, that its intended consequences had *not* been realized; or perhaps it was one of his particular intellectual abilities to see that the infinitely complex interconnections between different elements of society, once understood to any great extent, simply do not allow of a belief in Revolution.

When one considers how slow and difficult it is to change even one`s own individual life intentionally, as opposed to its being changed in a random, chaotic manner; or how long it takes to breed, deliberately, a new strain of plant or animal, let alone to alter fundamentally a whole community of people or an ecosystem intentionally or purposefully, and so to realize specific planned intentions; surely then one must marvel at Durkheim`s insight into this question. All is *not* possible.

But this pause for thought, or caution, did not make Durkheim doubt the wisdom or moral correctness of attempting to change human society for the better: he was not a sceptical cynic like Weber, but felt rather that the attempt to improve society should be

thought of as analogous to a doctor trying to improve the health of a patient. The doctor bases his efforts on science, but realizes that every case is different, and that medicine is ultimately as much an art as a science.

HISTORY

I believe, as does Peter Burke, that history and sociology should be complementary. The one looks at social structures, the other at changes in social structure. It is nonsense for the two to be separated, and due only to historical accidents in the history of academic thought.

Both disciplines seek to study all spheres of man`s activity, as no one department of social life can be understood in isolation from the others. Both disciplines try – or ought to try – to see human experience and human realities as a whole.

If society is not understood historically, that is, over time, it is not understood at all. If history is not studied in the context of changes in society as a whole, neither is that properly understood.

Saying this of course, tells us nothing of the *way* we should interpret social structural changes over time. All the questions therein are begged: they involve issues of theory, and of the relationships between facts, entities, and events, as well as the theoretical contexts within which these facts and entities are understood to exist and these events are understood to occur. In one sense, there are no "facts" outside of particular theoretical perspectives, explicit or implicit; nor can there be any meaningful "theories" outside of the facts or events from which they are constructed – i.e. the substance from which theories are derived.

The integrating concepts that operate between immediate structures and socio-historical changes, between facts and theory, are, I think: process, transformational praxis, and totality. I shall return to these concepts, particularly the last.

TRAGIC DRAMA

Alfred Einstein wrote that no one besides Shakespeare understood the human heart as well as Mozart. By this he meant that to extraordinary degrees both Shakespeare and Mozart plumbed the depths of human character, the human soul, the strangest feelings and inclinations; yet neither submerged themselves, ultimately, in negative, dreary, or despairing hells. They created, in their very different ways, *human tragedy*; yet there is in both of them excruciating human beauty.

In his tragedies, Shakespeare pushed to the extreme what a human being can do, pushed to the extremes of what a human being can feel or suffer. He explores the most sublime, simultaneously with the most terrible and ugly forms of thought, feeling and behaviour that human beings are capable of. These are contradictorily intertwined within the same realities or circumstances, and often within the same individual characters. The excruciating existencial situation suffered by Hamlet is somehow redeemed by the beautiful lines Horatio speaks at Hamlet`s death:

> "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

But Hamlet is not an unproblematical hero, certainly not a saint. His callousness in the face of Ophelia`s death, for which he is largely responsible, earns no admiration for him. The death of poor, young, loving Ophelia, so early in the play, a bud that never fully comes to flower, a casualty of the ´main plot`, leaves one in an adenoidal, silent pain and sadness, that is only softened right at the end when Hamlet himself dies, in literature`s ultimately tragic death. One is then drowned in another quality of pain and sadness, at the same time as experiencing a profound catharsis.

If Marx discovered the bases of modern Social Science, Darwin the bases of modern Biology, and Einstein the bases of modern Physics, Shakespeare learned from experience (life), but not in the same ways as Marx or Einstein. Of course Shakespeare, like Mozart, does not *reflect* life, nor human existence, as if with a naturalistic mirror. Rather, in their exaggerating focus on the core dimensions of human life, Shakespeare or Mozart are almost hallucinogenic in their dramatic intensity, drawing out strands of reality with a startling, cathartic, and otherwise inconceivable truth and beauty. Like Wagner`s music dramas, Shakespeare`s tragic plays and Mozart`s operas are *fantasies*, outside of any real historical time or geographical space.

Mozart`s ´traditional` tragedies, like *Mithridate* and *Idomeneo*, are extraordinarily great tragic operas. But his *real* tragedies are *The Marriage Of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Cosi Fan Tutte*, and *The Magic Flute* (though it could not be said that these are any more uniquely Mozartean than the first two, as everything Mozart wrote was perfect). All

these last four end either ´happily`, or eerily, not like his ´traditional` tragedies, or the tragedies of Shakespeare. But that only intensifies their strange explorations of the tragic qualities of human existence.

The deep truth of Tragedy, stemming from the tragic drama of Ancient Athens, is that the ´hero` or ´heroine`, he or she who suffers most intensely, is not consciously responsible for his or her fate. Oedipus does not mean to kill his father, or marry his mother: he does not know at the time that he has done either. Hamlet is the most truly tragic of Shakespeare`s tragic ´heroes` (though none of Shakespeare`s characters are heroic in any idealistic sense). Hamlet is not responsible for his ghastly, impossible, intolerable situation at all. Macbeth on the other hand, or Othello, or King Lear, or Anthony and Cleopatra, *are* responsible in some way for their predicaments, which follow from actions or decisions they have taken, though they may be far from deserving of their ultimate fates. However, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, as even more *Romeo and Juliet*, are romantic tragedies: the tragic fates of their protagonists are redeemed by the fact that they die in, and for, love. That is not *real* tragedy.

The reason for making this excursion into tragic drama is that I think human history is closer to tragedy than to many other schemas or kinds of meta-narrative, especially the one called ´progress`. The outcome of human efforts has always so far been quite different from what the protagonists of historical activities intended. As Marx put it, human beings make their own history, but not in conditions of their own choosing; and he might have added, without therefore their actions ever producing a given, intended outcome. Consider original Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, or the world Socialist-Communist movements of the twentieth century! What did the consequences and effects of these movements` activities have at all to do with their initial intentions, hopes, and yearnings, or with the ideas held onto by the millions of individuals who made them up?

This is a kind of tragic schema, because the subjects of history, or ´heroes`, are done down – like Oedipus or Hamlet – by destinies they do not understand; and suffer, in the sense that their existences are in the end failures, for reasons quite beyond their control, due to processes that render human history as something finally meaningless and purposeless. Marx`s dictum referred to above was supposed to apply only to the history of human societies ´hitherto`: the future would see human beings moulding society in the image of their collective dreams, intentions, and plans, in self-determining emancipation. But instead, the totality of idealistic efforts exerted over all of human history, have merely helped to produce this present world in which a globalised society is devouring both nature and humanity itself. What mean the intentions or ideas of Lao-Tzu, Confucius, the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Boethius, Spinoza, or Marx in the light of that farcical tragedy which is the direction of history now? How I would love to be disproved of this pessimistic view; but who can really believe in the ´cunning of reason` in History today, as at times did Hegel?

Marxism, in particular, underestimated the extent to which Revolution produces counter-revolution, and how in their darkly unpredictable clashes and counterpoints the society that later prevails is quite unlike the ´pure` vision of either. What Walter Benjamin called Myth, or living under the sign and shadow of Misfortune, has not given way to the victory of ´genuine` Socialism and nor does it look as if it can do. Humanity does not take a ´tiger`s leap` into authentic, liberated existence, and embark upon an adventure of ´true history`. Reifications in social relations and consciousness can be comprehended by the critical intellect, but overthrowing them through revolutionary praxis is quite another matter.

LABOUR

Karl Marx put labour at the centre of his social theory, though he did not call this theory Sociology. For him it is the labour undertaken by an entire social collective that creates and reproduces any given social form or structure, civilization, or culture. With his ´labour theory of value` he attempted to underpin everything significant in human history and society.

Ultimately his theory does not work through satisfactorily, but it represents a very profound and important mode of comprehending human society, or societies. His theory would have it that ultimately everything in any given human society emerges from structured forms of human *work*, though in capitalist societies this truth is supremely mystified. Though in reality money, capital, ´free time`, and culture are all actually disembodied emanations from work, which is undertaken by somebody, this is lost both to consciousness and to economic calculation. The general understanding of who precisely has performed this work, and how, and what it actually entails, forever decreases the more capitalist society becomes globalised.

The details of Marx`s theory of the commensurability of ´compound` and ´simple` labour, and how they generate ´use values` and ´exchange values` in society, do not stand up to analytical scrutiny. Nor does the theory explain the attribution of monetary values, or prices, to goods or ´commodities` – an absolutely crucial concept for Marx – on the ´market`. Nor does Marx`s theory satisfactorily incorporate the issue of values transferred from natural resources, sources of energy, or any other aspect of nature, to goods consumed by members of society. Marx`s theory is no more competent at comprehending the ´ecological` dimension of human production than are the other early sociological theories. Efforts have been made within Marxism of course, as with other sociological

theories, to amend this fundamental ´European` or ´Eurocentric` inadequacy, but with varying degrees of success.

Marx`s theories do however show how *all* societies, save the most egalitarian forms, rest upon the exploitation of human labour in systems dominated by some kind of class, group, or set of groups. It is mistaken however for this process to be seen as involving a simple dichotomy between a ruling and an exploited group: rather it is an interlocking process involving infinite, internally contradictory groupings and even individuals.

A powerful feature of Marx`s theory of labour is that it allows a view of any given society as an entire process of labour: the way Marx thinks about the ´division of labour` and the ´labour process` makes it possible for social analysis to grasp any given, whole social collective in its relationship to, or ´metabolism` with, nature. This is an extremely important contribution to Sociology (in spite of the fact that Marx`s theories and later Marxism were never truly ecological), although it is usually lost from sight. Part of this loss is due to the failure of Marxist ´economics` to explain the ´social` and ´technical` division of labour upon which it presumes to rest; another part is that the concept of Socialist Revolution in Marx involves an incredible ´unscrambling` of the historically produced division of labour, to produce a society of ´unalienated labour`, which is quite impossible the more the global economy becomes more differentiated and complex; worse, it invites attempts at state totalitarian actions to bring about conditions of unalienated labour, frustrations which only produce ever more totalitarian fiascos and failures.

SCIENCE

Sociology is a science, in the sense that it strives to understand society or societies in a systematic, ´objective`, and rational way. Of course everything depends on the meaning of these crucial terms, but enough surely has been written and thought about the term rationality for that at least to be generally understood. Sociology is not dogmatic, nor theological, nor purely moralistic knowledge, for example. It rests upon an attempted ´neutral` observation, investigation, and rational attempt to understand.

Of course, all these terms are problematic. The idea of an objective, neutral examination of social reality is particularly difficult: but let us attempt to make sociology fulfil what Max Weber wanted of it. Weber thought that values entered into, and indeed determined the sociologist`s choice of subject-matter in accordance with the latter`s concerns. Values

thus help to frame the nature of the sociologist`s enquiry, but once chosen, selected, and framed, it should be possible for the object of investigation to be analysed in a coolly fair, open, and neutral way, with respect to the results that sociological investigation arrives at.

Yet Marx was also right: there is no ´neutral` knowledge (though sometimes he contradicted himself in this by referring to nineteenth century natural science as pure and objective, in true positivistic style – and then extended this judgement to his own method of analysing the ´economic base` of society). The world is always seen, according most of the time to Marx, by human beings through particular ´lenses`, i.e. in terms of the observer`s and thinker`s position in the world, in terms of their interests – material and other; in terms of their aims or ambitions, individual or collective. Even if Marx simplified these insights into restrictive conceptions of class ideologies, or forms of class consciousness (he especially underrated the importance of personally held philosophical and spiritual beliefs as pure inspirations of human actions), he was surely right in his fundamental idea. All understandings of the world – be they ever so mathematical, experimental, tested, empirically proved, or accepted – are *particular* understandings. As with religion, never let those using ´pure` science or philosophy or any other system of knowledge dominate you or tell you what to do in the name of their favourite theory, world-view, or ideology! The deepest knowledge available in any socio-historical moment is ´practical-critical activity`. Thus Marx.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

It has already been observed that Sociology has hitherto (though with some recent exceptions) largely ignored the natural environment within which societies subsist and are immersed. In some respects this inadequacy undermines the central claims of most Sociology up till now. It is as if, after Montesqieu`s attempt at a theory of geographical determination of society, Sociology rebelled so hard against this kind of thinking that it threw the baby out with the bath water.

Societies do not exist in vacuums, nor in disembodied forms. They exist within nature: but perhaps that is to put it too weakly still – they are enmeshed, immersed, dependent upon, as well as influencing and interacting with nature, so totally that often these facts are forgotten, as if, for example, people in boats at sea were to forget they were floating in, and moving (or not moving) in, and gaining their sustenance from, this very sea. If they pollute this sea too badly, they die. Marx for example, as already noted, always emphasized the dependence of human society upon nature, and was deeply aware of the

ways in which society and *social praxis* affect, change, and transform nature in dynamic, dialectically interactive relationships - in which mutual interaction society is also continuously self-transforming. Yet Marx did not properly respond to the fundamental realities we are considering here.

Sociology therefore rejected the geographical determinism offered by Montesqieu in the eighteenth century and by such thinkers as Taine in the nineteenth century. It was right to reject a simplistic environmental determinism concerning society and consciousness, but it was wrong to ignore to a very great extent the fact that all societies are immersed in natural environments, and that their interactions and relationships with particular natural environments – both their own, and those of other societies, the latter being increasingly the case as globalisation progresses – are absolutely fundamental conditions of all social existence.

As a recent example of geographical determinism we could cite the interesting, but I think mistaken assertion of Bronowski, that the wild, irregular forms of nature on the Greek Islands of the Eastern Mediterranean prompted the emergence of science and mathematics in ancient times. The sheer chaos and apparently arbitrary forms of nature demanded, Bronowski supposed, that the Greek mind should find regularities, patterns, and laws within nature. But of course, a particular natural environment does not at all make such specific demands on human consciousness. What about those societies that lived on the same Greek Islands over many millennia before that pre-Socratic period in which Greek thinkers invented geometry and began to investigate nature according to rational, quasi-scientific principles? And in any case, even when the first Greek ´scientists` did begin to look for universal principles within, and underlying, the apparent chaos and infinite variety of nature, it was not the forms of nature themselves that conditioned these new forms of thought – it was the development of a new consciousness that led some Greek thinkers to seek out the universal, abstract principles that operate behind the apparent randomness of nature. Pure and exact triangles, squares and rectangles do not exist in nature, nor do the mathematical theorems that describe them simply pop out from the observation of nature. Similarly, the laws of gravity do not pop out from even the most precise observations of nature and the universe. It took the post-Renaissance mind of Newton to work them out, through particular processes of abstraction from observations and measurements of empirical reality, though all nature and all humanity had had their existences conditioned by these previously unknown "laws" since their origins (that is, in the Big Bang, and in the emergence of human consciousness and society).

Sohn-Rethel was right, I think, in insisting that the scientific mindset is connected with the growth of commodity production and distribution in human societies – especially in Ancient Greece first and then in post-Renaissance Europe. We do not have to accept the Marxist ´labour theory of value` to recognize the kernel of truth in many of Karl Marx`s insights about commodities. The production of commodities, as opposed to mere use-

values, involves thoroughly abstract forms of thinking and social organization. The distribution and exchange of commodities involves vast, abstractly organized social practices, before any particular use-value, turned into a commodity, ends up in the hands of any given individual or social institution. Never are all the details of the production and distribution of a commodity wholly known about or understood by any particular person. The abstract principles involved do not appear on the surface of the commodity as held before the eyes, as simple object, or use-value. The same applies to any commodified service or activity. Analysis must dig below the visible world to grasp abstract universals in respect of these principles, just as Euclid, Archimedes, Galileo or Newton had to dig down in order to determine the mathematically defined laws they each discovered.

Marx and Engels were right therefore, to criticize Feuerbach`s ´mechanical materialism`, in terms of which Nature – as matter, non-human life, and also human nature, all understood as something fixed – determines society in a one-way, static kind of causality (that is, un-dialectically and un-dynamically). ´Dialectical materialism` could have been used to understand nature as interacting with society in infinitely complex, dynamic ways, in processes that require us to understand human reality in terms of ´history`: that is, as constant human change and transformation of society and consciousness, *within nature*. Marxism might have realised that this original critique of Hegel and Feuerbach could have initiated a truly dialectical and environmental sociology, but that was not the way it developed. ´Historical materialism` theorized the ´laws` or processes of socio-historical development in ways that largely lifted them out from their entanglement with nature, that which they should have illuminated. For the alternative possibility to have happened, Marxism would have had to be radically `ecological`, as well as ´historical`, right from the beginning, but it was not. Instead, ´history` was understood as resting upon an ongoing, though changing ´metabolism` with nature, but this latter was construed only abstractly and philosophically, rather than empirically, concretely, and scientifically.

Probably however, the grand sweep of history, that of Weber`s iron cage of history, would have anyway sucked out and banished such hypothetically ´ecological` aspects of Marxism even if they had been able to evolve theoretically. In the ´real world`, Stalinism especially would have purged ´Marxism` of any such ecological dimension, just as it did with the authentic Marxist understanding of ´alienation`.

It is not to profess a radical kind of ´post-structuralist` or ´post-modernist` view of history and society as things essentially unknowable, beyond rational understanding, if we merely recognize that there can be no single account of either history or society. This is not just because history and society can be seen from so many vantage points and perspectives corresponding to the different angles of vision of the different social groups and individuals that make them up, as well as according to the different philosophical-theoretical frameworks which are brought to bear upon them (and history and society, like nature, cannot have any sense made of them at all without the use of philosophical-

theoretical frameworks of some kind). The point is also, that even when we try to consider history and society as objective totalities, we have to wonder to what extent we have, for example, recognized them as also being partly natural – i.e. physical and biological - and not only as truly ´human` - i.e. conscious and socially organized. It is not to be reductionist, nor to deny the uniqueness of specifically human consciousness, nor even to deny the realm of the spiritual, if we remember that human beings as individuals are on one level colonies of billions of cells, just as each of those cells is an integral totality whose complexity is built out of the numerous parts of which it is made up, as the result of billions of years of biological evolution from simpler biochemical entities; and also that human groups and societies are also on a certain plane increasingly complex comings-together of parts, which make up transcending wholes. Herbert Spenser was not entirely wrong to build his sociology out of the notions of differentiation and growth in complexity and efficiency. But his notion of ´progress`, of course, is much more problematical.

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COLOMBIAN POETRY, OR POETRY IN COLOMBIA?

Tim Cloudsley

Juan de Castellanos(1522-1606), though born in Spain, is the first known Colombian poet *to write his poetry down* - his extraordinary "longest poem ever written" is the *Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias*. (Indigenous pre-Conquest poetry was oral, not written down.)

Castellanos is sometimes considered a mere chronicler of the Spanish Conquest who wrote his account in a tedious, pseudo-versified form. William Ospina in his *Por Los Países De Colombia* disagrees with this view, as I do too. The poem is in an unintended way desperately tragic; Castellanos tried to see the Spanish Conquest of Nueva Granada as heroic, and composed an epic poem about it, analogous to Homer`s treatment of the Trojan Wars in *The Iliad*. But this intention is belied by his own sympathetic descriptions of the conquered Indians, especially the Guane of Santander – his descriptions of their life-styles, customs, physiques; of their culture and their personality, as well as their heroic resistance to their brutal, ruthless subjugation.

"Tienen disposición y gallardía;

Y es gente blanca, limpia, curiosa,

Los rostros aguileños, y facciones

De linda y agraciada compostura "

Ospina says of Castellanos' poem: "puede carecer de muchas cosas que nadie deplorará, pero la vida fluye por ella como un torrente, y es desmesurada y cruel; centenares de

hombres están vivos en sus páginas y vuelven a un vértigo de expediciones y confrontaciones….."

José Eusebio Caro(1817-1853) is an interesting nineteenth century poet – a conservative patriot, yet also a romantic. Outside Colombia this might seem a contradiction in terms, but not here, and certainly not in the nineteenth century.

"Tú, tú me amaste, solo tu supiste

De amar mi sed, mi sed de ser amado;

Y a mí tu inmenso corazón abriste,

Y en él entré, y en él quedé saciado. "

Many of the major subsequent poets of Colombia, such as José Silva, Barba Jacob, Léon de Grieff, and Raúl Jattin, were frequently unhappy living in their country, and wanted to escape; by suicide, by altering their consciousnesses, or by simply going elsewhere. Dogmatic, conformist, stupid, cold and lacking in imagination they often found Colombia, and in some strange way bore out the idea that this land *is* the Athens of South America, precisely perhaps because of the fact that there seemed to them at times to be a huge gulf between the creative and imaginative minds of a few individuals in Colombia and the dead, indoctrinated idiocy of nearly everyone else.

One has only to read the history of the Catholic Church in Colombia – in the Colonial Period and subsequently, especially during the so-called *Regeneración* – to realize how closed-off Colombian society has frequently been, and you only have to read the history of *"Los Estranjeros En Colombia"* by Rodrigo García Estrada, to see how few outsiders there have ever been here since *La Conquista* – and usually only a few crazy individuals; that is, no large-scale immigration – to understand that Colombia has been in many ways a self-enclosed "Imagined Community" that has never easily coped with "foreigners" or other unusual "outsiders".

From that, emerged:

"Una noche,

Una noche,

a la una,

a las dos, de la mañana……"

(José Asunción Silva)

How unkind such judgements might seem to be! Are not Colombians very welcoming and warm, so sociable and expressive? But this paradox it seems, has only helped to create an ever-growing mystery within the Colombian Poetic Imagination.

And when you think of the stupendous landscapes within which Colombians live! But that is part of the point: the separations caused by the immense geographical and ecological variations are part of the reason for a strange kind of poetic mind that stretches from the first "Colombian" poet, Juan de Castellanos, with his endless, dragging, never tiring "longest poem in the world", with all its fascination and information-providing richness, to Jattin`s weird meanderings in steamy Cartagena, around and within his mother, of how she had been when he was in her womb, and how she was before he was ever conceived! – before he strayed out into a trafficky street, stoned, and got himself killed, in what must have been a partially desired escape and entrance into oblivion, or return to the womb.

José Silva Asunción(1865-96) is one of the world`s great poets. The quantity of his poetry is not the point – how much poetry do we have from some of the greatest ancient Chinese or ancient Greek poets: very little often. His is a shimmering beauty within alienation. Eduardo Camacho Guizado shows how his real problem was that the social, familial and commercial milieu he was obliged to live within in fin-de-siècle Bogotá was an intolerable nightmare for him. He said: "Las preocupaciones principales son la religión, las flaquezas del prójimo y la llegada del correo de Europa." Thus he committed suicide, though other personal tragedies must have helped push him over the edge.

Sometimes the appreciation of Silva`s poetry is clouded by clichéd hagiography and by the dramatic tragedy of his early death by suicide. But when I first came across his poetry, I knew nothing of either, and was simply bowled over by the strange, unique beauty and power of the words.

"Una noche,

en que ardían en la sombra nupcial y húmeda,

las luciérnagas

fantásticas. "

Porfirio Barba Jacob and Léon de Grieff are poets who do not want to be "national" or folklorical, let alone nationalistic, which for them would be simply speaking the obvious.

Barba Jacob(1883-1942) was homosexual, just to add to his sense of alienation and isolation:

"…..nefanda deidad activa

que los robores vedan nombrar"

"…..dejo que mi carne, ruin lobia

de lúgubres anhelos arrecida

se me abandone al logro del deleite,

desnuda en la impudicia de la vida."

And he writes:

"Vagó, sensual y triste, por islas de su América"

and as Ospina puts it:

"Las fábulas morales suelen enseñarnos que la soberbia es a menudo causa de la desdicha humana. Barba nos muestra que en su caso la soberbia es más bien la consecuencia…. por no haber llegado temprano ya no llegará nunca, porque el beso no llega a borrar la huella de la ausencia de un beso…"

Jacob writes:

"….pero la vida está pasando

Y ya no es hora de aprender."

But yet he says to Death:

"Llegas temprano. Un vez más vas a frustrarlo todo."

William Ospina describes Léon de Grieff (1895-1976) as "…vástago de una estirpe de nórdicos arrojados por el destimo a los trópicos americanos, poeta bohemio, modernista precoz y lector insaciable…. Vencido por una irremediable melancolía…. Colombia, su país, estaba clausurando un tipo de relación con la poesía hecha de declamadores, de oratoria, de teatralidad y, casi se diría, de insubstancialidad."

"Gente necia,

local y chata y roma…..

Chismes

Catolicismo.

Y una total inopia en los cerebros.”

“Mi aburrimiento es largo, pero la vida es corta.

Mi vanidad…. ¡Mi vanidad no vale el resto….!

Y el resto es casi siempre lo que a ninguna importa….. “

“Yo habré de liar mis bártulos para ignotas regiones,

Regiones muy lejanas, raras y diferentes…. “

Though in some of his later poems he celebrates happily the “simple” joys of nature and friendship, he is essentially a solitary, lonely poet of the night:

“Yo de la noche vengo y a la noche me doy….

Soy hijo de la noche tenebrosa y lunática….

Tan sólo estoy alegre cuando a solas estoy

Y entre la noche, tímida, misteriosa, enigmática!”

With Raúl Gómez Jattin (1945-1997) we enter a private world that is utterly unique, strange, sad, but remarkable. He warns that “we poets are monsters of solitude.” Like Silva who asks: ”¿Contra lo imposible qué puede el deseo?” his writing enters into “el poema triste de la remota infancia”. For example:

“Es una tarde enclavada en el recodo de un tiempo

Que va y viene en la mecedora”

“El cuerpo de esa tarde

Es un fluido tenso entre el pasado y el futuro

Que en ciertos lugares de mi angustia

Se coagula como una caracola instantánea."

Yet Jattin also wrote of his love for his local, native soil:

"Soy un dios en mi pueblo y mi valle" and:

"El río es un gusano de cristal irisado".

Gonzalo Arango /1931-1976) became, after his fully Nadaistic phase, an iconoclastic, intense and unorthodox Christian radical, comparable to the English poet William Blake:

"Cristo no lucha por el poder politico,

Sino por el amor a la conciencia

De ser en Dios

Cristo creía en él, no en la espada. La palabra era su templo. "

It has sometimes been suggested that Colombian poetry, or poetry in Colombia, is mediocre, for example, by Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, quoted in Juan Gustavo Cobo Borda`s *Historia de la Poesía Colombiana Siglo XX*. Others suggest Colombian Poetry has been escapist, wishing to avoid issues of political conflict and violence. I disagree with both these judgements. Poetry in Colombia is fascinating and complex, not mediocre. And in any case there is a rebellion in pessimism sometimes, an ultimate non-conformity. Also, there is conflict in nearly all human societies to some extent, and in all of them much of their poetry does not address it, at least, not directly. Colombia is not exceptional in this respect. (And political issues can be discussed in other contexts.) Poetry in Colombia, as elsewhere, is something enigmatic and elusive; it explores the soul of man, wherever or however he happens to live at any particular time, and the strangeness of this. Sometimes it transcends that state of existence, in ways that are not completely explicable in rational terms. As William Ospina says of León de Grieff: "Se diría que este poeta no tiene mensaje, pareciera que no le interesa convencernos de nada. Pero es que en una cultura autoritaria e impositiva, le parece saludable que la poesía no venga a imponer nada, a prescribir verdades y deberes."

Finally, against the idea that Colombian poetry has failed to produce some kind of "rounded whole" (rather than peculiar bits and pieces), I would suggest that really no

tradition of poetry anywhere forms a complete, rounded entity or "canon". Such mental constructions are anyway always imposed "after the event"; and why are they necessary anyway?

Ideas of Nature in the European Imagination

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The philosophy and science of nature have always developed hand in hand in European thought, in complexly interactive, mutually influencing ways (Collingwood 1965). In both, the purpose has been to make the best possible sense from what is thought at the time to be known. Conceptual assumptions which at the time appear self-evident in the light of already proven empirical truths, later come to be regarded as irrational *a prioris*. Examples range from Thales' belief that water is the universal substance from which all things are made by a magician-like God; to Anaximander's indeterminate, undifferentiated Boundless, or Anaximenes' divine world-creative vapour; to Newton's belief in Absolute Space, Absolute Time, and an architect-like God (Collingwood 1965, Powers 1982).

The sociology or history of ideas shows such concepts to have arisen not at all randomly or arbitrarily. It points to the birth of Ionian science and philosophy from the creation myths of early Greek society, or to unavoidable assumptions given the philosophical and theological matrix within which Newton made his scientific advances.

The dominant philosophy and science of nature in any civilisation both reflect and reinforce its dominant socio-economic, political and military processes, and the ways these act upon nature. They are intrinsic to a civilisation's mode of social metabolism with nature, and thus their critique is essential to any project of transformation of this mode. Thus, nature for the early Greeks, with their maritime city-state civilisation emerging from tribal agriculture, was predominantly a God-created, purposive, cyclically-behaving organism. For post-Renaissance Europeans within emerging urban capitalism, it was and remains, to all too great a degree in spite of the outdatedness of the conception both intellectually and ethically (that is, with regard to human justice and survival), a God-created but purposeless, dead, timeless (in that the future and past are identical to the present, i.e. nature is nondevelopmental), determined machine. For contemporary Europeans it might be said that nature should be self-developmental (with spirit immanent to matter, thus nondualistic), purposive, spirally-progressive (that is, not cyclical nor linear, but not static either), and dialectically creative: generative of new emergent qualities from the inorganic cosmos to life to humanity and consciousness. This view of nature, which is part of a project that urges for an harmonious metabolism between a society under self-conscious control and nature, is of an endless evolutionary process, unitary on each of its nested levels (Fraser 1978, 1982) and as a whole: from the interwoven inorganic web of nature (Capra 1976, 1982), the implicate order (Bohm 1983) of the universe; to life understood as a holistic, Gaian, creative unity (Crawford and Marsh 1989, Goodwin 1981, 1990, Levins and Lewontin 1985, Lovelock 1989, Ho 1988, Sheldrake 1991); to human history as an interconnected process of attempted progress or of transcendence of alienation.

This as yet oppositional, alternative idea of nature - urging for a new, environmentally sustainable mode of metabolism between society and nature - can draw from many strands of ancient philosophy and science; from the holistic pantheism of the early Renaissance (as in Giordano Bruno or John Aymer) (cf. Cloudsley 1984); from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Romanticism (especially Goethe, Wordsworth, and Shelley); and from numerous nineteenth and twentieth century tendencies toward an evolutionary (in R.G.Collingwood's sense of the term) science and philosophy of nature. These last include modern geology, Darwinian biology, and electromagnetism among nineteenth century developments in science, and relativity and quantum physics in the twentieth. Within philosophy they include Hegel, Marx, and Engels in the nineteenth, and Bergson in the twentieth century. Also included should be the 'alternative' philosophies of science developed by contemporary thinkers such as Jim Lovelock (Lovelock 1988), David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, Rupert Sheldrake (Sheldrake 1991), and Mae-Wan Ho (Ho 1988). The twentieth century has witnessed backlashes against the mechanistic scientism that dominated nineteenth century science, in spite of tendencies in the latter toward creative evolution and field-theory, mentioned above. Modern physics and cosmology, and post-Darwinian biology especially, seem to have converged with a critical, humanly grounded dialectical philosophy of science (cf. Cloudsley 1988).

This is a process of European (and neo-European) self-discovery, of finding and adhering to the strands of thought about nature and man's relation to it, which are most appropriate both to immanent developments within the natural sciences and to a social and economic policy, a human strategy of life and feeling, that could ensure sustainable production and undestructive interaction with nature, an existence in harmony with, and within, 'Gaia'.

There have been two basic ethical visions of humanity's responsibility towards nature throughout western civilization's historical epochs, if looked at from a particular angle on a very general plane. For the first, man and other animals and plants (and sometimes non-living objects), have a purpose within existence, in their own right, whether the cosmos is endowed with a God or gods, or not, cf. Aristotle's teleology; the Biblical theme of man as keeper or steward of God's garden; the mediaeval vision of nature as wondrous and beautiful, testimony to God's marvellous Creation; or in modern times belief in the harmony of man in nature, their unity, understood biologically and ecologically in terms of symbiotic interdependence, or poetically as a unitary cosmic web. The latter is in Shelley's *Adonais*

'that sustaining love

Which through the web of being blindly wove

By man and beast and earth and air and sea [...] (Shelley 1970: 443)

As in 'natural theology', the sense of order (the 'higher order of chaos') and beauty in nature is part of both Romanticism's mystical aesthetic sensibility and its rational argument for unity and meaning in nature. The profound idea that a politics of conservation, a commitment to human justice and the love of nature are intertwined, recurs in the late twentieth century in the global ecological movement. The following quotation from Chee Yoke Ling, of the Malaysian Friends of the Earth, reflects this:

I think the reconciliation can only take place if societies as a whole in all tropical rain forest countries realise that the rain forest, or any other resources, or the environment as a whole, has to be conserved, for all reasons, not just because we want to have a beautiful environment, but for very sound economic planning and to be able to sustain our population as long a term as possible. Then, if that awareness exists, people and institutions in a country will accordingly make demands from politicians. So that people who want to come into political power have to show that they abide by that same principle. So we need to build that awareness as a society; then we dictate the political development. (Sarre e.a. 1991: 55)

The idea that humanity should feel at home on the earth, as a conscious part of 'Gaia', spontaneously in tune with or aligned to it, is one that has a long history in Europe, running parallel with Taoism in China (Cloudsley 1986a).

In the second of the two visions, animals and plants, and the non-living world, only exist for man's purpose. Thus thought countless ancient philosophers: there is the Biblical theme that God made other living things for man; there is the other mediaeval vision of nature as a fallen, despiritualized, evil source of temptation, and mere means to satisfy man's material needs through the sweat of his brow, due to Original Sin; and in modern times Francis Bacon believed in the natural domination of man over nature, as did Descartes. Darwinism was and still is predominantly understood not for its Gaian, interdependent, unitary, and emergently creative implications but one-sidedly in terms of struggle, conflict, and competition in which human society must win over and control the rest of nature. A scientistic instrumental vision of domination, control, and exploitation of all nature, living and non-living, as normal, inevitable,

and correct, came to dominate the European idea of nature. In a recent International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) publication, the authors write as follows about the world's forests:

The prevalent mode of development in forests this century has been characterised by predation - a 'frontier' approach to forest resources. This has deep historical roots in European expansionism, and it has since become a global phenomenon. In Ghana, for example, regions with a predominance of natural forest are termed 'frontier regions'. This mode of development has become widely discredited, but it is still embedded in policies, institutions and the attitudes of many individuals today.

Mediaeval European agriculture depended upon intensive techniques of resource husbandry, because of the increasingly confined European land-base. The 'New World' of the colonies, however, afforded rich possibilities for agricultural expansion. In ensuing centuries, predatory expansive agriculture came to characterize imperial European civilization, leading some emergent settler cultures (perhaps most notably that of the USA) to cultivate a mythology of 'expanding frontiers.' The profits from imperial agriculture helped to finance urban-based industries; and the dynamic of industrial growth served in turn to sustain the mythology of unlimited frontiers, and further transformed formative frontier myths into a belief in perpetual economic growth, as a phenomenon which was both good and natural. Having expanded on the things of nature, the West came to believe that expansion was in the nature of things. (Holmberg (ed). 1991: 201)

These two visions (cf. Glacken 1967, Thomas 1983) are distinct from and cut across the different ontologies that have prevailed in the different epochs of European history: whether unitary or dualist, that is, pantheist (or dialectical materialist) on the one hand and mechanical materialist or idealist on the other; whether atomist or organic and holistic; cut across ontologies of time that have been variously static, cyclic, or developmental; and notions of causality that have been determinist on the one hand or dialectical and process-like on the other. They are also distinct from and cut across the alternatives of monotheism, polytheism, and atheism, whilst they straddle, unboundaried, the spheres called science, philosophy, religion, art and literature. European integration asks that the finest traditions of European thought and sensibility be embraced by European peoples, and be made available to humanity as a whole.

The different traditions of thought in western civilisation concerning the relationship of human beings to (the rest of) nature can be dissected into three tendencies on the basis of a slightly different categorization from that used above. As with that however, it should be remembered that such tendencies are analytically abstracted from the concrete, interwoven, complex whole of historical reality.

The first of these three traditions can be characterised as *harmonious interaction, metabolism, or symbiosis* between human society and nature. Most of the major Greek philosophers - such as Anaximander, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle - maintain in their very different ontologies the pantheistic, intuitive world-view common to 'primitive' societies. Man is a part of the interwoven, living totality of nature. For Aristotle, each species has a purpose

specific to itself, while nature as a whole is a vital force with a purpose.

The truth of this continuity comes across very clearly in the following comments made by Martin von Hildebrand, an anthropologist who works with Amazonian native groups:

Tribal peoples' concepts of the Earth and their relationship to it and its other 'inhabitants' are quintessentially gaian insofar as they conceive the 'whole' as being necessary for vitality, continuity and sanity in the sense of health.

The Ufaina (of Colombia) believe in a vital force called *fufaka* which is essentially masculine and which is present in all living beings. This vital force, whose source is the sun, is constantly recycled among plants, animals, men and the Earth itself which is seen as feminine. Each group of beings, men, plants, animals, Earth or water require a minimum amount of this vital force in order to live.

What is of importance, according to the Ufaina, is that the vital force continues to be recycled from one species to another, in such a way that not too much accumulates in any one of them, since this would cause another to be correspondingly deprived of his vital force. The delicate balance between a community and its environment makes it defenceless; consequently any disturbance, however slight, necessarily affects the whole. (Hildebrand 1988: 186-189)

Navajo cosmology has similarly been described as dynamic and processual (Pinxten 1987), being concerned with activity and events, not with movements of things. The Navajo world is a finite, bounded bowl, but this is no static bowl 'containing' the universe. This cosmology is unitary and organic, with no dichotomies into form and content, or things and happenings. Within this total interrelatedness, human beings have a distinct impact through ritual actions. The world is indeterminate, non-hierarchical, and homogeneous, with no dichotomy between the 'natural' and the 'supernatural'.

For the Greek Stoic philosopher Posidonius (first century BC) there is a primeval creative force that brings forth the beauty and purposefulness of nature, a creative Logos that ensures development and differentiation of multiplicity from unity, the complex from the simple. The arts of man are the highest stage of this creativity, but as they are derived from nature they remain part of nature, and to be happy and free man should live harmoniously within nature.

The Roman Cicero (also first century BC) was influenced by Posidonius, and was a major vehicle for the reintroduction of the classical divine design argument into Renaissance thought, and into the natural theologies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Glacken 1967). The whole universe possesses a generative principle and an organic character. There is a hierarchy of being in which plants exist for the animals, animals for man, and man exists in order to contemplate the divine mind, yet each retains its own purpose and intrinsic value. Clarence Glacken writes: "The Stoic idea of sympathy is at work here; there are interconnections and affinities among things in the whole creation, strong bonds between the macrocosm and the microcosm that is man" (ib.: 57) This feeling was reinvoked in Shelley when he wrote in *Epipsychidion*:

The spirit of the worm beneath the sod

In love and worship, blends itself with God (Shelley 1970: 414)

and in *The Boat on Serchio*

Day had awakened all things that be,

The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,

And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,

And the matin-bell and the mountain bee [...] (ib.: 655)

The attitude of mind and feeling in the following from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*:

Think of all the various species of animals, both tame and wild! think of the flights and songs of birds' of the pastures filled with cattle, and the teeming life of the woodlands! [...] could we but behold these things with our eyes as we can picture them in our minds, no one taking in the whole earth at one view could doubt divine reason (quoted from Glacken 1967: 59)

is a Gaian one (though this is not to imply that the modern version requires a literal God. Rather one is reminded of Jim Lovelock's moment of insight that the planet Earth is alive.)

Again, it is a central experience in the Romantic vision, as with Shelley:

that Beauty furled

Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world [...]

or:

like a buried lamp, a Soul no less

Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,

An atom of the eternal, whose own smile

Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen

O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,

Filling their bare and void interstices. (Shelley 1970: 414, 422)

This sense of an awesome, ineffable, beauty and meaning in nature - which may or may not entail theism - has throughout the modern period resisted both the reductionism of the Galileo-

Newtonian scientific world view, and the callously destructive spirit of industrial progress, capitalist or otherwise.

Although the Roman Lucretius (first century BC) rejects design arguments, he retains the notion of a vital force and holds to another kind of teleology. Though materialistic and mocking beliefs in final causes, nature for Lucretius is not the 'blind watchmaker' (Dawkins 1986) of modern atheistic mechanism. Nature for Lucretius is a powerful cyclical process: the earth causes plant and animal life to grow, but on passing away, what remains is restored to earth as dust in proportion to what the earth has given. It is like a parent and like a tomb (cf. Glacken 1967: 71). It is hard not to feel the same unifying geographical and ecological awe in Shelley also:

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,

Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead are driven ...

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;

Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear! (Shelley 1970: 577)

The dominant view of nature in late mediaeval Europe was Christianized Aristotelianism. Ernst Cassirer has written: "The task of medieval thought had consisted largely in tracing the architectonics of being and in delineating its main design. In the religious system of the Middle Ages as it is crystallised in scholasticism every phase of reality is assigned its unique place" (Cassirer 1966: 39), but in the Renaissance one world and one Being are replaced by an infinity of worlds constantly springing from the womb of becoming, each one of which embodies but a single transitory phase of the inexhaustable vital process of the universe [...]

The nature philosophy of the Renaissance attacks [...] the old conception of nature. Its basic tendency and principle can be expressed in the formula that the true essence of nature is not to be sought in the realm of the created (natura naturata), but in that of the creative process (natura naturans). Nature is more than mere creation; it participates in original divine essence because the divine power pervades nature itself. (ib.: 37-41)

This ontology of nature in which the dualism between subject and object, mover and moved, creator and created, is overcome, has its counterpart in China in Taoism. In Europe, it was displaced and supplanted by the mechanistic dualism of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. The pantheistic holism of Bruno was replaced by the Newtonian world-machine with its paradoxical need for a machine-making God. Empiricist epistemology with its rigid relation of facts to concepts replaced the dialectical, dynamic interaction between the thinking person and nature, implicit in Bruno. As R.G.Collingwood puts it, the Renaissance view of nature came in due course to deny that the world of nature, the world studied by physical science, is an organism, and (asserted) that it is devoid both of intelligence and of life. It is therefore incapable of ordering its own movements in a rational manner, and indeed incapable of moving itself at all. The movements which it exhibits, and which the physicist investigates, are imposed upon it from without, and their irregularity is due to 'laws of nature' likewise imposed from without. Instead of being an organism, the natural world is a machine: a machine in the literal and proper sense of

the word [... its] orderliness [is] an expression of intelligence: but for the Renaissance thinkers it was the intelligence of something other than nature: the divine creator and ruler of nature. (Collingwood 1965: 5)

It was the reductionism, dualism, and mechanism of Newton that the Romantic movement rebelled against - not the progress of science and technology per se, nor the Enlightenment's trust in reason and rationality. It was anything but an anti-scientific spirit that led William Blake in his famous watercolour to depict Newton looking downward, measuring diagrams on the bottom of the sea; and when Wordsworth described a statue of Newton as:

The marble index of a mind for ever

Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone (quoted in ib.: 106) he was sympathetically conveying the alienated nature of Newton's genius, the cold direction in which Newton had taken the light of science, breaking the unity of thought and feeling, scientific reason and poetic imagination.

Particularly significant is Goethe's intention of constructing an alternative science to Newton's - one which engaged all the senses and faculties, and did not relegate the so-called secondary qualities (such as colour, taste, sound) to mere 'subjective' experience, whilst presenting the so-called primary qualities (such as number, magnitude, position and extension) as the sole 'objective', because measurable, stuff of science. In his complaint that Newton had 'tweaked and bent' light in his experiments with prisms, he lamented Newton's reduction of the phenomena of colour to a hidden mechanism; he urged for an active epistemology rather than the passive notion of the senses receiving' data, that has become central to the dominant scientistic world view; and for science as an activity that finds the *organization* or *unity* of the world (Bortoft 1986). Goethe wanted, as he put it in the *Introduction* to his *Contribution to Optics*, a theory that "includes all experiences, and can help towards their practical application." (quoted in Schindler 1946: 9) In this, he was echoed by Shelley when the latter wrote in his *A Defence of Poetry*:

The poetry in these systems of thought is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes [...]. The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. (Shelley 1890: 37)

Goethe, like Wordsworth and Shelley, was aware that the possibility of a different science and philosophy of nature was being suppressed, or pushed aside by history's trajectory. He wrote of Newton and his work on light:

Everybody knows that more than a hundred years ago a certain profound thinker devoted himself to this subject, collected his experiences and with them erected an edifice, a veritable fortress of learning in this domain of science; and by creating a powerful school of thought forced his successors into agreement unless they wished to be ousted from the field altogether. (quoted inBortoft 1986: 7)

The language is interesting for its militaristic, totalitarian imagery: the dominant version of western science is already being criticized as a project of domination and control of nature through a monolithic, hierarchical, and manipulative form of knowledge. The Romantic commitment to the *totality* of perception and experience, what Arthur Lovejoy termed plenitude (Lovejoy 1964) - the validation of and joy in all things, including their opposites and negative sides, their multiplicity and burgeoning exuberance - urges the science and philosophy of nature to respond to the whole of experience with the whole being, and thus make this totality practical in a rounded way, answerable to the fullness of human needs in an existence in harmonious interaction with nature. Science should not merely understand nature with a cold objectivity, but be part of a human praxis - living within it wholesomely, fully, enjoyably. Science should be part of 'the poetry of life' (Shelley 1890: 37), as Shelley put it, opening up its emancipatory potential.

The Romantic imagination experienced a mystical communion with a pantheistic, unitary nature in cosmic flux: this was a source of moral and spiritual learning that could overcome the alienation, isolation, and psychic dislocation induced by expanding urban industrial capitalist society (Cloudsley 1992). For Wordsworth in *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*

The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, nor any interest

Unborrowed from the eye [...]

[...] I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-times

The still, sad music of humanity [...]

And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of thought,

And rolls through all things. Therefore I am still

[...] well pleased to recognize

In nature and the language of the sense

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul

Of all my moral being. (Wordsworth 1972: 107)

For Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,

With one fair Spirit for my minister,

That I might all forget the human race,

And, hating no one, love but only her!

Ye Elements! - in whose ennobling stir

I feel myself exalted - can ye not

Accord me such a being? [...]

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,

There is a rapture on the lonely shore,

There is society where none intrudes,

By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:

I love not man the less, but Nature more,

From these our interviews, in which I steal

From all I may be, or have been before,

To mingle with the Universe, and feel

What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean - roll!

Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;

Man marks the earth with ruin - his control

Stops with the shore. (Byron 1868: 172)

And for John Clare in *The Voice of Nature*

The voice of nature as the voice of God

Appeals to me in every tree and flower,

Breathing his glory, magnitude and power.

In nature's open book I read, and see

Beauty's rich lesson [...]

I hear rich music wheresoe'er I look [...]

And that small lark between me and the sky

Breathes sweetest strains of morning's melody [...]

I read its language, and its speech is joy;

So, without teaching when a lonely boy,

Each weed to me did happy tidings bring,

And laughing daisies wrote the name of spring,

And God's own language unto nature given

Seemed universal as the light of heaven [...] (Clare 1984: 185)

The Romantic imagination integrates perception, feeling and thought to action and interaction; it conceives higher states of human being; feels the self as a point of intersection in the moving totality of nature and humanity. It aligns the spontaneous, free being with nature, in equal existence with all other things; it is synthetic, rather than purely analytic.

The Romantic vision of nature had its American counterparts or successors in Emerson, Thoreau, and John Muir. Muir was responsible for creating the world's first conservation area - Yosemite National Park in California (1864), before the English Lake District became the first land owned by the National Trust in 1894. Muir wrote:

Unfortunately man is in the woods and waste and pure destruction are making rapid headway. If the importance of forests are at all understood even from an economic standpoint, their preservation would call forth the watchful attention of the government.

Thousands of tired, nerve shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home, that wildness is a necessity and mountains, parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers but as fountains of life. (quoted from Sarre e.a. 1991: 23)

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, Hegel stands out as the philosopher who tried to bring about a synthesis between contemporary (mechanistic) science and his own philosophy of nature, which took nature to be a dynamic process of becoming, an unfolding and differentiation of forms. As Collingwood put it, he "tried to solve by philosophy the problems of natural science [...]. He tried to anticipate by philosophy something which in fact could only be a future development of natural science (namely, the transition from a conception of nature as a machine to one that sees it as permeated by process), not seeing that natural science must solve its own problems in its own time and by its own methods [...] [but] his anticipation [...] was in many ways startlingly accurate" (Collingwood 1965: 132).

Hegel helped to open the way to developmental, evolutionary thought, though his philosophy remains ultimately rent by the dualisms between Idea and matter, mind and reality. Dialectical materialism came into being through Marx's and Engels' critique of Feuerbach's materialist critique of Hegel (Cloudsley 1986b). Through this, new ontologies for both society and nature were born. The limitations of Feuerbach's metaphysical, mechanistic materialism crystallized, according to Marx and Engels, in his conception of Man, who was part inorganic matter, part physiological being, and part an abstract, unhistorical ('anthropological') human nature. Marx and Engels thought they had exploded Feuerbach's static conception of Man with their concept of *social being*, which grasps the self-transforming history of real human societies. Simultaneously, Feuerbach's mechanical materialist conceptions of matter and organic life were also exploded, and dualistic ontologies of nature were seen as expressions of human self-estrangement. Dualism in thought was seen by Marx and Engels as having its basis in the alienated division of mental

from manual labour in class divided societies: it reached its apogee in Hegel's active, dialectical idealism and Feuerbach's passive, mechanical materialism.

'Human nature' is transformed into real human practice in concrete history, matter and life are transformed into natural, dialectically developing processes. Process, development, and change cannot be explained by mechanistic materialism; idealism is brought back in new disguise through abstract, eternal 'laws' or a first cause. The separation of nature into matter or life on the one hand, and God, or Spirit, or immaterial laws on the other, entails the same inadequacy as do previous conceptions of society according to Marx and Engels: materiality is grasped passively, inertly, and mechanically (as in Feuerbach), whilst the active, self-developing side is grasped idealistically (as in Hegel).

Dialectical materialism replaces a mechanistic ontology of matter and life with one that grasps totality, dialectical process, and unity, yet recognizes irreducible levels of reality that emerge from development. The transcendence of mechanism and idealism claims to have understood all reality as both structure and activity, as both objective determination and vital, purposive, creativity. These critical insights of Marx and Engels have frequently been rejected, due largely to the abysmal levels of dogmatism and pseudo-science that have been presented as Dialectical Materialism. Already in Engels there are some posivitistic tendencies which see history as an extension of determinist 'laws of nature', which contradict his views elsewhere of human, sensuous activity and consciousness as creative and open-ended. In some of his formulations dialectical laws are pictured as applicable to both nature and history as a kind of reified contradictory Spirit that works its way through both.

Yet clearly Engels' central intention was not to force metaphysical, dogmatic schema onto phenomena; he himself commented that "outrageous treatment (arises when dialectics are) forced on nature and history (rather than) deduced from them" (quoted in Hoffman 1977: 17). He asked whether the natural sciences in his time did or did not bear out or necessitate a dialectical materialist ontology and epistemology. In concluding that they did, his mode of expression had, as Loren Graham puts it, "the unfortunate effect of tying Marxism to three codified laws of nature rather than simply to the principle that nature does conform to laws more general than those of any one science, laws that may, with varying degrees of success, be identified" (Graham 1966: 52). It is worth noting that these three laws (Transformation of Quantity into Quality, Mutual Interpenetration of Opposites, Negation of the Negation), which if regarded as general principles of a highly abstract nature are valuable and undogmatic guides to thought, arise from a simplification and reduction of the Hegelian dialectic which Hegel himself warned specifically against turning into a formula, as reality could be known only by going through the whole process of self-knowledge (cf. ib.: 51).

In the original Marxist vision, an emancipatory transformation of social being into a free, collective self-development in an harmonious metabolism with nature, entailed a dialectical form of knowledge of nature. The most complete knowledge of nature available in the contemporary stage of development of social being, coincides with a natural scientific project that is orientated not toward domination in society and over nature, but toward social emancipation and a non-destructive interaction with nature. Marxism took over this conception from the Romantic movement.

Darwin, by seeking to explain evolution in terms of a central mechanism - that of random variation within natural selection - discarded the other ways in which evolution was coming to be constructed in European culture, especially in Romanticism in general and Goethe in particular. As with the twentieth century neo-Darwinist projection of causation onto genes as the only determinants of an organism's life, it forced evolution into a dualistic and reductionist mould. The organic, non-dualist, anti-reductionist, holistic, active and striving conception that could have been its basis was lost (though this is precisely what is being reconstructed by contemporary biological theorists like Lewontin, Crawford and Marsh, Mae Wan-Ho, Goodwin, and Sheldrake). A similar loss occurred within Marxist thought: in its scientistic, reductionist, economistic tendencies it has constantly attempted to state its findings in terms of a mechanism of history in general and of the transformation from capitalism to socialism in particular. Even Marx in his own summary statements spoke of unchanging 'laws of history', denying the originality of his thought as it wrestled with the complex material that forms the bulk of his writings. There the notions of active, concrete process, of pluralistic, open-ended differentiation, of complex, multiple, and contradictory development, are in a spirit wholly at odds with linear models and mechanistic determinisms. But Marxism after Marx lost these aspects progressively more and more, in favour of increasingly banal mechanical models.

If it is true that modern science bears out the undogmatic premises of dialectical materialism, necessitating its creative reconstruction, it is also the case that compatible and equally valid modes of understanding are emerging within other philosophical frameworks. The use of Taoist conceptualizations by Fritjof Capra is a significant example, as it indicates that grasping nature on the highest level presently possible requires the integrated activity of all the faculties - cognitive, intuitive, affective, and sensuous. Thus, mechanistic materialism is transcended, with its eternal abstract laws divorced from the dynamic plenitude of concrete reality: the scientistic view of nature that banishes infinite variation in sensation for mathematized formulae, and suppresses all ethical and aesthetic consideration from its procedures.

Marx left a schizophrenic legacy. On the one hand there is his utopian vision of communist society in harmonious metabolism with nature, balanced in its equilibrium between agriculture and industry, town and countryside, which Alfred Schmidt rightly considered a coherent ecological worldview - remarkable for a nineteenth century thinker (Schmidt 1971). Then there is his oft-repeated theme of history as the growing mastery of nature, the socialist project entailing technological domination of outer nature as a counterpart to freedom of inner, human nature. In this facet of his thought he accepts nineteenth century science's self-conception (especially in physics) as the discovery of neutral and objective laws of nature and implicitly the mechanistic view of nature. In a famous passage of the 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* he speaks of the objective laws of nature and economy in a way that completely denies his more profound vision of science as socially and historically relative, a part of human praxis, which could become a project of human emancipation in the humanization of nature and the naturalization of man: a vision of humankind living harmoniously within and as part of Gaia.

The 'man or nature' dilemma is here transcended, continuing the tradition from Cicero that sees human works as part of nature - making no distinction between domesticated or pristine nature. Rejection of the belief that 'economic progress' requires an aggressive subjugation of nature, is

not here replaced by a naive conservationism that sees the rights of nature (without man) as absolute. If humanity is thought of as a special, conscious part of nature it is allowed that both humanly untouched and humanly influenced environments can be objects of aesthetic concern. The human species has from earliest times radically altered nature - hunting and the use of fire, then agriculture, did so long before mineral extraction and industry (Simmons 1990). The criticism made by Christopher Cawdwell in his *Illusion and Reality* of 1937, that Wordsworth's feeling for nature was inauthentic, as he failed to recognize his Nature to be the product of millenia of human labour, is unfounded. Wordsworth's concern that 'insensitive' nineteenth century development would spoil the Lake District did not mean he thought the latter was an untouched enclave. The aesthetic and practical value of nature to humanity are entirely inseparable.

The tradition of thought that has been committed to harmonious interaction of man with nature corresponds broadly to the ethical vision that holds all parts of nature to have purpose and value. Often, but not always, mechanistic and idealist worldviews have corresponded to that other ethic, according to which the rest of nature exists to fulfil man's purposes and to yield value to him. As Marx and many other philosophers have seen, mechanism implies idealism and vice versa, as they are opposite sides of a dualistic coin. It is a dialectical, organic, pantheistic and holistic vision that restores (or never loses) the unity of matter and spirit.

In the idealist worldviews of Euclid, Pythagoras, and Plato (not withstanding their other virtues) in Ancient Greece, through to Galileo, Newton, and Descartes in post-Renaissance Europe, nature has been understood in terms of pure forms, or systems of laws which are abstracted from the real, irregular, imperfect, chaotic world (Mandelbrot 1983). The concrete, phenomenal, material world 'obeys' laws that rule from an ideal realm; this view of nature reflects an autocratic social hierarchy, rather than a society that rules itself, as an undivided, living, creative nature also does. But science itself has begun to transcend this mechanistic model of nature. As Sheldrake puts it:

The idea that everything is determined in advance and is in principle predictable has given way to the ideas of indeterminism, spontaneity and chaos. The invisible organizing powers of animate nature are once again emerging in the form of fields. The hard, inert atoms of Newtonian physics have dissolved into structures of vibratory activity. The uncreative world machine has turned into a creative, evolutionary cosmos. Even the laws of nature may not be eternally fixed; they may be evolving along with nature (Sheldrake 1991: xiv).

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SOME THOUGHTS FOR AN ECOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY OF THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

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There exist a number of very different kinds of interaction between human beings and the natural environment in the Peruvian Amazon. The various kinds of society, with their different identities and different ways of feeling and identifying themselves as Peruvian, include:

Native societies
Mestizo and Andean Quechua or Aymara colonists (small farmers - including coca growers in the Rio Huallaga area especially, labourers, traders)
Mestizo and foreign extractors or producers of natural resources and primary products (mainly timber, oil, animals and animal skins; cocoa and coffee on plantations, cattle on ranches)
Inhabitants of towns and cities
Terrorists/insurgents/narcotraffickers/other bandits

These represent different ways of humanly relating to the rainforest environment, different ways of living in this particular form of nature and wresting satisfaction of human needs from it, each of which have different consequences for the rainforest ecosystem. The idea of an `ecological sociology` is a sociology that thinks of social structures and practices in relation always to their embeddedness in, and interactions with, the natural environment.

Processes of so-called ´development` in the Peruvian rainforest involve each of these major forms of social relationship with nature, and the dynamic interconnections between them, as well as mutual interactions between the environmental changes wrought by each

of them. That is, the different environmental consequences of these different groups` activities interact upon one another, so that social groups affect each other`s modes of existence through their environmental effects as well as directly.

Each of the different social forms tends to hold distinct perceptions or prejudices towards the others. The attention of this article is largely on urban and colonizing mestizo society`s prejudices and superiority complexes toward native ethnic groups, whose ecologically more sustainable, harmonious, and appropriate forms of production are looked upon as ´uncivilized`, and not as ´proper` production. (The term `appropriate` seems reasonable to describe native society`s generally effective form of adaptation to the rainforest.) This is therefore a kind of `sociology of knowledge` of urban and rural non-native perceptions of native society, from which a good deal of light can be shed upon the history and present predicament of the Peruvian rainforest.

The nomadic, hunter-gathering, shifting cultivation lifestyle is frequently regarded by outside societies as not involving ´real` work. The very qualities of the traditional native lifestyle that ensure an effective cultural and ecological adaptation to the rainforest environment - lack of individual property or ownership over productive resources, little or no understanding of money - are seen as ´lazy`. Such negative judgements in their turn ensure that useful lessons are not learnt from natives by non-natives. So often the dominant society does not see native society - its worldviews effectively obliterate the realities of native life-forms as meaningful references for understanding existence in the forest.

But at the same time, in characteristic Peruvian fashion, jungle mestizos see something authentic about themselves in the natives. This is similar to the way that Peruvian mestizos in the Andes and on the coast see their origins and identity as largely contained in indigenous history, which is exemplified in the way a pre-Columbian monument like Macchu Picchu has become a national symbol. Tupac Amaru, the Andean Indian leader of the extraordinary uprising against Spanish rule in the late eighteenth century, is a national hero. The very popular “folklorico” style of music is thought of as deriving from ´real` Andean Indian music.

In turn Andean culture pays homage and celebrates, through myths dating back to Inca times, as also in ´chuncho` (jungle native) dances at Andean fiestas today, its legendary origins in the jungle. In this, legend holds a truth, as the origins of Andean culture - including some of its crucial motifs, themes, and physical bases, from coca tohallucinogenic shamanism to jaguars to parrot feathers - do indeed lie in the tropical rainforest. The central motifs of Chavin art – Chavin (circa 850 - 460 BC) being thought of as the ´mother culture` of Andean civilization by the Preuvian archaeologist Julio Tello - are tropical animals: felines, lizards, caymans etc. It is a cruel irony that the remnants of traditional native societies in the rainforest today, who retain so many of the

cultural elements that underlay pre-hispanic Andean civilization - which in turn is felt to be the true basis of modern Peru - are held in such low regard.

In the rainforest regions of Eastern Peru, the urban ´brujo` (witchdoctor) bears a complex relationship to the native shaman. Mestizos frequently display a respect for the visionary and curing work to cure what in occidental terms would be called ´psychological` and ´physical` problems. But the mestizo idea of the ´brujo` has transformed the shaman`s activity according to models of the priest in church and the medical or psychiatric clinic. Once again there is a contradiction between respect for the primordial and the original, and a compulsion to improve upon, civilize, and tame the looked down-upon primitiveness of native culture. The free and anarchistic style of a native shamanistic session is replaced by a more controlled, ministered, and sedate approach.

At the same time as feeling disdain for ´uncivilized` natives, mestizos often also see the lives of natives in the jungle as free and untrammelled. Similarly, more acculturated natives such as the Machiguenga, the Piro, or the group of Yaminahua in Sepagua - to take some examples from northern Cusco Department and southern Ucayali Department(1) - both admire ´uncivilized` natives and remember their ´pre-civilized` past with pride, fondly reminiscing about making fire without matches, or hunting with bows and arrows for all their protein food, yet also feel sorry for those not yet ´civilized`. This structure of ambiguity in ideas and sentiments is constantly found.

There are therefore recognizable general complexes of disdain, feelings of superiority, and contempt for the ´backward` savage, alongside admiration, nostalgic yearning, respect and a sense of loss for the ´noble` savage - in relation to various facets of lifestyle, culture, productive activity and ecological orientation. Perhaps these inclinations - Hobbesian and Rousseauist respectively - are common to much of humanity - at least, that portion of it (the vast majority now) which has moved beyond a nomadic, hunter-gathering mode of existence; though no doubt they take on specific forms in particular cultural and historical circumstances.

Contrary to many Western, ´mythical` accounts of ´progress` - both the ´orthodox` or ´standard` versions of history and the Marxist or other radical versions - most transitions from hunter-gathering to settled kinds of food-producing society have in the past not been the result of voluntary decisions, but more often due to necessity, in the form of population pressures acting within a context of limited natural resources. (In the Amazon basin, before the Spanish Conquest, this transition only occurred in certain riverine areas. Only a minority of Amazonian peoples moved into a more complex form of civilization, developing stratification, occupational specialization, and the beginnings of a form of state.) For the shift from hunting and food collection to animal domestication and agricultural production may increase the offtake of energy as edible food per unit area of land, but the productivity of labour typically falls, so that the average time spent working increases.

This increase in work for the majority of people as a consequence of the ´neolithic revolution`, is perhaps registered in the almost universal mythical theme of a Fall, or expulsion from paradise, in post-hunter-gatherer societies. An experience that was at the time traumatic, representing a transition to a less happy condition, is however later revised in ´official` histories (of progress, or self-congratulatory accounts of the emergence of civilizations); though a trace of the real experience perhaps remains in poignant archetypes of alienation.

The food surplus produced typically increases in small-scale, settled agricultural societies, and still more in large-scale ´civilizations` with their enormously greater populations integrated into much larger geographical territories, with their states, classes, and urban centres, their specializations in productive roles and their complex divisions of labour. Yet, though these make the existence of non-producing classes possible, and there emerge among them hitherto impossible advances in the sophistication of culture, religion, cosmology, science and the arts, for the majority of people the transition to settled production and civilization rests upon an increase in toil and an exclusion from many of the cultural gains these developments make possible.

It is not therefore surprising that representatives from indigenous hunter-gathering societies today almost uniformly express a clear wish to continue in their traditional lifestyles, whilst rejecting the options of settled farming or urban life for as long as they are able. As just suggested, it is more than reasonable to see in the lop-sided ´progress` of social history a major source of the widespread myths of a Fall from Grace amongst post-hunter-gathering societies, deriving from the realities of transitions from nomadic to settled, especially civilized, societies. The ´angel of history` in Walter Benjamin`s millenial, visionary, eschatological ´Marxism` views the past as Paradise, and progress from it into the present and future as a catastrophic storm causing debris and ruins to pile up along its path(2). In this tragic view of history - a catastrophic inversion of Marxism - instead of humanity facing the future and moving forward, it is blasted away from the Paradise at which it stares, transfixed by what it is losing and moving away from, its wings tangled up in the storm. Involuntary, violent, piling up heaps of rubble at the feet of the angel of history, with all revolutions aiming for a better world going wrong: this predicament of the ´angel of history` is also that of the Peruvian mestizo seeing his or her identity and origins in the Indian, or native indigenous, pre-Columbian past - though distortedly, hazily, in alienated forms, in line with the alienated and sometimes violent historical ´progress` that has itself brought about the movement and distance from those origins.

A fundamental aspect of traditional native cultures that is misunderstood within the mestizo worldview, exists in native mythologies which are based on holistic cosmologies, according to which nature and supernature are cyclic processes in which energies and forces are recycled. As Reichel-Dolmatoff puts it:

“The (Tukano) Indians conceptualize man and the universe in terms of a huge circuit of restricted energy in which the individual person must always try to avoid causing a disturbance. There exist very concrete reasons for this, apparently very idealized, concept. The carrying capacity of the rainforest habitat is defined by the Indians chiefly in terms of the availability of protein-rich food resources such as game, fish, and certain wild fruits. In order to avoid walking excessive distances, frequent relocation of settlements and, in general, the depletion and degradation of the physical environment, the uses of these resources must be regulated and restricted. The uncontrolled killing of game, the over-harvesting of forest fruits, and the reckless exploitation of raw materials are thought to diminish the total energy of the universe, an energy that must be restored by the individual who has to restrain his biological needs by observing frequent sexual abstinence and strict dietary prescriptions during many ritual and secular activities. Population growth is checked by the use of oral contraceptives of plant origin, and the common belief that game animals and their spirit-masters are the main causes of illness is an effective mechanism in the control of overhunting.”(3)

Or as von Hildebrand writes:

“The Ufaina believe in a vital force called fufaka which is essentially masculine and which is present in all living beings. This vital force, whose source is the sun, is constantly recycled among plants, animals, men and the Earth itself which is seen as feminine. Each group of beings, men, plants, animals, Earth or water require a minimum amount of this vital force to live.

“What is of importance, according to the Ufaina, is that the vital force continues to be recycled from one species to another, in such a way that not too much accumulates in any one of them, since this would cause another to be correspondingly deprived of his vital force. The delicate balance between a community and its environment makes it defenceless; consequently any disturbance, however slight, necessarily affects the whole. Human beings, although superior to animals in knowledge, are also part of this energy recycling system, and are subject to the same constraints.”(4)

Within the organic flux of nature and supernature(5), shamans must negotiate with and appease spirits of animals and plants, within a worldview that recognizes the need for a ´giving back` to nature, and for limits to the harvesting from nature. Hunted animals and collected plants must be returned, recycled into nature. For example, rites and rituals ensure that animal spirits are sent back into the forest(6). Such magical cosmologies contain an intuitive understanding of the finiteness of nature and of natural resources, and of humankind as a part of, and link within, nature`s system of energy flows and food chains. The ecological need for a human economy to achieve a steady state, is recognized within native Amazonian mythology and cosmology. Man needs to play his role in ensuring that nature`s flows and cycles are perpetuated, unlike so often for modern

consciousness which apparently presumes that nature inevitably and always restores its processes after the depletions and interventions made by human beings. In the Amazon, small-scale societies based on hunting, gathering, and shifting cultivation have been made up traditionally of nomadic groups, flexibly undergoing fusions and fissions. Survival is experienced as the consequence of a direct, interactive metabolism between the social group and nature. The following is how Philippe Descola describes this type of society in connection with his analysis of the Achuar, a native group that lives in both the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon:

"The Achuar are a perfect synthesis of those enigmatic inclinations peculiar to many societies of Amazonian Indians. They are a near charicature of zero-degree social integration..... The lack of those institutions (sometimes) regarded as the sociological axes of classless societies - chiefdoms, village communities, unilineal descent groups - does not seem to hamper the Achuar..... Internal conflict is permanent, but it does not follow (a) fine segmentary logic..... In view of the extreme atomization of these quasi-autarkic households engaged in endemic feuding, it is obviously tempting to evoke the presocial condition in which, according to the well-known formula, every man is Enemy to every man….. In point of fact, their residential atomism is tempered by a supralocal structure..... the ´endogamous nexus`..... consisting of from ten to fifteen households scattered over a relatively well-defined territory, whose members are closely and directly related by kinship and affinity..... the highest rates of endogamy being found in those with the highest demographic density; many exogamous unions stem from the abduction of women in the course of raids on neighbouring nexus.....a clear military victory of one nexus over the other does not imply territorial annexation..... This endemic feuding has important demographic consequences, since.....one out of every two male deaths can be attributed to war..... This brings out the highly labile character of a system of social relationsorganized around factionalism and institutionalized feuding."(7)

It is easy to see how such social groups would die off or reduce in population if nature were taken from unsustainably and were degraded locally. The cosmologies of such traditional Amazonian societies tend to be pantheistic, non-dualistic, and expressive of Heraclitean fluxes and transformations, with continuous movement occurring between the supernatural world of spirits, demons, gods, dead ancestors and culture heroes and the empirical (to the Western mind) world of nature and humanity. Michael Harner speaks thus of the non-dualistic view of reality within shamanism generally, and within Amazonian native shamanism in particular:

".....shamanism (can be) characterized in terms of Carlos Casteneda`s distinction between ordinary reality and non-ordinary reality. It is useful because it does not introduce the concepts of mental and material. In shamanic experience, when one is in non-ordinary reality things will seem quite as material as they are here."(8)

Time is cyclic, repetitive, yet burgeoning and spontaneously determined in rhythm and rate from within processes of organic development, rather than by external law-like mechanisms. Matter and spirit are drawn upon by human groups from nature and supernature, then returned to them in ritual and psychic identifications; the spirits of animals hunted and eaten are released back into the forest of nature and supernature, in processes that involve an intuitively understood need for balance, and for a ´steady state` economy of energies within the metabolism between humanity and nature.

In the Andes by contrast, small-scale local, settled, agricultural communities became integrated into large-scale civilizations occupying large territories, through complex state apparatuses, classes, occupational specializations and bureaucratic administrations. Very varied ecological niches and ecosystems were brought under human control to produce for human need. Complex agro-ecosystems were created to direct energy flows toward humanly constructed ends. A centralized religious-cosmological system integrated the regional variety of myth and spirit-world into a more or less unifying system, which included a hugely complex astrological-calendric cosmology based on close observation and measurement of the movements of the celestial bodies. This cosmological system harmonized religious ritual throughout the wider civilization or empire, coordinating the agricultural and pastoral tasks that varied in content and timing between different localities, underpinning the mechanisms of exchange, and movement of products between different communities and classes.

In the modern western European worldview that began with Francis Bacon and Descartes, nature has been thought of as infinite, so that once its secrets are understood in terms of scientific laws, it can be taken from infinitely and treated as if it were an infinite ´sink` for human wastes.

By contrast, the hunter-gathering, nomadic, shifting cultivation strategy and lifestyle of Amazonian natives do not normally result in environmental degradation of the rainforest. The level of production, use of resources, and population, do not exceed the carrying capacity of the ecosystem, because of the form production takes. The essential features of traditional shifting cultivation are that ´chacras` (fields) are not made too close together, and are left to return to jungle for long periods. The fields are policultures, mixes of crops, displaying many species of plants and trees in a variety of sizes and kinds, so that they imitate the forest ecosystem.

Yet human existence in the rainforest has undoubtedly modified the environment over millenia, so that it should not be regarded as a pristine environment unaffected by human beings. Some authors argue that the entire ecosystem has been shaped by human activity, as the system of letting fields return to jungle, and continually harvesting the products of trees and plants for several generations(9), selectively modifies the balance of plant and tree species, so that in a sense the entire rainforest is like a very freely-growing ´garden`(10). There is an infinite sliding scale between the extreme concepts of

´collecting` from a completely wild environment on the one hand, and ´domesticating` a completely controlled and simplified one, on the other. One of the characteristic misperceptions of the traditional native, or ´primitive` mode of production in the Amazon on the part of outsiders, is the failure to understand that the forest is not left ´unused` because it has not been transformed into the kinds of agriculturally or industrially productive environments familiar in other regions. The kind of humanly-shaped environment characteristic of regions where a full-blown agricultural revolution could take place - for example the Andes or coast of Peru - is recognized as being ´used`, or ´farmed`. By contrast, in the traditional rainforest native economy, natural products appear to be simply collected, in an arbitrary fashion by wandering savages - a conception often expressed as part of a non-native prejudice about natives being lazy and opportunist. This, together with the fact that native societies lack money, and thus wages and wage-labour, as well as private ownership of land, allows non-natives to view natives as people who do not work.

This issue concerns the coevolution and development of nature and society, in agroecosystems(11). From the point of view of members of societies in which a qualitatively new nature/society dualism has emerged, nature and society appear indistinguishable in a ´primitive` agro-ecosystem. From the viewpoints of traditional Andean Indian colonists, rural and urban mestizo migrants, and of foreigners, the native agroecosystem in the rainforest lacks a driving force of ´progress` with the project of refashioning nature behind it, converting it into agricultural and industrial processes under more or less scientific control. The humanly-induced transformation of ´wild` nature into ´countryside`, which cannot exist separately from a society involved in settled land use, comes to be a necessary physical and visual aspect of ´civilized` existence. The cultural attitudes of both poor Andean or mestizo colonists, and wealthier mestizos or Westerners (for example Alfred Russel Wallace, who developed a theory of evolution contemporaneously with Darwin and visited the Amazon, envisioned the forest being transformed into ´productive` agricultural land), share the judgement that the jungle must be conquered(12) and the trees cut down, even when all the evidence from experience - including the colonists` own experience of planting fields of single crops, leading to soil degradation - indicates that this does not generate wealth or comfort. ´Virgin` jungle does not appear to outsiders as properly transformed by human society - even though in fact it probably has been over millenia; and from their perspectives it simply must be, for both utilitarian and, so to speak, moral reasons. These values and perceptions are hegemonic in most areas of Peru where the jungle is taken into consideration at all, not only in the jungle itself.

This in turn is related to the failure to understand that native societies now, as in the past, have and did have population levels more or less suited to the environment`s varied carrying capacity. For the patchwork quilt of nomadic societies, which the Amazon basin is, leave nowhere ´uninhabited`. Nothing could have been both more factually false as well as immoral than former Peruvian president Belaunde Terry`s depiction of the

Peruvian jungle as “land without people for people without land”. The indigenous pre-Columbian population of the Peruvian jungle may have been nearly 1.5 million, about the same as now (including urban inhabitants), but as so many died of diseases in the wake of the Spanish Conquest this fact was never understood - until recently, by a relatively small number of people. The Spanish conquest did not result in a thorough penetration of the jungle in Peru, before the rubber boom at the end of the nineteenth century.

The immediacy of a traditional native group`s relationship to its natural environment, would mean that its population level would have always adapted to the local environment`s carrying capacity fairly quickly - given the particular form of production, social practice, and regulation and transformation. Environmentally destructive practices would not be continued for long, quite simply because the people who undertook them would not survive long. No complex civilization with large-scale coordination of social activities, large-scale capacity to extend sensory-motor powers vis-a-vis the environment through tools, weapons, technology or means of production, or the ability to transport large quantities of food to populations living far from where it is produced, ever before the present period emerged in, or conquered, the rainforest and its inhabitants. No pre-Columbian Andean civilization, up to and including the Incas, nor the post-Conquest Hispanic colonial system, nor the Republic until quite recently, was able to undertake this feat. For a civilization to persist in destructive, ecologically ill-adapted practices as in the Amazon today, it must have highly developed structures of technology, transport, and administration, but also the characteristic that those who make crucial decisions concerning the fate of the forest are not those who suffer from its destruction. There does not yet exist, at any rate, an effective feed-back system to ensure experience is learnt from, and destructive practices replaced by undestructive ones.

It is nearly unique to the Amazonian rainforest as an environment, that it is moving historically from the culture and technology of simple, small-scale, traditional native society, almost directly to modern, technocratic, global industrial society, through a ´forced Westernization`. There was little in the way of complex, class civilization in between: the limited development of state-forms and larger-scale social and productive activity in riverine areas before the Conquest, mostly disappeared in its wake, and was certainly not on a scale comparable to that which arose in the Andes or on the Coast. Ecological factors made such development very difficult or impossible(13): lack or very limited availability of stone or metal, limited availability of uninundated land, low restrictions on agricultural productivity and concentrations of human population, the restricted speed of transport and communication, are just some.

The ecosystem`s human culture is apparently jumping more or less straight from ´primitive` to modern, in a form which lacks communal or normative regulation over its relationships to nature. Technical and scientific advance is experienced as an alienated, reified force, out of control and thus far unstoppable. Of course this is not some mysterious *telos* of history, but a consequence of the reification of the capitalist market,

of key institutional processes of corporate control, of state power, and of scientific and technical development.

In the traditional, indigenous mode of existence within the rainforest, if a local ecosystem starts to become degraded, either the human population falls, or alternatively productive strategies adapt quickly, to become more ecologically viable. Only now is it possible - over the short-term and in the context of largely irreversible environmental degradation - for the population level, especially in urban centres, to exceed rainforest carrying capacities. This excess is in terms of the production of food and other commodities, and in terms of the environment taking up waste and pollution. Forms of agriculture and resource extraction, especially logging, are practiced which are environmentally destructive - are indeed more akin to a ´mining` of the forest as if it were made up of non-renewable resources, than a form of renewable agriculture or managed forestry.

It is illigitimate to read off from a specification of the biophysical environment what its carrying capacity might be in terms of human population, in an abstract way. Culturally and historically specific social customs and technical practices must obviously be taken into account. There is no purely ´natural` mode of human relation to the rainforest, as for any other environment; each social form is characterized by its own specific constellation of limits, affordances, and vulnerabilities to the ecologically unintended consequences of its activities. This is an aspect of the general truth that there is no single, ´natural` way of living for human beings; people always live in societies of one form or another, each of which has its distinct set of structures and practices. An ecological sociology should not fall into the trap of thinking there is a single, objectively given, ´natural` way to live in any particular environment. Different societies will meet ecological limits and respond to ecological potentialities in different ways, even if they are all ´sustainable` - due to cultural and historically structured preferences and institutionalized tendencies and activities. Not only is there no one ´right way` for any given environment, but there is no ´automatic` way that societies adapt to their environment. Cultural or religious influence on particular material practices for example, may or may not ensure that they conform to the requirements, or ´logic`, of a particular environment. Sometimes a cultural habit that is ecologically inappropriate to a particular environment may have originated in a different environment where it was appropriate, but this is by no means always the case. Yet, in certain cases ecologically attuned social forms have arisen, and it is important to try to understand why this is so.

The possible forms of human ecology within any given environment may be infinitely variable; but they are, nevertheless, also ecologically bounded from forms that are impossible - except perhaps in the very short run. As a simple analogy one could imagine a circle; societies may be situated on any of the infinite points within it, but outside it they will not in the long run survive. With respect to the idea of ´learning` from native societies, this analogy underlines the point that what is at stake is not a literal copying of native socio-economic strategies, but rather a coming to understand where the circle lies

within which societies must choose how to live.

Thus it should be possible to pinpoint roughly the population level that can be supported sustainably by any particular area of forest, assuming that the form of human ecology practiced is similar to what we have been calling ´traditional native`. To repeat, this does not entail assuming there was an ecological ´golden age` when traditional native societies were in perfect, timeless harmony with their environment - a caricature of the situation that is often set up in order to attack native human ecology the more easily. For the remaining native societies that continue to practice traditional forms of existence in the Amazon are by no means pristine examples or unchanged remnants of a typical pre-Columbian form, unaffected by subsequent history.

Frequently when it is asserted that no presently existing native society functions exactly as its forbears did more than five centuries ago, this is assumed to imply that nothing can be learnt from these contemporary cultures about a style of life that survived in essential harmony with the forest for several thousand years. But in terms of the present discussion, it is surely reasonable to speculate that the ecologically important features of such native cultures are indeed similar to those which must have prevailed over the millenia.

On the other hand it is sometimes alleged that indigenous peoples did degrade parts of the rainforest over very long periods; though this may be true it does not refute the central argument concerning the identification of a sustainable mode of social existence within the rainforest ecosystem. Such contemporary native societies cannot serve directly as models for an ecological Utopia, but if approached subtlely, much of practical value can be derived from an understanding of native human ecology, in order to develop a sustainable form of livelihood for mestizo, or no longer traditional native, communities.

It is possible to conclude that urban concentrations as large as Iquitos or Pucallpa exceed the jungle`s carrying capacity in terms of sustainable absorption of waste and pollution into the rivers, for example - a situation which would remain even if the import of food could make possible an avoidance of excessive harvesting of plants, fish, domesticated or wild animals. It might be that this exceeding of carrying capacity would persist given present population levels whichever form of as-yet practicable urban human ecology were adopted. It may be that even if the best of presently-available techniques and technologies were installed, a town like Iquitos could not be sustainable with its present population.

Small colonist farmers, practising as they mostly do at present forms of agriculture deriving from their experience in the Andes or the coast, exceed the rainforest`s carrying capacity - that is, are unsustainable almost whatever their number. Typically they make fields too close, plant too few kinds of crop, and leave fields fallow for insufficient time: the result is deterioration and erosion of the thin topsoil, and sometimes climate change.

Particularly in the foothills of the Andes, as colonization eats into the jungle, changes in climate follow it.

Similar consequences result from plantation monoculture, cattle ranching, and the most dire forms of logging. Through experimentation it should be possible to arrive at judgements concerning what population levels can be supported, or not exceed carrying capacity in particular contexts, so long as sustainable forms of human ecology are practiced. Research might yield recommendations concerning upper limits to urban populations, sustainable harvesting levels for fish, wild plants and animals, sustainable extraction levels for renewable resources, and minimally disturbing ways of extracting non-renewable resources (such as oil and minerals) where that is still considered wise or desirable. The lessons for agriculture would emphasize mixed cropping with some animals present, using all levels from ground to forest canopy, mirroring the forest ecosystem, ideas such as these being already practiced in a few places dotted around the Peruvian Amazon. Resource extraction would focus on the sustainable gathering of rare and valuable forest products, such as medicinal plants.

Other crucial emphases would be on labour-intensiveness and little-mechanized methods, in agriculture and in general; developing good output/input energy ratios, and good protein or other nutritional outputs per unit of land. All this goes against the logic of the capitalist market, though not necessarily the logic of any kind of market at all. The capitalist market constantly moves towards mechanization and reduction of labour-intensity: something very different from capitalist rationalization is what is wanted. The capitalist market works to maximise profit from the yield of a given amount of land, and it tends to raise the productivity of labour - though indirectly, as a consequence of its concern for profit. It is generally unresponsive to ecological reqirements concerning sustainable use of land and ecosystems, input and output energy ratios, and ratios of nutritional value produced by a given area of land. A new kind of regulated market is needed, slanted towards ecological well-being as well as supporting human equity and justice; using appropriate indicators as part of feed-back mechanisms that allow continuously effective adaptive learning from experience.

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHARLES DARWIN ON TIERRA DEL FUEGO

"While entering (the Bay of Good Success) we were saluted in a manner becoming the inhabitants of this savage land. A group of Fuegians partly concealed by the entangled forest, were perched on a wild point overhanging the sea; and as we passed by, they sprang up, and waving their tattered cloaks sent forth a loud and sonorous shout. The savages followed the ship, and just before dark we saw their fire, and again heard their wild cry."

Charles Darwin, ***Voyage Of The Beagle*****.**

(Published in "The Linnean", Volume 25(3), London, 2009.

This is how Darwin described his first encounter with the Haush, or Selk`nam, a hunter-gathering people of eastern Tierra del Fuego, on December 17th 1832, in his *Journal Of Researches Into The Geology And Natural History Of The Various Countries Visited By H.M.S. Beagle, Under The Command Of Captain Fitzroy, R.N. From 1832 To 1836*, the book which subsequently became known as *Voyage Of The Beagle* .

David Wilson, in his book *Indigenous South Americans of the Past and Present*, writes thus of Darwin`s account of meeting Fuegian peoples:

".....upon encountering the (Fuegian) people, this nineteenth-century European gentleman could scarcely believe that such 'wretched savages' belonged to the human race. Nevertheless, the scientist in him was able to rise above narrower nineteenth-century English prejudices, permitting him to see that these people, so different from any indigenous peoples to the north (i.e. in the Andes and Brazil), must have come down from the north at some remote time in the past to adapt, and thus endure, in the Fuegian climate."

Of course, one must understand Darwin`s observations in the light of his social and historical context: as a member of the English upper classes of the 1830s, but also as a `member` of the fraternity of European scientist-travellers of that period who visited and reported on their observations in South America. Nevertheless, his perceptions are striking, partly because of the precise and exact prose he used in his accounts of the native peoples he met, which is quite as limpid and superb as are his geological and biological descriptions. Darwin`s attitudes can surprise today`s readers perhaps, because it was not inevitable that a European gentleman-scientist of his period should think in his way. Humboldt for example, in his writings about his experiences in Colombia and Venezuela some thirty or so years earlier, stressed a universalistic humanism which united peoples of the Old and New Worlds; and although convinced of the cultural inferiority of South American 'natives' in certain respects in comparison with Europeans, he adopted a different tone from Darwin, and constantly affirmed his belief that slavery was the greatest evil in the world. He put his Kantian ethics where his mouth was so to speak. And H.W. Bates, Darwin`s contemporary and fellow countryman, in his book *The Naturalist On The River Amazons*, speaks of Amazonian Indians and what would today be called *caboclos* in much more sympathic and respectful terms, noting particularly how beautiful the women of the region were! (See the NOTE at the end of this essay.)

Let us follow Darwin`s account further:

"In the morning, the Captain sent a party to communicate with the Fuegians. When we came within hail, one of the four natives who were present advanced to receive us, and began to shout most vehemently, wishing to direct us where to land. When we were on shore the party looked rather alarmed, but continued talking and making gestures with great rapidity. It was without exception the most curious and interesting spectacle I had ever beheld. I could not have believed how wide was the difference, between savage and civilized man. It is greater than between a wild and domesticated animal, in as much as in man there is a greater power of improvement."

The extraordinary thing about this passage is not really the snobbery of comparing a 'savage' with a wild animal, in comparison with a 'civilized' man who is compared with a domesticated animal. It is rather that, as Darwin would later show in *On the Origin of Species*, in the course of man`s domestication of animals and plants from wild precursors, their original 'natures' are lost, and replaced by artificial races that can no longer survive in nature. The latter owe their existence entirely to the species *Homo sapiens sapiens*; they are wholly dependent upon man, having been manipulated through breeding to yield what man wants, and to be tame, obedient, and subservient to man. In a sense of course, they are no more nor less 'natural' or 'artificial' than wild species, and no less 'free' or 'unfree'. The only relevant criterion within the theory of evolution is survival. Nevertheless, it is strange that this man, Charles Darwin, should prefer being similar to a domesticated animal than to a 'wild', 'authentic', 'natural' one, especially when it is he who

will unlock the great secret of biology, the theory of evolution, as driven by 'natural selection'. That human 'improvement' within `civilization' should seem analogous to being shaped into an obsequious and dependent condition by others purely for their exploitative convenience, might in fact be a very apt insight into the condition of the vast majority of people in civilizations based on social classes and hierarchical domination; yet for the fearless, rebellious scientist who was to enter with his mind into the wildest truths of organic nature, in an era still largely dominated by religious dogmas and unquestioned traditions, it cannot but appear amazing.

Darwin continues:

"The chief spokesman was old, and appeared to be the head of the family; the three others were powerful young men, about 6 feet high. The women and children had been sent away. These Fuegians are a very different race from the stunted miserable wretches further to the westward, They are much superior in person, and seem closely allied to the famous Patagonians of the Strait of Magellan. Their only garment consists of a mantle made of guanaco skin, with the wool outside; this they wear just thrown over their shoulders, as often leaving their persons exposed as covered. Their skin is of a dirty coppery red colour."

Darwin`s observations become contradictory here: though these people are according to him 'superior' to the 'stunted miserable wretches further to the westward' (in fact the first group must have been Haush or Selk`nam, the second Yámana), they (the Haush) are described as being of a 'dirty' colour. (No doubt Darwin thought the Yámana were still dirtier.) Yet at the same time Darwin creates a picture of dignified people, 'powerful', and 'six feet high'. These people were adapted to a tough climate and geography, and made effective use of the only large mammal available, the guanaco, from which they obtained their food and their clothing. Yet the latter is described disdainfully by Darwin, as representing 'their only garment'.

"The old man had a fillet of white feathers tied round his head, which partly confined his black, coarse, and entangled hair. His face was crossed by two broad transverse bars; one painted bright red from ear to ear, and included the upper lip; the other, white like chalk, extended parallel and above the first, so that even his eyelids were thus coloured. Some of the other men were ornamented by streaks of black powder, made of charcoal. The party altogether closely resembled the devils which come on stage in such plays as *Der Freischutz*."

Strangely paradoxical is this passage. The old man is wonderfully depicted, though to use the word 'coarse' to describe his hair rather than perhaps 'thick' seems a little contemptuous. But the picture of his and the other Haush men`s painted faces is brilliant, and would suggest that Darwin, like any intelligent observer, realizes how difficult it must be to enhance facial features with access only to substances available in the

immediate environment, and how strongly this fact testifies to a powerful aesthetic and imaginative urge, no less strong than that witnessed in 'Civilization.' With respect to these men being compared with the devils in *Der Freischutz*, one wonders whether for Darwin this is a compliment or a condemnation! For are not these 'devils' the product of a great Romantic European imagination? To find their archetypes at the other end of the earth might have been as exciting to Darwin as his discovery that Lyell`s theories of geology, derived from the latter`s studies in Europe, applied admirably to the mountain ranges of South America.

"Their very attitudes were abject, and the expression of their countenances distrustful, surprised, and startled. After we had presented them with some scarlet cloth, which they immediately tied around their necks, they became good friends. This was shown by the old man patting our breasts, and making a chuckling kind of noise, as people do when feeding chickens. I walked with the old man, and this demonstration of friendship was repeated several times; it was concluded by three hard slaps, which were given me on the breast and back at the same time. He then bared his bosom for me to return the compliment, which being done, he seemed highly pleased. The language of these people, according to our notions, scarcely deserves to be called articulate. Captain Cook has compared it to a man clearing his throat, but certainly no European ever cleared his throat with so many hoarse, gutteral, and clicking sounds."

These people, faced with the unexpected appearance of a shipful of Europeans on their land, were friendly, communicative, and eager to display and share their customs with Darwin and his colleagues. Certainly, they might be 'surprised', 'startled', and indeed 'distrustful', unsurprisingly. Yet they were courageous and welcoming enough to 'advance' and 'receive' the strangers. One wonders how Darwin and the crew of the Beagle would have reacted if they had been walking one day in the hills on the coast of North Devon, when a shipload of men from Tierra del Fuego suddenly arrived from the sea and disembarked before their eyes. Darwin`s description of 'their very attitudes' as 'abject' seems indeed an unsympathetic and unimaginative one.

But it is at the point where Darwin describes their language as 'inarticulate' that he displays pure bigotry, even though he qualifies his words with the phrase 'according to our notions.' 'No European ever cleared his throat with so many hoarse, gutteral, and clicking sounds.' Now would the man who discovered the theory of evolution compare the wings of one species of finch on the Galapogos Islands with another in the way he here compares a Fuegian language with a European one? He would surely not compare the morphological adaptations of two different finch species in a way that was derogatory to one and praising of the other, inasmuch as they differed. He would not take one as a desirable norm, the other as deficient in some way.

"They are excellent mimics: as often as we coughed or yawned, or made any odd motion, they immediately imitated us. Some of our party began to squint and look awry; but one

of the young Fuegians (whose whole face was painted black, excepting a white band across his eyes) succeeded in making far more hideous grimaces. They could repeat with perfect correctness, each word in any sentence we addressed them, and they remembered such words for some time. Yet we Europeans all know how difficult it is to distinguish apart the sounds in a foreign language. Which of us, for instance, could follow an American Indian through a sentence of more than three words? All savages appear to possess, to an uncommon degree, this power of mimicry. I was told almost in the same words, of the same ludicrous habits among the Caffres: the Australians, likewise, have long been notorious for being able to imitate and describe the gait of any man, so that he may be recognized. How can this faculty be explained? Is it a consequence of the more practised habits of perception and keener senses, common to all men in a savage state, as compared to those long civilized?"

Darwin here admires the ability of these Haush to mimic his and his companions` gestures, sounds, and words. He admits they are better at this than 'we Europeans', and even commences, for a moment, to enter into a scientific speculation into the reasons for this. Yet he describes this facility as a 'ludicrous habit.'

"When a song was struck up by our party, I thought the Fuegians would have fallen down with astonishment. With equal surprise they viewed our dancing; but one of the young men, when asked, had no objection to a little waltzing. Little accustomed to Europeans as they appeared to be, yet they knew, and dreaded our fire-arms; nothing would tempt them to take a gun in their hands. They begged for knives, calling them by the Spanish word 'cuchilla'. They explained also what they wanted, by acting as if they had a piece of blubber in their mouth, and then pretending to cut instead of tear it."

Here again, Darwin observes and apparently admires these Indians` interest in, and openness to entering into his and his colleagues` way of dancing. He observes their sensible reluctance to play around with fire-arms. And he shows how well they know which piece of European technology they want, the knife, and how they can communicate very well both their desire for this and the use to which they will put it.

"It was interesting to watch the conduct of these people towards Jemmy Button (one of the Fuegians who had been taken, during the former voyage, to England. Captain Fitzroy has given a history of these people. Four were taken to England; one died there, and the three others - two men and one woman - were now brought back and settled in their own country): they immediately perceived the difference between him and the rest, and held much conversation between themselves on the subject. The old man addressed a long harangue to Jemmy, which it seems was to invite him to stay with them. But Jemmy understood very little of their language, and was, moreover, thoroughly ashamed of his countrymen. When York Minster (another of these men) came on shore, they noticed him in the same way, and told him he ought to shave; yet he had not twenty dwarf hairs on his face, whilst we all wore our untrimmed beards. They examined the colour of his

skin, and compared it with ours. One of our arms being bared, they expressed the liveliest surprise and admiration at its whiteness. We thought that they mistook two or three of the officers, who were rather shorter and fairer (though adorned with large beards), for the ladies of our party. The tallest amongst the Fuegians was evidently much pleased at his height being noticed. When placed back to back with the tallest of the boat`s crew, he tried his best to edge on higher ground, and to stand on tiptoe. He opened his mouth to show his teeth, and turned his face for a side view; and all this was done with such alacrity, that I dare say he thought himself the handsomest man in Tierra del Fuego. After the first feeling on our part of grave astonishment was over, nothing could be more ludicrous or interesting than the odd mixture of surprise and imitation which these savages every moment exhibited."

To us today, these observations must evoke some sadness, now that these peoples have been exterminated or wholly assimilated, by a combination of genocide and ethnocide. It is not clear with whom Darwin`s sympathies lie in this fatefully significant and tragic encounter between the minimally acculturated Haush and the three Yámana who had previously been wrenched from their land and culture and dragged over to England. Darwin had come to know these 'Europeanized' Yámana on the voyage from England, before reaching Tierra del Fuego where he met their 'savage countrymen.'

Darwin says that the old Haush man 'addressed a long harangue to Jemmy (a Yámana) which it seems was to invite him to stay,' indicating that he disapproves of these Fuegians being taken away to become 'Europeanized.' He and the other Haush tell York Minster that he ought to shave, rather than grow a beard like Englishmen. The Haush wonder whether, having been some time with the Englishmen in their country, York Minster`s skin has changed colour, to become like theirs. This passage of Darwin`s is full of most pertinent observations, though it is peppered with prejudices: the Haush men`s surprise is once again described as 'ludicrous', whilst their examination of an Englishman`s skin is assumed to express 'admiration at its whiteness.' But perhaps the saddest remark of all that Darwin makes, and let us assume he is correct in his assessment, is that Jemmy was 'thoroughly ashamed of his countrymen.' The observation is made in a ruthlessly cold, 'objective' manner, though Darwin seems unconscious of this.

Let us emphasise again that Jemmy and York Minster were Yámana, whilst the Fuegians they met here with Darwin were Haush, or Selk`man. It is significant that Darwin considers the Yámana living in Tierra del Fuego to be more degraded than the Haush living there, although Jemmy Button, the captured Yámana that had been taken to England, he sees as loftier than the Haush.

The account given by Darwin so far, has all been from his journal entry for December 17th 1832. Let us now move on to that of December 25th, when he encountered some Yámana Indians further to the west of the island:

"This part of Tierra del Fuego (called Kater`s Peak) may be considered as the extremity of the submerged chain of mountains already alluded to. The cove takes its name of 'Wigwam' from some of the Fuegian habitations; but every bay in the neighbourhood might be so called with equal propriety. The inhabitants living chiefly upon shellfish, are obliged constantly to change their place of residence; but they return at intervals to the same spots, as is evident from the pile of old shells, which must often amount to some tons in weight. These heaps can be distinguished at a long distance by the green colour of certain plants, which invariably grow on them. Among these may be enumerated the wild celery and scurvy grass, two very serviceable plants, the use of which has not been discovered by the natives.

"The Fuegian wigwam resembles, in size and dimensions, a haycock. It merely consists of a few broken branches stuck in the ground, and very imperfectly thatched on one side with a few tufts of grass and rushes. The whole cannot be so much as the work of an hour, and it is only used for a few days. At Goeree Roads I saw a place where one of these naked men had slept, which absolutely offered no more cover than the form of a hare. The man was evidently living by himself, and York Minster said he was 'very bad man', and that probably he had stolen something. On the west coast, however, the wigwams are rather better, for they are covered with seal-skins."

Darwin provides a good description here of the Yámana mode of life. It is strange though, that the 'wigwam' he observed is described as 'merely consisting of a few broken branches', and as 'very imperfectly thatched.' No doubt these houses sufficed; they would have represented a bad adaptation to a hard environment if more labour time than was necessary were expended on their construction. In a case like this, a direct comparison might reasonably and legitimately be made between adaptations to the environment developed by human beings on the one hand and by other animals on the other.

These people were nomadic hunter-gatherers, spending 'only a few days' in any particular 'wigwam'; if 'on the west coast the wigwams are rather better, for they are covered with seal-skins,' presumably this is either because seals are more available on the west coast than at Kater`s Peak, or because the weather on the west coast is that much more inclement, making it worthwhile or necessary to undertake the effort of protecting homes with seal-skins.

It is unreasonable perhaps to dispute the validity of Darwin`s observations of Yámana houses. Nevertheless, when one looks at the replicas of typical Yámana houses outside the *Museo Del Fin Del Mundo* in Ushuaia, or at old photographs of real ones, one can only say that they appear extremely well-built, sturdy, functional, and attractive. Just as the bows and arrows, harpoons, baskets and other utensils on display in the museums at Ushuaia are very beautifully made; exemplary instances of objects made both for use and in accordance with aesthetic principles, as William Morris believed is true of all authentic art and craft.

The comment made by York Minster that Darwin records, indicates that the former`s English acculturation has turned him into something of a snob, as well as encouraging him apparently to accuse a man of a crime without evidence or proof.

It is striking that amidst the close and accurate account that Darwin gives of the Yámana lifestyle, he describes their evidently effective solution to the challenges of their environment as obliging them 'constantly to change their place of residence.' This mode of expressing it implies it is undesirable and abnormal so to live; to stay in one place indefinitely is desirable and normal. Is it not odd that Charles Darwin, the man who discovered who and what humanity really is, should consider the mode of life that predominated over the vast majority of its existence - the mode moreover that undoubtedly represents a direct continuity from our 'natural' and animal past - as undesirable and abnormal?

"At a subsequent period the Beagle anchored for a couple of days under Wollaston Island, which is a short way to the northward. While going on shore we pulled alongside a canoe with six Fuegians. These were the most abject and miserable creatures I any where beheld. I believe, in this extreme part of South America, man exists in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world. The South Sea islander of either race is comparatively civilized. The Esquimaux, in his subterranean hut, enjoys some of the comforts of life, and in his canoe, when fully equipped, manifests much skill. Some of the tribes of Southern Africa, prowling about in search of roots, and living concealed on the wild and arid planes, are sufficiently wretched. But the Australian, in the simplicity of the arts of life, comes nearest the Fuegian. He can, however, boast of his boomerang, his spear and throwing-stick, his method of clmbing trees, tracking animals, and scheme of hunting. Although thus superior in acquirements, it by no means follows that he should likewise be so in capabilities. Indeed, from what we saw of the Fuegians, who were taken to England, I should think the case was the reverse."

One feels like asking Darwin, why are people who live in, and are adapted to, a tough environment, in which they have very likely survived for millenia, to be considered 'abject' and 'miserable'? No doubt, if seen canoeing on a cold, stormy day, elemental wear and tear would be expressed on people`s faces; but would not this be equally true for Cornish fishermen in a storm, or for Lancashire workmen walking to the cotton-mill on a cold, rainy morning? In his comparisons of the Fuegians with South Sea Islanders, Eskimos, and peoples from Southern Africa and Australia, he is scientific again (except in his use of the word 'wretched'). Interestingly though, in his statement that native Australians are 'superior in acquirements' to the Fuegians, he also suggests that Fuegians are superior to Australians in 'capabilities.' This judgement apparently rests on Darwin`s assessment of how well the Fuegians who had been taken to England 'improved.' Here he seems to be in a real confusion. If it was the entry into civilized English culture and society that ensured these Fuegians` 'improvement', then he does not assume their

deficiencies are intrinsic to their 'race', that is, as a biological given. But on the other hand, in suggesting that the Australians, in spite of their 'superiority in acquirements,' are intrinsically inferior in 'capabilites,' he implies in their case the opposite.

Of course Darwin can hardly be blamed for not having resolved the nature/nurture, biology/culture dilemma in the understanding of human societies: that issue remains far from resolved to this day. But it is striking that his observations of different forms of human adaptation to different natural, ecological environments should be so filled with pejorative value judgements and unscientific preconceptions; again, in a fashion so different from his mode of analysing and comparing geological and biological phenomena. The fact is, as David Wilson has shown in the book cited above, that different societies become adapted to different natural environments in more or less effective ways. Terms such as 'simplicity' or 'complexity' of adaptation, where they refer to population sizes typical of human groups, their technologies, or their forms of shelter and so on, should be used absolutely neutrally, for they do not register or imply any cultural, ethical, or aesthetic inferiority or superiority at all. A small-scale, technologically 'simple' society that is well-adapted to existence in its environment is no more nor less culturally 'complex' than any other: in scientific terms it is merely successful at surviving in its natural environment.

Clearly however, Darwin`s implicit view of humanity, though contradictory, rests on one conspicuous presupposition. Whether it is a cultural or biological process, humanity engages in, or can engage in, a process of 'improvement' of a kind which Darwin will not build into his theory of the biological evolution of non-human living organisms. It seems worth noting therefore, that a presupposition of human history involving a kind of 'linear progress', an ideology that many have taken to result from the uncritical translation of the fully developed Darwinian theory of organic evolution onto human society - by such late nineteenth-century thinkers as Herbert Spenser for example - was evidently in Darwin`s mind well before he had made the scientific breakthrough into his theory of biological evolution.

"On the east coast the natives, as we have seen, have guanaco cloaks, and on the west, they possess seal-skins. Amongst these central tribes the men generally possess an otter-skin, or some small scrap about as large as a pocket-handkerchief, which is barely sufficient to cover their backs as low as their loins. It is laced across the breast by strings, and according as the wind blows, it is shifted from side to side. But these Fuegians in the canoe were quite naked, and even one full-grown woman was absolutely so. It was raining heavily, and the fresh water, together with the spray, trickled down her body. In another harbour not far distant, a woman, who was suckling a recently-born child, came one day alongside the vessel, and remained there whilst the sleet fell and thawed on her naked bosom, and on the skin of her naked child. These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gestures violent and without dignity.

Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world. It is a common subject of conjecture what pleasure in life some of the less gifted animals can enjoy: how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians. At night, five or six human beings, naked and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals. Whenever it is low water, they must rise to pick shell-fish from the rocks; and the women, winter and summer, either dive to collect sea eggs, or sit patiently in their canoes, and, with a baited hair-line, jerk out small fish. If a seal is killed, or the floating carcass of a putrid whale discovered, it is a feast: such miserable food is assisted by a few tasteless berries and fungi. Nor are they exempt from famine, and, as a consequence, cannibalism accompanied by parricide."

Darwin seems to imply here that the 'small scrap' the men wear is insufficient, just as he assumes that the nakedness of other men and women is lamentable. His own morality and preconceptions prevent him from asking whether these are not once again effective adaptations to the environment. Attitudes like these of Darwin are perfectly borne out in photographs of Yámana taken by missionaries later in the nineteenth century, in which both men and women have been coerced humiliatingly into hiding their genital regions with their hands.

Yet in a climate where rain is frequent, the Yámana found that not wearing clothes, but instead applying oil or grease to their skins, was a better form of protection. Clothes can often remain permanently wet when one is exposed to such an environment, whereas water 'trickles down' a body covered in grease.

Why Darwin thinks 'these wretches were stunted in their growth', rather than having adapted their average height to the physical exigencies and pressures of their existence, is also strange. But his finding their faces 'hideous' is merely prejudice, whilst his observation that their skins are 'greasy', which should answer his bewilderment that they go naked, means to him that they are merely 'filthy', all of which is in accord with his judgement that their hair is 'entangled', 'their voices discordant', 'their gestures violent and without dignity.' The passage that follows these remarks is rhetorical, and perhaps it is more a poetry of (unnecessary) pity and sympathy than of arrogance, as the prejudice and sense of superiority appear to be unconscious and gentle: 'Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures.....' But then comes the suggestion that people often wonder what pleasure in life 'some of the less gifted animals can enjoy.'

Do people so wonder, or did they really in Darwin`s time? There seems to be something false in the rhetoric here: according to the religious view, all animals are created to fulfil their particular, humble purposes, as part of God`s larger, transcendent plan. This is true of Man as well, but since he alone among living things has Free Will, his situation is distinct from that of the other animals. The question posed here by Darwin could have no meaning for animals; indeed it might even be blasphemous in terms of traditional

Christian theology.

Now, according to Darwin`s theory of evolution, which at the time of his voyage on the Beagle he had not yet arrived at, the question must be even more meaningless. Animals, except for Man, have no consciousness, self-awareness, sense of purpose, ethical principles, moral, aesthetic, or sensual ambitions, nor criteria for comparisons over such values or pleasures. They are driven by a blind, non-conscious will to survive, in order to reproduce biologically. In Man alone, because of the emergence through evolution of intelligence, mind, and consciousness, can issues of pleasure or purpose arise. Precisely how Darwin understood these issues in 1832 is not clear, but the movement of his thoughts from 'the less gifted animals' to 'these barbarians,' is hardly a 'reasonable' one, on the basis of any consistent system of thinking available in his time. But when Darwin`s account moves once again onto the naked Fuegians sleeping unprotected from the elements (although he has already shown that they are *not* wholly unprotected, due to the grease they apply to their bodies), 'coiled up like animals', comparison between animal and savage, savage and animal ('how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians') is turned around again, in such a way that, given we are considering the thought processes of one of the greatest geniuses in recorded human history, we are moved to conclude that he is sacrificing intelligence here to some kind of spiteful contempt, or at least, to a deep human insensitivity.

"Whenever it is low water, they *must* rise to pick shellfish," Darwin says (emphasis added). One might equally say that at every dawn, every maid and servant in every house in England that has maids and servants, *must* perforce rise to work for their masters and mistresses. Or that on those days when a University lecturer has morning lectures, he or she *must* rise to deliver those lectures. And animals *must* go to feed when opportunity arises. What is Darwin`s point? Perhaps he, as a Victorian gentleman from a wealthy background with a large unearned income, was one of the very few organisms of any species who did not need to work or make any effort in order to eat, and one is not sure which fact is more extraordinary: that the scientist who would later make one of the most important discoveries of the modern age could be so intellectually limited in his choice of words here, or that this very scientist should have nevertheless come from the particular class of human beings that he did come from.

Darwin is appalled, and contemptuous, that people should make a feast out of a 'putrid whale,' but surely since time immemorial human beings have had to eat the meat of animals that have been dead for a greater or lesser period of time. Refrigeration is a relatively new phenomenon, whilst the arts of meat preservation have been very gradual in their historical development. And perhaps taste is in the mouth of the eater: certainly, even in 1832 Darwin must have been aware that taste in food is culturally extremely relative, as it is in other things. To put it simply, the Yámana may not have found their berries and fungi 'tasteless.'

At the end of this passage, Darwin makes reference to issues of food shortage and cannibalism. The ethnographical literature does not record cannibalism (nor 'parricide') as being practiced by Fuegian peoples at any known time. There is some debate within the literature concerning whether infanticide was practiced at any time as a form of population control and/or as a response to food shortage. The following conclusions arrived at by David Wilson (*op. cit.*) concerning the Yámana might be worth quoting here:

".....overall Yahgan (Yámana) population densities were low and probably always had been so, since the environment and their subsistence adaptation would not permit any higher numbers of people. We may thus hypothesize that over the hundreds and thousands of years of their presence in the archipelago the Yahgan must have had to practice one or another form of population regulation.....(but also) children between the ages of two and ten years old were especially at risk in this difficult setting. In light of this, prior to the arrival of the European diseases in pre-Contact times high infant mortality may have been a major factor in the regulation of population numbers. In other words, the rigorous environment itself may have been regulatory in keeping Yahgan numbers adjusted to the carrying capacity of the subsistence-settlement system."

Let us continue with Darwin`s account:

"The tribes have no government or head, yet each is surrounded by other hostile ones, speaking different dialects; and the cause of their warfare would appear to be the means of subsistence. Their country is a broken mass of wild rock, lofty hills, and useless forests: and these are viewed through mists and endless storms. The habitable land is reduced to the stones which form the beach; in search of food they are compelled to wander from spot to spot, and so steep is the coast, that they can only move about in their wretched canoes. They cannot know the feeling of having a home, and still less that of domestic affection; unless indeed the treatment of a master to a laborious slave can be considered as such. How little can the higher powers of the mind be brought into play! What is there for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgement to decide upon? to knock a limpet from the rock does not even require cunning, that lowest power of the mind. Their skill in some respects may be compared to the instinct of animals; for it is not improved by experience: the canoe, their most ingenious work, poor as it is, has remained the same, for the last 250 years."

The beginning of this passage invites no controversy, until we arrive at the word 'useless,' which comes before the word 'forests.' Surely, even a gentleman from domesticated England in 1832 would be aware that forests have many resources, and that numerous nomadic peoples had inhabited them, and still did in 1832. The Yámana extracted among other things wood and tree bark from the forests, from which they fashioned many items including buckets, and the 'wretched' canoes that Darwin denigrates. The Argentinian archaeologist Luis Albert Borrero has written of the Yámana (in an article called *The Origins of Ethnographic Subsistence Patterns in Fuego-*

Patagonia), that:

"Canoes were the mainstay of their maritime adaptation. They were not only an indispensable means of transportation, but also formed the focus of family life. Families moved everywhere by canoe, some even carrying fires burning inside them almost permanently, and they have been observed consuming mussels on board."

The territory of the Yámana was limited to areas where maritime and forest environments were close by, as they depended crucially on both. Habitable land was not only to be found among the stones on the beach; though why Darwin should think such a location beneath contempt is anyway extraordinary.

Now there may have been a particular aspect of the European mind-set which influenced Darwin in his choice of the word 'useless' to describe the forests. We know that a dominant perception of forests throughout the European Middle Ages was that they were dangerous, Satanic, wicked places. In the *Confessions*, Saint Augustine includes mountains, rivers, and oceans in the category of nature`s fallen matter, admiration of whose sights was capable of distracting a Christian from the proper contemplation of God and one`s own soul. One can easily imagine forests could have joined the list, if he had extended it further. As a realm of material nature, standing over and against the spiritual realm and that of civilization, forests for centuries symbolized both sinful temptation and a chaotic, unproductive world that must be tamed and brought under control by hard work and godliness, that is, under human control - meaning also human self-control. In the modern era, up to the emergence of the (first) Romantic Movement and its associated Romantic sensibility, much of this way of thinking persisted, and was indeed intensified by the new imperatives of capitalism, science, technology, urbanism, and modernizing agriculture. Francis Bacon, the first major philosopher of modern science, considered that Nature should be interrogated like a harlot to yield up Her secrets. Descartes considered that for the rational scientific mind, inorganic and organic nature must be regarded as machine-like, and they would yield up infinite resources if treated in that way.

But from about 1770 some of these attitudes began to change, especially in Germany and Britain, under the influence especially of the Romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley, and Keats; and of artists like Constable and Turner. In Germany, analogous sentiments are to be found in much of Goethe`s poetry, and in the art of Caspar David Friedrich, but especially in the great German and Austrian composers, Beethoven and Schubert. All these people were dead or old by 1832; had Darwin not been influenced by them at all? His view of the vast, stupendous forests of Tierra del Fuego is closer to the aesthetic attitude to nature of Dr. Samuel Johnson as expressed in his account of travels in 1773 to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, than to that expressed in the numerous Guides to the English Lake District that were available by the 1830s, let alone to the poetic imagination of William Wordsworth, who was a student at Cambridge University, like Darwin, though

roughly fifty years earlier. To the Romantic mind forests, like all 'wild' nature, offered excitement, adventure, and challenge to the over-ordered, one-sidedly rational character of modern man: they mirrored the strange and unfathomable depths of the human mind and soul, as otherwise only art, poetry or music could, or the emotions of love, or the realm of dreams. 'Wild', 'chaotic', 'raw' nature was something awesome and sublime, as Emanuel Kant had it, because it was 'infinite' and beyond any narrow usefulness. It displayed 'final form' as art did, precisely through its apparent chaos. To use Ehrenzweig's phrase, 'untamed' nature expressed 'the higher order of chaos.'

Once again, we are amazed that the young Darwin, who would later give the world the Theory of Evolution, thought thus in 1832. For Evolution was to provide a most powerful impetus to the second great wave of Romanticism in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, and in the Twentieth Century up until the First World War. Friedrich Nieztsche, Rimbaud, and Lautréamont are among those who were thrilled and enthralled by the subversiveness, the struggle and challenge forced upon the human mind by Darwin; the complete decentering of man that his theory entailed - far more even than the Galilean-Newtonian revolution had done; and the final defeat of theology that it appeared to them to represent.

As for the influence of these last upon subsequent artists, poets, composers, and philosophers the list would be almost impossible to complete. Among them Otto Dix, Scriabin, Mahler, Richard Strauss, and the Surrealists stand out. But the influence of Nietzsche especially on art and culture was and is immeasurable.

These remarks pertain to the worlds of literature, art, and philosophy: how equally much did Evolution transform all science itself, and none less than the human sciences. In his influence upon, and the admiration he induced in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and in the emergence of Sociology and Anthropology as disciplines, Darwin was the Copernicus of the modern mind.

But of course, the whole nature of the Beagle's voyage must be borne in mind, as this is well summarized here by Gillian Beer (in an essay called *Travelling The Other Way)*:

"(Such) voyages.....were those whose prize was represented as knowledge rather than treasure. The categories are, however, not altogether separate. Although the nineteenth-century journeys that set out from Britain to survey the sea and coasts around the world were not piratical, not part of that unconcerned predation that earlier centuries justified as exploration or discovery, they were nevertheless an expression of the will to control, categorise, occupy and bring home the prize of samples and of strategic information. Natural history and national future were closely interlocked. And natural history was usually a sub-genre in the programme of the enterprize, subordinate to the search for sea-passages or the mapping of feasible routes and harbours."

Indeed, in their historical study *Tierra del Fuego*, Luiz and Schillat show that the Beagle voyages under Captain Fitzroy's command were largely concerned with garnering information for the British Admiralty, as part of a widely-embracing concern in regard of strategies for British conquest, colonization, and control of trade in the Southern Atlantic.

But to return again to Darwin's account. The assertion that the nomadic Yámana "cannot know the feeling of having a home" needs no further comment in the light of the above; but that they know "still less that of domestic affection" enters the bizarre once again. Affections are dependent on staying indefinitely in one place? But in any case the touching accounts in the ethnographic literature about how Selk'nam and Yámana men would set about looking for a wife, and how a woman indicated 'yes' or 'no' to a man`s proposition (to be found in Wilson, *op. cit.*), suggest Darwin was wrong in assuming a lack of romantic affection among Fuegians. But his following phrase, "unless indeed the treatment of a master to a laborious slave can be considered as such", I confess baffles me entirely. Who is the master and who the slave in the egalitarian societies of Tierra del Fuego? Perhaps Darwin means the people are like slaves before their natural environment, but in that case they are at least equal in their servitude, unlike in the England of 1832, where the majority of people were slaves towards both Nature and their human rulers.

Gillian Beer (*op. cit*) sees these aspects of Darwin's reactions in a rather different way from me. She considers that:

".....one of the most pressing issues raised by travels and their narratives in the nineteenth century (was).....what are the boundaries of natural history? Are human beings within its scope? Are they one species or several? Are they separate from all other species because created as souls by God? And do all, all savages, have souls? Or are they - here danger lies - a kind of animal? (If they, then we?)

"Over and over again the narratives of voyages demonstrate how the borders of natural history were blurred by human encounter and how evolutionary theory profited from that growing uncertainty about the status of the human in knowledge and in nature".

She thus sees Darwin's prejudices in relation to the scientific revolution he would later undertake:

"Darwin's encounters with Fuegians in their native place gave him a way of closing the gap between the human and other primates, a move necessary to the theories he was in the process of reaching."

Elsewhere she suggests:

"Darwin's much later *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) may owe much to his puzzling experiences on the *Beagle* and be in part a final attempt to

regulate the irregularities he had there encountered."

But, though it may be that on some unconscious level Darwin's scientific mind was fomenting the utterly novel worldview he would eventually promulgate, his account of Fuegian peoples in *Voyage of the Beagle* includes many tedious and prejudiced ideas about primitive people being inferior and degraded. The terms he deals in are ethical, and assume 'civilization' represents an indisputable improvement upon 'primitiveness', which implicitly justifies arrogant and dictatorial behaviours, such as snatching people and taking them to England, or missionary activity intended to convert 'savages' to Christianity and Western ways of behaving. The fact is that Darwin, neither in 1832 nor later when he formulated the theory of Evolution, had any clear idea of the relationship between *biological evolution*, which had brought into being Man from its animal antecedents, and *human history*, the development of different cultures and civilizations within the general biological framework of the human species. And though it may be necessary now, in the context of neo- or post-Darwinism, to understand that *biological evolution* can continue in interwoven relationship with the cultural and historical development of humanity, generally Darwinism has in the past failed, and still does fail now, to distinguish between the two processes. From Darwin himself to Herbert Spencer, through to many Darwinian biologists who today attempt analyses of human history and society, the confusions are deep, and persist, as many writers have attempted to show. Darwin's 'swerving', his 'disturbance' (to use Beer's words), in his meditations on the Fuegians, and their imagined similarity or difference from animals, is conducted in a confused, moralistic, and derogatory mode of thinking which as is common today as it was in Darwin's own. It absolutely fails to see that different human societies have different cultures, different behaviours and different ethical systems and attitudes: conditioned greatly by natural and environmental factors and processes, in ways that are extremely complex, but again, *not* in ways that mirror the environmental determinism of other animals' physiology or behaviour.

Human societies can only be judged one against another according to the taste of he or she who judges or according to ethical principles which should be made absolutely explicit in the course of making such judgements, and according to which certain Western cultures, vis-a-vis the morality of killing other human beings for example, would rank very low in any pan-human table of ethical comparison. Human beings are animals, yes, but as members of one animal species, *Homo sapiens*. Yet it is remarkable how often European or Neo-European individuals and nations that want to justify and rationalize their nastiest kinds of behaviour (ethically speaking), draw upon the fact that human beings are, after all animals.

Major differences between human beings are either individual, or culturally based, though it is true that the roles of biology and genetics in understanding these differences are only just beginning to be understood.

A NOTE ON H.W. BATES

Two quotations from H.W. Bates` science-cum-travelogue book *The Naturalist On The River Amazons* may suffice to indicate some of the differences between Bates` and Darwin`s approaches to the human dimensions of their experiences in South America. Bates certainly has some stereotypical European prejudices, and his perceptions are often constructed through characteristic nineteenth-century tropes, themes, vistas, and metaphors belonging to a British colonial view of 'tropicality,' with his readership at home always in mind. But, like Alfred Russel Wallace, who also displayed "a somewhat baffling mixture of the conventional and the unconventional..... (in an attitude of) unsettled ambivalence" (as explained in Nancy Stepan`s book *Picturing Tropical Nature*), he has at the same time a spontaneous sympathy and empathy with people, and a more admiring attitude towards the people he meets, than Darwin evinces:

(I) "On the morning of the 28th of May we arrived at our destination (Belém de Pará). The appearance of the city at sunrise was pleasing in the highest degree. It is built on a low tract of land, having only one small rocky elevation at its southern extremity; it therefore affords no amphitheatral view from the river; but the white buildings roofed with red tiles, the numerous towers and cupolas of churches and convents, the crowds of palm trees reared above the buildings, all sharply defined against the clear blue sky, give an appearance of lightness and cheerfulness which is most exhilarating. The perpetual forest hems the city in on all sides landwards; and towards the suburbs, picturesque country houses are seen scattered about, half buried in luxuriant foliage. The port was full of native canoes and other vessels, large and small; and the ringing of bells and firing of rockets, announcing the dawn of some Roman Catholic festival day, showed that the population was astir at that early hour.

"The impressions received during our first walk, on the evening of the day of our arrival, can never wholly fade from my mind. After traversing the few streets of tall, gloomy, convent-looking buildings near the port, inhabited chiefly by merchants and shopkeepers; along which idle soldiers, dressed in shabby uniforms, carrying their muskets carelessly over their arms, priests, negresses with red water-jars on their heads, sad-looking Indian women carrying their naked children astride on their hips, and other samples of the motley life of the place, were seen; we passed down a long narrow street leading to the suburbs. Beyond this, our road lay across a grassy common into picturesque lane leading

to the virgin forest. The long street was inhabited by the poorer class of the population. The houses were of one story only, and had an irregular and mean appearance. The windows were without glass, having, instead, projecting lattice casements. The street was unpaved, and inches deep in loose sand. Groups of people were cooling themselves outside their doors - people of all shades in colour of skin, European, Negro and Indian, but chiefly an uncertain mixture of the three. Amongst them were several handsome women, dressed in a slovenly manner, barefoot or shod in loose slippers; but wearing richly decorated ear-rings, and around their necks strings of very large gold beads. They had dark expressive eyes, and remarkably rich heads of hair. It was a mere fancy, but I thought the mingled squalor, luxuriance and beauty of these women were pointedly in harmony with the rest of the scene; so striking, in the view, was the mixture of natural riches and human poverty. The houses were mostly in a dilapidated condition, and signs of indolence and neglect were everywhere visible. The wooden palings which surrounded the weed-grown gardens were strewn about, broken; and hogs, goats, and ill-fed poultry wandered in and out through the gaps. But amidst all, and compensating every defect, rose the overpowering beauty of the vegetation. The massive dark crowns of shady mangoes were seen everywhere amongst the dwellings, amidst fragrant blossoming orange, lemon, and many other tropical fruit trees; some in flower, others in fruit, at various stages of ripeness. Here and there, shooting above the more dome-like and sombre trees, were the smooth columnar stems of palms, bearing aloft their magnificent crowns of finely-cut fronds. Amongst the latter the slim assai-palm was especially noticeable, growing in groups of four and five; its smooth, gently-curving stem, twenty to thirty feet high, terminating in a head of feathery foliage, inexpressibly light and elegant in outline."

(II) "I suffered most inconvenience from the difficulty of getting news from the civilized world down river, from the irregularity of receipt of letters, parcels of books and periodicals, and towards the latter part of my residence from ill health arising from bad and insufficient food. The want of intellectual society, and of the varied excitement of European life, was also felt most acutely, and this, instead of becoming deadened by time, increased until it became almost insupportable. I was obliged, at last, to come to the conclusion that the contemplation of Nature alone is not sufficient to fill the human heart and mind. I got on pretty well when I received a parcel from England by the steamer once in two or four months. I used to be very economical with my stock of reading, lest it should be finished before the next arrival, and leave me utterly destitute.....

"During so long a residence I witnessed, of course, many changes in the place (the village of Ega, modern Tefé). Some of the good friends who made me welcome on my first arrival died, and I followed their remains to their last resting-place in the little rustic cemetery on the borders of the surrounding forest. I lived there long enough, from first to last, to see the young people grow up, attended their weddings, and the christenings of

their children, and before I left, saw them old married folks with numerous families.....

"The people became more 'civilized', that is, they began to dress according to the latest Parisian fashions, instead of going about in stockingless feet, wooden clogs, and shirt sleeves; acquired a taste for money-getting and office-holding; became divided into parties, and lost part of their former simplicity of manners.....

"Many of the Ega Indians, including all the domestic servants, are savages who have been brought from the neighbouring rivers; the Japurá, the Issá, and the Solimoens..... most of whom had been bought, when children, of the native chiefs. This species of slave dealing, although forbidden by the laws of Brazil, is winked at by the authorities, because without it there would be no means of obtaining servants..... But the boys generally run away and embark on the canoes of traders; and the girls are often badly treated by their mistresses....."

There is a marvellous illustration in Bates` *The Naturalist On The River Amazons* called *Masked Dance And Wedding-Feast Of Tucuna Indians*. Bates is pictured inside a Tucuna *maloca*, graciously and gratefully accepting something to eat from a handsomely depicted naked Indian woman with long black hair, which he seems to find delicious. He seems wholly at ease in the huge interior of the *maloca*, in which is taking place, without reference to him, a masked dance in costumes very like those one can see today in ethnographic museums in Manaus or Leticia. The whole scene is certainly idealized and shaped into a European stylized 'interior,' but it is also authentic in its depiction of someone in a hammock, and others up on a typical kind of structure made of wooden poles, from which also hang animal skins and on which a parrot perches. The whole scene is warm and convivial, suggesting that Bates` hosts enjoy his presence as much as he enjoys their hospitality. And though it is slightly sentimentalized, the scene somehow resembles very much the indoor life of Amazonian Indians even today.

POSTSCRIPT

On a retrospective reading of this essay I wondered if I had been hard on Charles Darwin both in the sense of suspending recognition of the extent to which he, like anyone else, was a prisoner of his socio-historical context (though I tried to show that he could have embraced different attitudes), but also in the sense that further reading undertaken after I had already written the bulk of this essay indicated to me the extent of his enlightened,

liberal, and humanitarian attitudes in certain other situations outside of his account of the Fuegians, both during the voyage of the Beagle and at other periods of his life. His argument with Captain FitzRoy in Brazil over slavery - Darwin against, FitzRoy in defence - which Darwin feared at first might require him to leave the voyage, is only one rather noble example.

Nevertheless, the central purpose in writing the essay was to show how narrow a view of the Fuegian Indians even a great genius could have, and how the contrast between his genius for scientific understanding of nature and his socially prejudiced views of a culture very different from his own, might be seen as deeply symptomatic of the horrible, tragic fact that one hundred years after Darwin's encounter with them, 'progress' in the surrounding and intruding semi-Westernized forms of society would result in their complete genocidal extermination or assimilation. It also allowed me, briefly at the end, to refer to the great importance of distinguishing biological evolution from human, social and cultural history, a highly problematic area that concerns the interface between the biological and the social sciences.

SOVEREIGNTY AND REVOLUTION IN THE IBERIAN ATLANTIC

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The vast empires of Spain and Portugal in the "New World" were running into deep trouble three centuries after Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of "America" in 1492. The political, economic, and military decline of Spain and Portugal relative to Britain and France, and the constant wars between all four European powers, were together undermining the strength of the two Iberian empires.

But the final knock-out blows to both Iberian empires were delivered by Napoleon's invasions of Portugal and Spain in 1807-8, which were intended, incredibly, to bring these empires under Napoleon's control. There was no inevitability underlying the process through which most of Hispanic America and all Brazil became independent

within the next fifteen years, and that is a core argument in this major study by Jeremy Adelman – though at times one feels he slightly belabours the point. After all, is any great historical phenomenon inevitable? Was the First World War such; it is often asked whether that conflagration would still have occurred had the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria not been assassinated in Sarajevo in June 1914. Even given that the assassination did happen, the reactions of the various European governments and the order in which they occurred could well have been different. Similarly with Napoleon‘s invasions of the Iberian Peninsular; the multiple chains of complicated events that these initiated might also have been otherwise.

What is certain however, is that the demise of the Iberian American empires, like that of British rule over the Thirteen Colonies in North America before it, was brought on by the rivalries, wars, and miscalculations of the European powers – no matter whether it would all have happened anyhow in the long-run. Just as the two World Wars of the twentieth century helped to destroy the later British and French empires, the revolutionary and then the Napoleonic wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries smashed the Spanish and Portuguese American empires. Like Hitler more than a century later, Napoleon assisted this breakdown of European empires more than anything else. (Here again these judgements involve matters of time-scale – many major historical processes, from the Neolithic agricultural revolution to the decolonization of European empires, may have been ultimately inevitable, though their precise historical timings were highly contingent upon extremely variable factors.)

The great tragedy for Spanish America, Adelman argues, is that unlike Brazil which avoided both a violent struggle for independence *and* civil wars, and unlike the United States of America which had the advantages of both a positive model to follow and improve upon from its “mother country” Britain, and also a consistent supporter, in France, for its independence, the Spanish American colonies experienced terrible, destructive wars, had no single, clear, appropriate or relevant model to emulate, and no consistent support for independence from a major European power. The struggle for independence in Spanish America unleashed fractures, divisions, and internal conflicts in every region; rather as one might find analogies in Protestant Reformation or in twentieth century “Socialist Revolutionary Movements” and “Socialist Revolutions”, the bid to break free from centralized authoritarian power frequently led first to one and then to another unsatisfactory solution, each of which was constantly challenged by a new alternative, ending up finally, very often, and after endless fragmentations, in new authoritarianisms. It was often espoused by the major leaders of the independence struggle, particularly Miranda and Bolívar, that authoritarian government would be unavoidable in post-imperial South America, due to its history and social makeup. (Bolívar became disillusioned with the project of independence even before it had been completed, and died in 1830 in despair at what he then believed was total failure – on his death-bed he actually proclaimed that the struggle for independence from Spain had been *a mistake*.)

Three centuries of Spanish rule had not created a citizenry that was virtuous, responsible, nor able to understand the meaning of freedom, Bolívar (and a number of other independence leaders) believed. These values needed to be inculcated into people over time; for the foreseeable future strong centralized government was necessary to prevent anarchy and disintegration. “When the delegates of the liberated territories of Venezuela gathered at Angostura in 1819” writes Jeremy Adelman, “Simón Bolívar reminded them that colonists were now free, but they lacked basic virtues that prepared them for citizenship because as Spanish colonists they had never been apprenticed in the art of governance and the mores of the civitas”(345).

Naked force and repression were not to be eschewed by responsible revolutionary government. Reading some of their writings and statements today makes these men seem almost like proto-Bolsheviks, though their ideological inspirations came from a heady mix of the British political philosophers and political economists (including John Locke and Adam Smith among others), the French Enlightenment (especially Rousseau and Montesquieu), the French Revolution, and the American Constitution. Certain thoughts and fantasies derived from ancient Roman republicanism also played a significant ideological role among some of the literati and political leaders of the movement for Independence – as similarly they had in the American and French revolutions.

It is important and interesting to note how the beliefs of the central protagonists of the historical independence struggles appear more important if one views the process “from within” South America – as South American historians such as the Colombian German Arciniegas, for example, tend to do, as well as the North Americans David Bushnell and Frank Safford – whilst they do not seem so significant when the overall history is viewed from outside and above – an issue of “trees” versus “forests” perhaps – as Adelman does. His is indeed a macrocosmic perspective, taken from a hugely wide angle, stressing very much structural issues of trade and finance and their deep contradictions everywhere throughout the entire area and the entire period considered. He does not even mention that it was Tom Paine who authored the `Rights of Man` which Antonio Nariño translated into Spanish and published in Bogotá in 1794, an event that figures as immensely important in many other histories of the independence movement in Spanish America. Though he briefly recounts Nariño`s epochally rebellious gesture that led to his arrest, imprisonment and exile, Adelman appears not to want to underline the fact that this Englishman Tom Paine was deeply implicated in both the American and French revolutions; it seems that this is because he does not feel the growth of republican ideology was an important long-term ideological factor within the move to independence. Thus he writes:

"Rights to property did not lead automatically to..... rights to representation. Colonial injunctions were couched not as "rights" for themselves but as claims that were good for the sovereign that ruled both sides of the Atlantic. In a sense they (i.e. colonial demands

at first) were concerned not with who ruled, but how they ruled the empires..... There is little evidence of Anglo-American republicanism shaping Iberian Atlantic thinking; colonial criticism did not unfold into a fuller indictment of the principles of imperial sovereignty."(174)

Now it is certainly true that for example, the Comunero Revolt in Nueva Granada was, as Adelman says:

"…..like so many of the uprisings across the region….. not an anti-imperial movement. It simply wanted to reverse the combined fiscal burdens and commercial uncertainties…….. the movement was inspired by fealty to the king and determined to keep his imperial officers governing in the interest of his subjects, the commonwealth, and therefore his majesty. Faced with administrative "tyranny" and "corruption," it fell to the vecinos themselves to defend the monarchy from the enemy within…….. After months of demonstrations and large assemblies centred on the city of Socorro, on June 5, 1781, 20,000 irate vecinos began marching on the capital of Nueva Granada chanting, "Death to bad government and long live the king!""(49).

But need all this necessarily mean that the Comunero Revolt cannot in a sense be thought of as a step towards the demand for independence; or is it teleological to express it thus? Challenging the form taken on by imperial sovereignty did not at first entail the wish to end it altogether and replace it with a new kind of national sovereignty, but in the end it did do just exactly that. Can we not in any case also imagine that a complete break from the mighty Spanish Empire would have been a leap too terrifying psychologically for the humble comuneros of 1781 to conceive of, whilst it might also have seemed to them more pragmatic and realistic to demand sweeping changes in government whilst swearing eternal loyalty to the king? (They were nevertheless bloodily suppressed and their leaders brutally executed. One could argue that as this response was inevitable, so too was the eventual demand for complete independence; equally one could argue that the response was not inevitable, and thus that the gradual escalation towards complete independence was not either.)

The history of Spanish post-colonial America can also be seen to presage the fates of many subsequent nations in other parts of the world in their anti- and post-colonial struggles: civil wars, lack of clarity and agreement over political "rules of the game", coups, confusion, and the wastage of national effort in futile conflicts. If Protestantism failed to create a united, reformed Christianity as a viable long-term alternative to Roman Catholicism, and Socialism failed to produce a viable form of society superior to Capitalism, so have many former colonies of European empires confronted immense difficulties in constructing viable, functioning, peaceful, independent, sovereign nation-states. Adelman argues that national communities with a sense of "historical self", ready to wield sovereignty, had not matured within the Spanish colonies, nor did they during the process of becoming independent. There was frequently no consensus even about

which territorial units – viceroyalties or provinces, for example – should constitute the geographical and social bases of the new nations. As he writes:

"The breakdown of the Spanish empire in South America did not begin in the peripheries. It started in its core and issued its shockwaves outward……. nascent political communities emerged *because* not *before* the Spanish empire imploded……. American secession was a reaction to the metropolitan effects of Atlantic warfare, and not the expression of accumulated colonial grievances that spawned a separate political identity" (p 219). And elsewhere he states:

"…….the breakdown of empires intensified proclamations of loyalty on their peripheries. If Madrid's and Lisbon's policies of recovery were oftentimes oppressive, colonists voiced some of their concerns – though almost always in the name of what was good for the empire as a whole because, in their mind's eye, sovereignty was synonymous with imperium. There was, however, a point – when the metropolitan monarchy itself was destroyed – at which imperial sovereignty went into shock. One pivotal point in this narrative involves the French invasion of the Iberian metropoles and the centrifugal effects on the peripheries. Only at this stage did imaginings of a new, postcolonial order begin to eclipse the old one."(8)

Adelman disagrees with Benedict Anderson`s seminal analysis of non-European national independence movements in respect of Latin America:
"Eager to wage a myth of bold, liberal state making, men like Bartolomé Mitre and José Manuel Restrepo offered heroic narratives of nations coming into being in a struggle for modernity against premodern oppressors. In their eyes, Latin American revolutions were part of the breakup of ancien-régime Atlantic empires groaning under the pressure of accumulated enlightened demands for freedom. Much later, this nineteenth-century concept of creole freedom poised against colonial tyranny provided a framework for future generations of historians, culminating in Benedict Anderson`s celebrated Imagined Communities…… Latin Americans had a sense, "imagined" or real, that they were different from Iberians and that they would be better served without imperial masters. What is more, in this view, such a national gestalt was already maturing before the crisis of 1807."(143) But rather, Adelman avers:

"……the political conflict and process of imagining a historical self got stuck in the complex chain of events in which ancien-régime empires gave way to liberal nation-states. It is this fundamental political transformation at the heart of creating a new model of sovereignty organized around "nations" that were supposed to fill the gap left by collapsing empires that is missing from Benedict Anderson`s account of modern nationalism."(219) And he asserts:

"What Anderson….. (has) tended to presume was that "creole patriots" acquired a different sense of self as a prelude to their proclamations of something new……. And

yet creole nations did not predate formal announcements of their existence. Empire or nation?..... They could feel at home imagining themselves simultaneously as Spaniards, Spanish Americans, and citizens (vecinos) of Caracas. The colonial subjects of Jose I, king of Portugal and the Algarves, envisioned themselves simultaneously as royal subjects and as notables in the various juntas of Rio de Janeiro. After all, what made empires, especially the composite Iberian regimes, so complex was that their monarchies sheltered multiple identities under a single roof. Indeed, for decades what South Americans wanted was to be autonomous and to belong to a great empire, to be Americans and the subjects of a magnanimous monarchy; to have it as many ways as possible…… It is not enough, in other words to account for the emergence of national identities in mechanical opposition to imperial ones."(8-9)

Adelman provides in the following a good summary of his overall perspective on "Dissolutions of the Spanish Atlantic" (which is the title of one of his chapters):
"Sorting out the steps from the breakdown of metropolitan sovereignty to the breakup of empire requires an approach that does not presume their inevitability. We have for too long presumed a teleological appeal of colonists' desire for exit from colonialism. Imperial breakdown challenged colonists to re-imagine the conditions of their subject-hood, but for the most part still within imperium. It did not predict a breakup of empire. Indeed, imperial endurance was more than a possibility; for many dominions, the European convergence after Napoleon's defeat eliminated a principal source of the crisis: imperial rivalry"(p 258).

Great power rivalry and continual wars at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries in the Iberian Atlantic were intimately connected with trade. Central to all the issues concerning the problematical relationships between metropolitan Spain and Portugal and their American colonies was the question of, and the conflict between, "free trade" versus imperial mercantilism, which latter tried in principle to keep trade restricted exclusively within the two respective, Iberian empires. The disruption caused to trade by wars, the never-ending squabbling and battling over illicit contraband trading, and the constant legal changes in trading rules and systems, together brought frequent mayhem to merchants of all the countries and all the colonies concerned. Adelman deals with these issues in great detail and very effectively for both imperial systems and both their dissolutions, using many citations from the statements, reports, and writings of merchants, officials, political leaders, contemporary political economists and other authors, from all the countries involved in the endless wrangling and aggression over commercial advantage and control.

The "revolutionary process" in the Spanish colonies sometimes invoked deep social changes – challenging racist demarcations and breaking open pre-existing property relations in certain places and at certain times, when in particular land was given to or simply taken over by people of the lower orders, or when slaves were given their freedom if they fought on one or another side of the civil wars and wars of independence that

finally resulted in the complete break from Spain. Bit by bit slavery was abolished in the former Spanish colonies, but not in Brazil.

Generally however, the process of independence was not a social revolution, neither in Spanish America nor, still less, in Brazil. In the former, political and economic power shifted from Spain to the "true blood", property-owning criollo elite, who were of Spanish descent, and who now could rule and trade without interference from Spain. People of all groups – criollo, mestizo, Indian, African, and other "mixed blood" categories, fought on both sides of the often chaotic, violent process. Independence also led in certain times and places to the re-entrenchment of a particular kind of autocratic, militarized, legal-bureaucratic, and religiously dogmatic socio-political domination, now without the kinds of moderation that had occasionally emanated from Spain before Independence. Indians in particular were sometimes and in certain respects worse off after the end of Spanish rule than they had been before. Adelman does not trace through these subsequent developments but his treatment of the history up to Independence certainly allows a better understanding of why and how the later developments occurred. In particular he shows how the effects of the destructive wars on trade, agriculture and production generally were disastrous, leaving the former Spanish colonies in economic crisis, foreign debt (mainly to British bankers), recurring, violent civil conflicts and a disarray that would persist right through the nineteenth century and sometimes beyond. And Adelman notes that: "As politics became militarized, the decisive spheres of collective action shifted from the urban spaces, which flourished in the final days of the empire, to new "associational" mobilization: armies. In this phase, with the colonial response to metropolitan reaction, the final bloody and chaotic denouement of empire was the historic breeding ground for actors who would populate the post-imperial age in South America", since "……the political vacuum of an imperial crisis unleashed the centrifugal furies of multiple fighting machines"(p 278). He summarises the matter in respect of both Iberian empires generally, thus:

"……the centrifugal crisis of ancien régime empires bore down on fledgling post-colonial systems, ravaging the remnants of old orders, and leaving their deep imprints on their successors."(346)

Due to extraordinary good luck, and the shrewdness of the royal minister Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, the Emperor of Portugal - the Prince Regent Joâo - fled from Lisbon hours before Napoleon's troops marched in, and was transported across the Atlantic with his court by the British Navy, as Britain was more concerned lest Brazil should fall into the hands of the French than it was to see the exit of Brazil from the Portuguese Empire, which it would also clearly have liked to see happen provided it was to its own advantage. (Britain's attitude to the independence of the Spanish colonies was much the same at this point in time.) Lord Strangford's plan involved escorting, by a British squadron, the Portuguese court:

“It took three days for the court – its retinue, treasury, archives, and thousands of staff and hangers-on – to pack and load the thirty-vessel fleet amid torrential rainfall. For good measure, a printing press, the royal jewels, dishes, and even a vast book collection were thrown into the cargo. On the morning of November 29, 1807, hours before Junot‘s advance troops entered the capital, the immense flotilla weighed anchor and sailed out from the mouth of the Tagus River. Their destination was Rio de Janeiro. French troops swept into the vacated capital and began to set up an occupa tion regime” (p 227).

Thanks to this, and to the later declaration of Brazil‘s complete independence (after fifteen years of unresolved problems within the imperial compromise) by the emperor‘s son Pedro in 1822, Brazil was spared the carnage of a War of Independence (though it became embroiled in a vicious war with the River Plate and bloodily suppressed numerous short-lived uprisings). On the other hand however, it maintained slavery - which remained the bulwark of its economy - until late into the nineteenth century. New agreements concerning trade, especially with Britain, and deep-seated commercial reforms making trade generally more open, followed the emperor‘s arrival at the new imperial capital. These also included commitments to abolish the Portuguese/Brazilian slave trade in the long run, as Britain had abolished it in its own zones of domination (after centuries) and was now determined to see abolition prevail everywhere in the Atlantic; though words did not become reality for many decades in Brazil. After meeting the British foreign secretary Lord Castlereagh in 1812, Rio de Janeiro’s envoy to London, Count Funchal, claimed the British viewed the slave trade “with a blindness and ardour which equals Religious Fanaticism……..”(quoted p 256). But when Brazilian slave-traders complained to their Royal Board of Trade that their slave-ships on the Atlantic were being seized by the British Navy, who then freed the captives, they found their objections to be of no avail.

The crucial difference between the fates of the Spanish and Portuguese American empires after Napoleon‘s interference in both metropolises, was that in Spain, Napoleon captured King Ferdinand and then tried to replace him with his own (Napoleon’s) brother as monarch. Loyalists both in Spain and in the colonies rejected Napoleon‘s puppet, as well as the Cortes (assembly) which Napoleon also tried to bring into being with all kinds of seductions to new rights afforded to colonial representatives. In turn Spanish loyalists set up their own surrogate Cortes, and felt obliged to offer equally generous promises to colonists to keep them loyal to the interim government until Ferdinand – it was optimistically assumed – would be able to reclaim his throne: “Dear and beloved subjects, Spanish Americans, you enjoy the same rights and prerogatives as those of the Peninsular, as an essential part of these Dominions of the Spanish Monarchy…….. you are now elevated to the dignity of free men from the yoke that oppressed you with avarice, ignorance and arbitrariness of a few rulers of the old Government”(quoted p 187).

But the Cortes in (internal) exile did not act in accordance with these grand statements, nor was it thought by colonists to be honouring the reforms within its own new

constitution of 1812. This was partly because *peninsulares* could not bear to see colonial representatives outnumber them, as they would if proportional representation was accorded, and nor could the embattled regime, trying to hold on to the principle of monarchical power without a monarch, and fighting against French occupation, grant the colonists the kind of concessions to more open trade that many of them had long demanded, and still more felt the absolute right to now; because in order to finance the war this government needed funds, which could only be maximized in the short run by controlling and taxing imperial trade even more than before.

Thus the interim Cortes would not or could not deliver either on the hitherto frustrated yearnings for greater democratic representation (though this was an exceedingly vexed question for all sides – were mulattos, blacks and Indians 'citizens'?) nor those for greater freedom of trade. Furthermore, by staying in Spain, rather than migrating to America as the Portuguese government had done, it ensured that both the sense and the reality of arrogant and unjust metropolitan rule was maintained and indeed intensified. Much of Spanish America now seceded from what was felt to be an illegitimate Cortes, though this was not meant at the time to be a complete break from Spain. When, after Napoleon's final defeat, Ferdinand returned to his throne from humiliating captivity, everything became still worse, as Ferdinand against all intelligent advice, became hell-bent on violent and bloody reconquest and restoration of uncompromising, absolutist Spanish monarchical power in the colonies, tearing up the anyway unrealized 1812 Constitution without any respect for the reforms or concessions desired by the colonists. "Out of what was once an incoherent and weak rebellion in 1810, which was sputtering by 1814, peninsular counterrevolution created revolutionary armies," Adelman avers (p 277).

The incredibly murderous and cruel Reconquest, undertaken under the command of Pablo Morillo, *el Pacificador*, polarized the situation until it finally cast the fate of Spanish America into uncompromising independence through revolution: "War to the Death", as Simon Bolìvar, *el Libertador*, so touchingly put it. In Jeremy Adelman's view a more sensitive and negotiating stance on the part of Ferdinand might have shored up a reformed, constitutional monarchical empire, as most of the local colonial secessionist governments had anyway collapsed or been torn apart by internal conflicts by the time Ferdinand returned to his throne. But as one of the king's advisors, the Count of Vistaflorida insisted, the insubordination and "scandalous doctrines" of a few rabble-rousers must be defeated by force. And Ysidro de Angulo, a Cadiz merchant, spoke in an address to the king of "the disgraceful insurrection of our ungrateful children in our Americas" (although importantly he also pleaded for some relaxation of the tight regulations that the king was determined to re-impose concerning trade within the empire, in this going against the stated position of the Guild of Cadiz Merchants).

However, the use of an inappropriate kind of force fomented and consolidated the very enemy being fought against, and in the end ensured the ignominious defeat of the

perpetrator of this counterrevolutionary violence. Adelman makes a tantalizingly apt suggestion at one point, which unfortunately he does not explain or elaborate upon further:

"The Council of the Indies put its recommendations to the king in October 1814…… agreeing that getting rid of a few malvados inspired by foreign models would restore the natural hierarchy of the empire. The circle around Ferdinand agreed on the principles of what would become in the twentieth century a textbook counterinsurgency, concocted out of a mixture of wishful thinking and amnesia"(p 272).
Indeed how true it remains today, that when "great powers" use massive force in order to impose their order and subdue complex, confused, and little understood social and political processes in countries far away, both geographically and in terms of their (the great powers') limited understanding of them, they only pour fuel onto flames. And not to learn from history, as someone (actually Georges Santayana!) once said, only ensures that its mistakes and disasters will be endlessly repeated.

This book is packed with information from an enormous number of sources, yet I could not help questioning Jeremy Adelman`s constant assertions that it was *not* the build-up of colonial resentments against Spain that led to the revolutionary wars, but rather the sequence of events, the "shockwaves" emanating out from the collapsing empire, especially after Napoleon's humiliating invasion of Spain. These are typical statements of Adelman:

"It was the deterioration of the empires that led to the breakup of their ruling coalitions and the stirrings of revolution. Social revolutions were not the cause of imperial breakups, but their consequence."(8)

"…….colonial subjects acquired anticolonial identities not because they harboured deeply gestating grievances that suddenly erupted at the opportune moment. Rather, anticolonial identities emerged in response to the ways in which royalists handled the crisis of imperial sovereignty. Colonial identity formation was a reactive process, responding to external political pressures that forced the issue of who got to speak for the general interest in the absence of a king; new identities did not precede and motivate political change."(177)

But why does Adelman want to replace one unidirectional model of cause and effect by another, opposite one, the direction merely reversed? Adelman's own account of the historical processes involved, let alone those provided by other historians, seems absolutely to show a continuous interaction between "subjective factors" (resentment, the absorption of new, oppositional ideologies on the part of some colonials – criollos as well as other groups - that grew with the unfolding of the disastrous circumstances of Spain); and these with "objective factors" (war, long-term decline of Spain, problems with an inadequate economic and trading system, etc.). All occurred in an immensely

complicated process of mutual interactions, conflicts, influences, and events. Certainly revolutionaries like Nariño, Miranda, and then Bolìvar were convinced of the need for total independence from Spain long before most other people (while some never were convinced), and it took "events" – including the "blunders" of the interim Cadiz junta and of King Ferdinand to help turn things in favour of the "firebrands". But that surely does not mean the psychological potential was not there in 1806 when:

"…….Francisco de Miranda led an expeditionary force to the shores of his native land with the goal of liberating it from the Spanish yoke. Counting on British support, he hoped that his little army of white, black, and mulatto patriots would start a revolution to free a continent…….. The daring escapade was, however, a fiasco. A Spanish man-of-war spotted the small flotilla and forced two of the schooners aground, depriving Miranda of the element of surprise. Spanish soldiers paraded the captured sailors through Puerto Cabello, hanged ten of them before a crowd, and sent the rest to face trials in Spain. Several months later Miranda returned, and this time landed a force of 1,500 men. He took the town of Coro with the following proclamation: "The time and the conjuncture are perfectly favorable for us to carry out your designs, and the many people who compose this army are your friends and compatriots, resolved to give their lives if necessary for your liberty and independence under the auspices and protection of the British navy." Some Indians and mulattos joined him. But otherwise the townsfolk fled or stayed indoors……."(175)

And so hardly anyone followed Miranda at that time, but deep dissatisfactions *can* remain muted until people either feel forced to act upon them, or experience something like an inner explosion of anger or frustration which causes an apparently sudden change of behavioural and philosophical direction. (Again parallels with revolutions in other parts of the world and at other times come to mind.) What might be called the "natural conservatism" of most people most of the time, ensures that they do not arrive as soon at the same conclusions as do constitutionally-disposed revolutionaries, who sometimes later become the leaders of revolutions.

Also, as Adelman himself puts it:

"…….the more there was to question about the old regime, the harder it was to contain prophecies of a new one, and the more vicious became the reaction. So, as international warfare provoked civil war within the Iberian Atlantic, the contradictory pressures of unity and secession became more difficult to resolve. At that point, the revolution – and its antithesis, the counterrevolution – tore apart the economic, social, and political foundations of the Iberian Atlantic."(5)

Another point that emerges in considering the processes involved here brings us back to the "objective inevitability" or otherwise of history. Adelman shows how in some respects, or from some points of view, it was almost impossible for the hobbled,

ramshackle, temporary Cadiz junta and then the obstinate, foolishly blind King Ferdinand to behave otherwise than they did, due to financial constraints, their dependency on the peninsular merchants and in addition important numbers of colonial merchants who also did not want free trade; as well as for many other reasons. Would it all have been so different if the Spanish imperial government had moved – if it had been able to move – to Lima or Buenos Aires or Caracas, as Dom Joao moved from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro? Was this shrewd move the absolutely determining reason that Brazil did not shatter into fragments and "exit", as a congeries of separate, squabbling, fighting new nations, from the Portuguese empire? I do not really feel that Adelman adequately explains why the fate of the Portuguese empire was so different from that of the Spanish one, though here is the case as he presents it:

"..…Portuguese effrontery, the treatment by metropolitan deputies of "Brazilians" as somehow inferior and less consequential to the nation, created a sense of unity among the fissiparous Brazil delegations. It was not a sense of Brazilian nationalism that galvanized New World unity….. Rather….. each time the Portuguese Cortes threatened to restore Brazilian provinces to their colonial status, it humiliated provincially elected deputies. This made it easier for Rio de Janeiro to proclaim its defence of the sovereign rights of the colonies. One by one the provincial juntas, which worried that they did not have access to the military resources necessary to ward off a Portuguese invasion, rallied to Rio de Janeiro`s leadership, less out of nationalist conviction than provincial preservation… there was relatively little antimonarchical sentiment on either side of the Atlantic; dissolution of the ancien-régime empire cannot be explained by the appeal of republicanism….. the apostles of Brazilian secession could argue that it was Brazil, not Portugal, that stood behind the principle of dynastic integrity as the model for the political community. The official discourse that championed Brazilian sovereignty therefore did so in the name of continuity of the ancien regime.

"Had Pedro not declared his intention to stay in Brazil, and had the entire dynasty been associated with Lisbon`s aggressive injunction to restore its primacy, it is quite possible that anti-Portuguese sentiment might have spilled into antimonarchical feeling……Pedro`s highly celebrated promise that "I will stay" was a popular gesture across the provinces…… When Pedro learned that Portugal was prepared to coerce Brazil into submission, he declared the country formally free of the metropolis on September 7, 1822…… The fact that it was the monarch himself who declared independence took the "revolutionary" sting out of the breakup."(340-342)

Neither do I feel that Adelman gives an adequate explanation of why, given its advantages over fragmented, devastated, conflictive and bankrupted post-imperial Hispanic America, Brazil has in many respects not experienced a much more "satisfactory" history since its independence than has ex-Spanish America, from economic and political points of view – I am thinking here of poverty, oppression,

dictatorship etc. These are some more of Adelman‘s interesting – but I am not sure if they are always completely convincing – conclusions about Brazil:

“Brazil would secede from Lisbon, like its Spanish American neighbours from Madrid, as a response to imperial rulers‘ efforts to establish a new framework for an older imperial system. But there were important contrasts. When Brazil seceded from Portugal, the process was less contested; the incision between revolution and counterrevolution was much less bloody – indeed difficult to locate at all. This contrast has inspired historians to treat the dissolution of the Portuguese empire as more or less inevitable, and therefore less contestable. Oliveira Lima, for instance, maintains that Brazil had acquired a sense of national selfhood through the eighteenth century, and saw it ripen in 1808 and mature in ensuing years. When independence did come in 1822, it was a foregone conclusion. The years from 1814 to 1822 added up to a necessary transition period, allowing for the maturing of a national identity within an older colonial mold in order to dismantle it. But this is not the only inevitabilist account. Fernando Novais has argued that Brazilian independence was not the result of decolonization and the withering of the imperial state. Rather, for Novais, the contradictions of the Portuguese Atlantic were not governed by the teleology of a colony becoming a nation, but by the crisis of an ancient regime wedded to mercantilism, absolutism, and primitive accumulation. In the hothouse of the age of revolutions, the forces of modernity were bound to sweep aside the archaic structures that integrated the Luso-Brazilian Atlantic.

“Colonial secession and imperial dissolution were not such predictable outcomes in 1814, when the dominant sentiment among members of the ruling elites was loyalty to empire and monarchy. The rush to account for national “exit” from empire can miss the passages through loyalty and voice….. Not only was secession from Portugal not simply automatic or preordained, it was far from clear what in fact was seceding: Brazil, or a collection of provinces that refused to comply with Lisbon`s efforts to restore its centrality in empire? What is important is that a unitary, nationalized Brazil was not imagined and did not declare itself into existence by people who identified as such in order to bring down the old order….. With “exit” in 1822, the ruling classes then had to confront the challenge of what to be loyal to now that they were free of formal European control…….

“A “new mold of structural dependency,” to use the words of the Portuguese historian Valentim Alexandre, blunted the political ambitions of those who wanted to restore the old regime. As a result, the very weakness of the regime, its dependency on Brazilian and British merchants for funding, exposure to liberal lobbying at home, and the need for common support against Spanish aggression stood in the way of vindictive absolutism of the sort unveiled by Ferdinand in 1814. Ironically, deliverance of the Portuguese monarchy from French armies appeared to rescue the monarchy…… External forces, especially the shifting balance of commercial power and interstate conflict, shaped the choices of domestic and local colonial actors……..

"The prince announced in late 1815 a Carte de Lei, which changed the structure of sovereignty of the Portuguese empire. "Brazil" became a kingdom in its own right – and was folded in as an equal to the other two kingdoms of the realm, Portugal and Algarves. Accordingly, in December 1815, the monarchy pronounced that henceforth Brazil would be elevated to the status of kingdom, along with the kingdom of Portugal; Brazil`s sovereignty was inscribed in the very affirmation of the imperium. In effect, what many Spanish colonists had been advocating became a reality in the Luso-Brazilian Atlantic…… in some sense (this) was the sort of thing that many moderates in Madrid and colonists in the Americas, fatigued with civil war and protracted fighting, had been urging on Ferdinand." (309-313).

By contrast, not only did members of all "castes" fight on both sides of the Wars of Independence in Spanish America, but those who fought on the side of independence broke into fractions who fought against one another both before and after independence. This was sometimes for reasons of belief, and sometimes for reasons of perceived short-term or long-term interests. The simple buying–up of soldiers and supporters in various ways, on all sides, was also common. Adelman`s explanations as to why this did not occur in Brazil, and how Brazil managed to remain united, remain for me, as already stated, unsatisfactorily answered:

"What kept Brazil from breaking up were also the conditions that shaped the nature of the breakup of the old Portuguese empire…. The power bloc in Rio de Janeiro that squashed hinterland secessions also had the means to cut its ties with the metropolis and carry with it all of Brazil´s provinces (even precariously). This reduced the prospect that a conflict across the Atlantic world might degenerate into civil war within the New World By contrast to the fitful and violent process of achieving independence in Spanish America…… transition to independence in Brazil did not involve large-scale militarization….. "(342-343)

Yet at the same time Adelman asserts:

"……..secession (did not) take care of what it meant to be Brazil….. (there was) much more consensus over what Brazil had ceased to be, a colony, than the principles that should govern the new state-nation."(343)

Now let us ask this question again: why have the fortunes of Iberian America been so different from those of Anglo-America? The final paragraph of Adelman`s book reads thus:

"As Hannah Arendt once observed, the North American colonists had the singular good fortune of being able to have a revolution and crystallize a new system of power and a single source of law because there was so little that had to be changed. They also had the

advantage of being first – and thus innocent of their consequences. Not so the subjects of the Iberian Atlantic, for whom the knowledge of the consequences and alternatives of change was present at the moment of birth. For them, the next two centuries would be governed by the plenitude of possible futures and the challenge of changing so much."(397)

In the first pages of the Introduction, Adelman in a similar vein, writes:

"……the passages from empire to nationhood forked in ways that required actors to make choices without knowing the certainty of the outcome…… revolutions are unintended by-products of social conflict, not the results of antecedent volition."(1-2)

Surely however, these general points could be applied equally well to any and all periods of human history.

The idealistic leaders of Latin American Independence and their enthusiastic supporters in Europe (such as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and Victor Hugo) saw no reason to believe that the new "Latin" nations would be any less "successful" than that of the North; indeed it was sometimes felt they could be more "successful". (Let us be clear that we are here talking of such matters as effective political power and quantitative dimensions of economy – not of matters of culture, art, music, or literature, nor of quality of life or other spiritual human values. In many such matters of unmeasurable quality, Latin American societies may have achieved more than those of North America, in ways precisely linked to the relative lack of "success" in the above-mentioned senses. These issues enter into the profoundest philosophical questions concerning human existence – about its "meaning", its "purpose", its "significance", its "value". And nor of course are we entering here the field of criticism of "imperialism", whether political, military, or economic.)

Símon Bolívar believed that Gran Colombia, like other former Spanish colonies, would best have become a virtual colony of Britain; he was convinced that the compromise between monarchical and democratic parliamentary rule in Britain`s "Constitutional Monarchy" was the political system best suited to South America. Gran Colombia in particular was too fragmented and socially varied for fully representative government to work. It required centralized government, strongly enforced laws, and a life-long presidency. In the absence of these he foresaw only conflict and chaos in the future. Bolivar`s efforts to create a centralized "dictatorship" led to the attempt by supporters of Santander (who later became President) to assassinate him. Jeremy Adelman writes:

"Lawmakers saw themselves as the makers of states as well as nations….. Bolivar`s worries echoed across the lettered elites of South America. Neither the American model of laws nor French declarations of basic rights were appropriate cornerstones for constitutionalism in South America. Turning to Montesquieu, Bolivar made the case

against universal theories of lawmaking: "Does not *L´Esprit des Lois* state that laws should be suited to the people for whom they are made?"….. If North American colonists or French citoyens had to be armed with legal weaponry to uphold their….. rights, South American lawmakers felt they could not premise their charters on the defense of rights that Iberian rulers had never instilled….."(345)

As Adelman elsewhere puts it, for Bolívar as well as for some significant Brazilians of the period, "Iberian colonies were not made up of civic-minded subjects of self-governing communities as they were idealized in the "other" America, that of English origins."(4)

The differences between North America and Latin America after independence from European empires stem from a huge number of factors, varying from geography, climate, and ecology, to the differences between England/Britain and the Iberian Peninsular as colonial powers – in cultural, religious, political, and economic terms; to the differences between the conquered peoples (and the African slaves) in the two regions, and to the differences in the outcomes of the conquests in the two regions with respect to enslavement, genocide, ethnocide or otherwise; and in respect of cultural and "racial" mixing. The far greater degree of *mestizaje* in Latin America is crucial to understanding its history. These issues are not discussed directly or in depth in Adelman`s book, though they are at times touched upon, at least implicitly. They have of course been considered elsewhere, such as in James Dunkerley`s *Americana* among many other studies; and Jeremy Adelman`s analyses can greatly deepen our understanding of their immense significance, even if ultimately, as with many other issues, there still remains much to explain.

This is a powerful book in many ways, and like all good histories of South America, it makes the mind reverberate with a profound sense of the latter‘s interconnectedness and interrelatedness with European history.

THE WORLD AS CREATION AND CREATOR

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Nature is made up distinct, irreducible levels, which operate in different temporalities. Though the structures and processes characteristic of each ontological level are different, having their own laws, tendencies, forms, and component entities, requiring specific and distinct kinds of theory for their comprehension, nevertheless each ontological level can be understood as kind of developing structure, or active organized process. That these structures change, rather than exist in static forms of being, is inseparable from the fact that all reality´s existence is in time.

Since these structures generate qualitatively new and ever more complex forms, the different ontological levels can be viewed as different forms of creative becoming. They are:

1. The individual consciousness and creative activity of the self
2. The structural processes and transformative praxes of history and society
3. Human biology and its interacting interface with culture, in human prehistory and recorded history
4. The biological processes of organic life biological evolution, and the developmental biology of organisms
5. Inorganic chemical and physical processes
6. The fundamental micro and macro structures and processes of the universe: nuclear and quantum physics, gravity, post-Einsteinian cosmology and the universe´s history.

The number of specific and distinct levels is potentially iinfinite, since the ´hierarchy of levels´ in nature does not rest upon absolute qualitative discontinuities.[1] it is limited to six in the above list. In J T Fraser´s[2] system there are either five or six ´stable integrative levels of nature´ which are identified as the domains of special relativity theory, quantum mechanics, general relativity theory, biology and phsysiology, and the sciences of mind, knowledge and society. Though Fraser distinguishes the levels differently from the approach adopted here, we are in agreement that the "levels of organization are distinct, stable and bear a hierarchical, nested relation to each other"[3] No level can be reduced to that ´below´ it, nor can it be incorporated into or subsumed under that ´above´. Each represents a distinct form of creative becoming, within the overall process of cosmic evolution in its burgeoning through to life, then conscioiusness. ´Meaning´ in, or for the cosmos could be thought of as resting in a human understanding (emotional and intuitive, as well as intellectual and sensuous) of this burgeoning process, praxis, or struggle. It is perhaps from an understanding of the ´cosmic setting of human life ´(to borrow Joseph Needham´s phrase[4]) that a ´telos´ for human history and individual biography might be appropriated.

The human activity that has come to be termed ´science´ emerged from myth, theology, and practical knowledge in particular social formations. Like the ideologies or modes of

thinking about the world from which it emerged, whether in Ancient Greece or Traditional China, science has always linked to specific social processes, institutions and interests, has always been framed within socialy constructed conceptualizations. Modern science in its development within late mediaeval and Renaissance Europe, through to the present, is no exception but it has continuously strained to become, or at least claimed that it has become (in its ´scientistic ´philosophical self-understanding non-ideological, dealing, uniquely in a non-social objectivity.

In our period, the ways that science and cosmology are developing in some areas (from within themselves, due to their own discoveries and inherent tendencies) suggest yet new kinds of attitude, conception, and sensibility toward the natural and human world which are extraneous to science strictly defined. To many there seems a new task thrust upon us – to construct self-conscioiusly a ´mythology´(not literally – ie not one single, rigid set of myths), and an attitudinal (intuitive, emotional, sensous) and conceptual framework appropriate both to the findings of science and to the general forms of human life felt to be harmonious and free. This feeling rests upon a recognition that any cosmology, science, or conceptual outlook (like any religion or mythology) has implications for social relations and practices; supposedly ´neutral´ modern science is associated with a whole structure of non-scientific values and practices whose negative implications are only intensified and perpetuated by the characteristic refusal to question this ´neutrality. The ontological ideas considered sketchily here are meant as a contribution toward what seems the best theoretical bearer of science´s own findings, but also the mode of human consciousness appropriate for a self and society that wish to be aligned spontaneously and harmoniously with the processes of nature. I am principally concerned with the level of organic life, though elsewhere I have followed parallel concerns in relation to inorganic levels of nature.[5]

The emergence of life from non-life, can only be understood as both a creative, purposive process and a structurally determined, inevitable, necessary outcome, given a particular constellation of conditions and circumstances. Similarly life itself – on the level of species evolution and the individual organism – should be understood as both creative interaction with, adaptation to, and modification of environment, and determination by hereditary structure.

The qualitatively distinct, specific ontological level of reality called life displays the characteristics that are common to all reality (ie being simultaneously structural determination and creative agent), in ways that are specific to life. The insights of modern physics in the nature of fundamental micro and macro structures and processes in the inorganic universe have been summed up by Fritjof Capra in the following typical phrases:

“(The interconnected) cosmic web is intrinsically dynamic. The dynamic aspect of matter arises in quantum theory as a consequence of the wave nature of subatomic particles, and

is even more central in relativity theory, which has shown us that the being of matter cannot be separated from its activity. The properties of its basic patterns, the subatomic particles, can be understood only in a dynamic context, in terms of movement, interaction and transformation.

"… In a relativistic description of particle interactions, the forces between the particles – their mutual attraction and repulsion – are pictured as the exchange of other particles. This concept… links the forces between constituent of matter, and thus unifies the two concepts, force and matter, which had seemed to be fundamentally different in Newtonian physics. … Relativity theory has made the cosmic web come alive, so to speak, by revealing its intrinsically dynamic character; by showing that its activity is the very essence of its being… the image of the universe as a machine has been transcended by a view of it as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood only as patterns of a cosmic process.[6]

Thus inorganic nature is seen fundamentally as a self-creating, ordered flowing[7] interconnected, structural totality. On the ontological level of human society, sociology is characterized by a general concern to construct in one way or another theories and methodologies sensitive to, and appropriately balanced in respect of the polarities structure/action, causality/meaning or intention. Similarly, pscychology must consider the psyche and individual behavior in terms of both structure and causation on the one hand, and activity or experience on the other.

This ontology implies not only that phenomena in each level of the cosmic hierarchy must be understood in the sense of being rationally and scientifically interpreted, but that they should also be comprehended or experienced in a holistic, intuitive way[8]. The distinction between rational analysis and intuitive comprehension is of course a perennial one in Western thought; it corresponds to some extent to Kant´s distinction between the forms of knowledge appropriate to phenomena and noumena, and to Hegel´s understanding and reason. It is the starting point for Shelley in A Defence of Poetry:

> "According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and the latter as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to color them with its own light… the one is the principle of synthesis, and has for its object those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is the principle of analysis, and its actions regards the nature of things simply as relation; considering thoughts not in their integral unity… imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities…"[9]

On the level of inorganic nature scientific explanation is achieved thorough physics, chemistry, astronomy, cosmology etc, but, as the physicist David Bohm argues, the inorganic world must also be understood through poetic or ´mystical´ imagination: "…the mind requires an overall grasp of what is generally know, not only in formal, logical, mathematical terms, but also intuititvely, in images, feelings, poetic usage of language, etc".[10] for organic nature, life scientific explanation is achieved thorough the various fields of biology; intuitive undersatanding occurs through poetic imagination or ´mystical´experience, as with inorganic nature, but in a special form which allows a kind of identification with the flowing, burgeoning, peculiarly creative pr Bergsonocess of life. This is depicted in parts of Henri Bergson´s philosophy, but for the view taken here it does not require his metaphysical vitalism. Human existence, through from social history to individual consciousness, must also be understood intuitively, through poetic empathy with human experience – conflict, struggle, suffering, yearning, transcendence.

Modern science has been and is a project committed predominantly to explanations of nature as if ´in retrospect. This does not mean, as vitalist have argued, that life has been treated as if it were ´dead´, but rather that activity and process become reified; interconnected wholes become fragmented into discrete objects, causes and effects. This is the case for positivistic, and certain varieties of structuralism, sociology which lose sight of intention, action, consciousness and totality in their objectifications of society, as it is also, for example, in behaviorists psychology. Whit respect to life it is a question of grasping a process of emergent, qualitative development in time, which may be thought of as in a sense purposeful. But as Joseph Needham has repeatedly warned, the desire to avoid mechanism should not mean falling into vitalism:

> "Biological order is a form of order different from those found in physics, chemistry, or crystallography, yet not impenetrable by the human mind or ruled by unintelligible spiritual entities. Translated into terms of Marxist philosophy, it is a new dialectical level."[11]

The Soviet biologist, A I Oparin also found in dialectical materialism a mode of thinking that seemed to allow the nature of life to be grasped properly. As Loren Graham says:

> "Dialectical materialism heavily influenced the very structure of his analysis. The careful reader… cannot seriously maintain, it seems to me, that dialectical materialism was merely something to which Oparin paid lip service … as a result of political pressure. …
>
> The point to which Oparin returned again and again … is that dialectical materialism is a <u>via media</u> between the positions of frank idealists and vitalists on the one hand and mechanistic materialist, exuberant cyberneticists, and supporters of spontaneous generation on the other … (it)

> provides a means … of accepting the principle of the material nature of life without regarding ´everything´ which is not include in physics and chemistry as being vitalistic or supernatural´…
>
> Life was to Oparin a flow, and exchange a dialectical unity … (which) is ´strictly co-ordinated in time and space´ in an orderly way insuring self-preservation and self-reproduction … a living organism must have, in addition, the characteristic of ´purposivenesss´….

He recognized that his insistence on purposiveness as an essential feature of life had its dangers, since "in one form or another Aristotle´s teaching about ´entelechy´has left its mark on all idealistic definitions of life". But Oparin believed that the purposiveness of the organization of life was "an objective and self-evident fact which cannot be ignored… (it) depends on what interpretation one gives to the word ´purposiveness´… He thought that dialectical materialist could avoid idealism by always studying this purposiveness in terms of its development, its origins. So long as purposivenesss can be understood as a result of a historical interaction between the material organism being studied and its material environment, one need not fear idealism. It is only … when purposiveness is brought in form outside the boundaries of the material world, or is left so unexplained that such an origin seems implied, that biological explanations become idealistic".[12]

In capitalist society, from soon after its inception, nature has been de-spiritualized and de-feminized, turned into a static (from a developmental point of view) machine composed of separable entities interacting according to eternal laws relating causes to effects. This view is the counterpart to a scientist-technicist project of manipulation and explotation of nature, in a system of capitalist production which extracts value from labour power, blind to its specific or unique qualities. The fragmented, splintered, alienated labour-force controlled by the production system is mirrored in an atomized nature, which is the object of a social activity that has no collectively conscious subject, but is rather a blindly driven machine.

Just as western science bleached nature in its ontology of qualities it could not measure or control, so its epistemology purged perception of those faculties – intuitive, emotional, sensuous – which were regarded as irrelevant or in conflict with cognitive-rational understanding. In the Newtonian world-view nature is uniform inert matter upon which operate abstract, mathematised laws. These laws (like the Creator – belief in which is necessitated by a machine-like universe) are external to concrete, contingent realities. Time, the laws of gravity etc, are not immanent to real processes as they are for pantheist, or dialectical ontologies. Nature, and by extension society, are systems created by a ´hidden God´ who has laid down external laws according to which they must operate, whether of gravity or the market. A ´decentred´ autocracy rules machines with no

immanent purpose: objects, motion and events in the world are ultimately the product of the mind of an inscrutable God.

Mechanism entailed idealism simultaneously: Newtonian objects act in accordance with laws thought by divinity – which mirrors the social division between mental administrative labour and physical labour – empties matter of spontaneity. In non-dualist worldviews, which for some are returning in modern physics what is is what happens. But for classical physics the aim was to formulate laws that abstracted from the plenitude and concrete heterogeneity of the world. The concomitant suppression of intuition, feeling, and direct sensuous experience became internalized in a qualitatively new psychic repression.

The Romantic vision at its best – in Blake, Shelley or Keats – was not ´anti-science´, but rather urged for a re-integrated knowledge of nature to overcome the separation of abstract laws from direct experience of heterogeneous reality, as in Hegel and dialectical material lism the concrete totality bears its own laws immanently. Process is not divisible into matter and laws or categories, just as Jacques Merleau-Ponty[13] argues that the new cosmology engendered by relativity and quantum physics re-unite form and content. Instead of timeless matter and an external time, being should be grasped as becoming, with time an immanent part of it.

An epistemology in pursuit of an integral dialectical knowledge require a resynthesis of cognition, feeling, intuition and sensuous experience (not merely sensation in the Newtonian and Human senses). The psychic counterpart to an experience immersed in the full variety of nature – in which light, for example, is not only that which is analysed when it is ´tweaked and bent´, as Goethe put it, by prisms – is a dynamically integrated one, liberated from oppression and the urge to dominate either humanity or nature. Perhaps I should continue with the earlier quotation from David Bohm: "this kind of overall way of thinking is not only a fertile source of new theoretical ideas: it is needed for the human mind to function in a generally harmonious way, which could in turn help to make possible an orderly and stable society"[14]

The Cartesian tradition in western scientific thought treated living organisms other than man as if they were machines, as was consonant with a general mind-matter dualism. Biologists, of course, specially post-evolutionists, have not literally thought in these terms, yet mechanistic modes of conceptualization have remained central to biology. The replacement of static, unhistorical being by historical becoming occurred implicitly in biology before it did in physics, yet a thorough move to a dialectical, process, developmental framework has if anything happened even less in biology than in modern physics. I will try to illuminate this claim by reference to Richard Dawkin´s The Blind Watchmaker[15,] but I must make clear that I do not see these brief remarks as constituting a systematic critique of that work, nor should it be presumed that I am in disagreement with all of it.

Dawkins defines his philosophical position as ´hierarchical reductionism´: "The hierarchical reductionist … explains a complex entity at any particular level in the hierarchy or organization, in terms of entities only one level down the hierarchy; entities wich, themselves, are likely to be complex enough to need further reducing to their own component parts; and so on".[16] There is nothing to dispute in this general definition from the viewpoint I am trying to evolve, though Dawkins, by comparison perhaps with Oparin for example, stresses less the extent to which a new ontological level, a new type of totality with new qualities (such as life, of human consciousness/society) brings into being or has invoked within itself new types of process, laws, structural propensities etc.
In his desire to render evolution a process not requiring a ´vital force´Dawkins tends towards both mechanism and recutionism. It is significant that he suggests a computer can be creative in the way evolution is, when he argues that although the programmer of a computer is unable to control or predict a simulated evolutionary process, there is nothing ´myistical´ about this, any more than with biological evolution[17] But it is what Dawkins (and others that have come to be called ´neo-Darwinists´ by their opponents) sees as the crux of evolution that is the issue: natural selection working solely and blindy on genes and their random mutations, in the struggle for survival of the fittest (genes).

I do not intend to enter the controversies about evolution within biology, as if I were a biologist. I shall only try to draw upon different biologists´ conclusions fro their research work, to point out different ways of theoretically conceiving the process of evolution. Brian Goodwin, for example, sees both evolution and the individual living organisms, development as involving structured totalities in creative interaction with their environments, through processes of dialectical interaction between genotype and phenotype. He is concerned with "the sense in which the biological process is creative… (it) may be perceived as a dialectic of creative transformation. Thus order and creativity replace contingency and opportunism as the foundations of the new biology".[18]

For Goodwin neo-Darwinian genetic theory is anchored in an atomistic mechanism which precludes recognition of the active dimension in biological processes. Creative development becomes shrouded in idealist mystery by default: "the self-reproducing machine is constructed by genes. So what is really important is these entities, the biological atomic units. The organism then becomes essentially an aggregate of genes which, by virtue of their capacity to direct the synthesis of the constituent elements of the organism (molecules and macromolecules) and to replicate themselves, somehow give rise to organized entities with powers of adaptation, generation, and regeneration".[19]

He suggests that mechanism actually retains the dualist and reductionist ontology of Judaeo-Christian theology: "More than a century (since Darwin) … has led to the proposition that each organism has within it a designer: the genetic program. This represents a materialized essence which is ultimately responsible for all of the organism´s activities. So the problem of the Designer has not gone away, it has simply

come back in another, equally mysterious form, … Genes define the potential composition of organisms ie the molecular constituents out of which any particular organism is formed. But composition does not determine form, a proposition well known in chemistry and clearly true in biology".[20]

Biological ontology requires a view of the organism as a totality whose being or activity is not the consequence of some fundamental determinant, nor the expression of some presumed ´essence: "Genes have a well-defined place in a structuralism biology: they are modifiers of basic form, not its generators, so they have in fact been unfortunately named."[21] Goodwin considers that embryonic development "illustrates the principles of organocentric biology, as contrasted with the genocentric view which regards cleavage to be a result of a ´genetic programme´, despite a failure to define the nature of this program and the absence of evidence that genetic mutants can systematically alter the geometry of the typical cleavage pattern. In the absence of such evidence, one is led to the alternative view that the spatial organization revealed in the geometrical order of the embryonic cleavage planes is a manifestation of intrinsic organismic order … a field property".[22] Now evidently it is not that a ´neo-Darwinist´ like Dawkins is unaware of this point, for he writes: "the effect, if any, that a gene has is not a simple property of the gene itself, but is a property of the gene in interaction with the recent history of its local surroundings in the embryo. This makes nonsense of the idea that the genes are anything like a blueprint for a body".[23]

The issues at stake is the implication for the worldview of biology overall, that emanates from such recognition. Actually the following passage from The Blind Watchmaker is in itself almost wholly compatible with Goodwin´s view, but Dawkins does not see that it is in contradiction with his own mechanistic and reductionistic framework:

> "An animal´s genes are never a grand design , a blueprint for the whole body. The genes… are more like a recipe than like a blueprint; and a recipe, moreover, that is obeyed not by the developing embryo as a whole, but by each cell or each local cluster of dividing cells. I´m not denying that the embryo, and later the adult, has a large-sacale form. But this large-sacale form emerges because of lots of little local cellular effects all over the developing body… It is by influencing these local events that genes ultimately exert influences on the adult body."[24]

By using the term exert influence´ rather than determine´, Dawkins begs the whole question of how a ´large-scale form´, or a totality, is related to its constituent ´local´ parts; of how the whole ´emerges because of´ its parts.

Ho and Saunders say "organisms are not preformed in the germ, they take shape epigentically, in the course of development"[25], and that "the major and deepest difficulty inherent in a theory of evolution by the natural selection of genes is that it leaves

organisms out of consideration … it leaves out of consideration…. It leaves out the very entities that are to be explained… an alternative approach to the study of evolution… (is) tha the intrinsic dynamical structure of the epigenetic system, in its interaction with the environment, is the source of non-random variations which direct evolutionary change… The real mechanism of evolution therefore, consiste of the epignenetic processes involved in organismic-enviromental interactions, and in the canalizations and genetic interactions… (but) this by no means exhausts the alternatives to neo-Darwinism".[26]

Thus "development may have an influence on evolution"[27], as well as the other way around. The whole ontological orientation of this is towards dialectical interactions rather than mono-casuality; towards understanding the totality of an active organism rather than seeking a fundamental cause in one part of it (the genes) regarded a an underlying essence or determinant of development. Thus: "It is rather the epigenetic system which interacts with the environment and ultimately generates those phenotypic variations on which natural selection can act."[28]

Mae-Wan Ho says of this process that:

> "The integration of development and evolution occurs through the organisms´ experience of the environment. The registering of experience and its eventual assimilation are the basis of adaptive evolution.
>
> The material link between development and evolution is the hereditary apparatus which realistically includes both maternal/cytoplasmic effects and nuclear gener. The oocyte cytoplasmic is at once a carrier of heredity independently of nuclear genes and the necessary communication channel between the environment and nuclear genes in the co-ordination of developmental and evolutionary processes.
>
> …The environment exerts necessary formative influence on development. This simple truth has been obscured by their genotype, and that environmental influences are merely ´disturbances´ to be overcome on the way to realizing the ideal phenotype.
>
> … If mutations in ´major´ genes accompany generic assimilation, they could well result from ´instructive´ processes in the sense that the environmental stimulus increases the likelihood for the right mutations to occur … when we bear in mind that gene expression depends "on nuclear-cytoplasmic interactions, then it is not difficult to envisage a feedback to the genome from the cytoplasm due to alterations in concentrations of proteins and metabolites which favour alternative gene expression states by the same mechanism of molecular memory stated above. The latter, if sufficiently intense, could then be stably inherited (ie become genetically assimilated) …

> Generic assimilation may therefore be achieved either by direct genomic change or the fixation of a cytoplasmic state favoring altered gene expression… it is possible that as the environmental stimulus continues to modify the cytoplasm, the latter becomes incompatible with some of the nuclear genes or genotypes. Organic selection will then operate through the elimination of genotypes which give lethal or harmful combinations with the cytoplasm.
>
> … The classical view of an ultraconservative genome the unmoved mover of development – is completely turned around."[29]

An ontology of life that unites structure with active process transcends the projection, characteristic of western science, of social dichotomies of subjet/object into nature. At the conclusion of an essay titled The organism as the Subject and Object of Evolution Levins and Lewontin write:

> "The incorporation of the organism as an active subject in its own ontogeny and in the construction of its environment leads to a complex dialectical relationship of the elements in the triad of gene, environment, and organism. We have seen that the organism enters directly and actively by being an influence on its own further ontogeny. The organism is, in part, made by the interaction of the genes and the environment, but the organism makes its environment and so again participates in its own construction. Finally, the organism, as it develops, constructs an environment that is a condition of its survival and reproduction, setting the conditions of natural selection. So the organism influences its own evolution, by being both the object of natural selection and the creator of the conditions of that selection. Darwin´s separation of ontogeny and phylogeny was an absolutely necessary step in shaking free of the Lamarckian transformationist model of evolution. Only by alienating organism from environment and rigorously separating the ontogenetic sources of variation among organism from the phylogenetic forces of natural selection could Darwin put evolutionary biology on the right track. So, too, Newton had to separate the forces acting on bodies from the properties of the bodies themselves: their mass and composition. Yet mass and energy had to be re-integrated to resolve the contradictions of the strict Newtonian view and to make it possible for modern alchemy to turn one "element into another. In like manner, Darwinism cannot be carried to completion unless the organism is re-integrated with the inner and outer forces, of which it is both the subject and the object."[30]

The alienated divisions of society into rulers and ruled, and mental and physical labour, are projected into scientific ontologies and epistemologies that divide reality into

immaterial laws and ´inert´, ´law –abiding´ matter, organic or inorganic. Unlike a dialectical materialism, the causes of change or development are distinct from that which changes or develops. An ontology that grasps reality as a complex, holistic process does not expect to find ´ultimate indivisible fragments´, be they atoms in physics, gener or ´replicators´ in biology, or discrete, separable social entities in sociology. The following statement by Goodwin resembles Bohm´s depiction of physical reality as an enfolding totality, not a set of external realtions between isolated particles:

"… the cell is not the fundamental unit of biological organization. Once again, it is the organism with its field properties which plays the role of fundamental unit in a structuralist biology, and whether the organism is made up of one cell or of many is irrelevant from the point of view of wholeness, self-regulation, and transformational capacity. Thus cellular partitioning does not divide the multicellular organism into a collections of autonomous inter-acting units, as is so often assumed in theories of "embryo-genesis, following the logic that wherever there is a nucleus whit its genes, there is a quasi-autonomous decision-making unit, an automaton. It would appear rather, that the strategy of multi-cellularity is a means of packaging and assembling gene products, allowing the organism to generate complex local mosaics with sharp discontinuities of state. But the fundamental organizing entity remains the whole organism, irreducible to any of its material parts"[31]

To view life as active dialectical process rather than deterministic mechanism, is analogous to a dialectical sociology that interprets social development as collective human activity, but simultaneously as mutual interaction and influence between ´base´ and ´superstructure´, each being understood as mutually penetrating and entailing the other. The existence of each is not just dependent on the other, but rather presupposes it. Such a conception contrast with economic, techonological, ideational, cultural, or any other kind of mono-casual, mechanistic determinism; ad contrast with any philosophy of unidirectional influence from essence to phenomenal appearance. The counterpart to this conception for biolgy rejects the notion that a genetic program is a ´central directing agency´[32]

If there is therefore purpose in life, this is not an Aristotelian entelechy which would see in it the realization of a previoiusly existing ´plan´, understood as its inner nature´; but an understanding that organisms purposively interact with their environment, struggle to survive, and in some degree actually shape their evolution. Furthermore, though evolution has been hitherto ´blind´- though ´watchmaker´ is not a suitable analogue for the force behind it – it has given rise to a new ontological level: humanity. Dawkins does not see the significance of this, assuming any special place being given to humanity must entail belief that its emergence was the inherent purpose of evolution and its finality.[33]

Notes and References:

1).The view taken in this paper is compatible with that of Josepeh Needham, who in Order and Life (The MIT Press, 1968), p 46, quotes Prenant as follows: "Dialectical materialism is as much opposed to vitalism as to old-fashioned mechanistic materialism, because both are metaphysical theories. It refuses to trace any sharp demarcation between physics and biology has the task of reducing itself wholly and effectively to physics. The unity of the universe expresses itself in qualitatively different forms, the characters proper to which must not be lost sight of."

A.I. Oparin, in similar vein, wrote: "life is a special, very complex and perfect form of motion of matter. It is not separated from the rest of the world by an unbridgeable gap, but arises in the process of the development of matter, at a definite stage of this development as a new, formerly absent quality." Quoted in Loren R Graham: Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union (Allen Lane, 1973), p 278.

2 J.T. Fraser: "Temporal Levels: sociobiological aspects of a fundamental synthesis", J. Social Biol. Struct. 1978 1; J T Fraser: The Genesis and Evolution of Time (the Harvester Press, 1982).

3 J T Fraser: op- cit. (1982), p 29.

4 Joseph Needham: "The Cosmic Setting of Human Life", unpublished paper given at a conference at Tenvi, Japan, December 1986.

5.For example T. Cloudsley: "The Social Structuration of Time in Thought and Experience", paper given to ASSET conference 1984 (available from ASSET), also published as "Spoleczne Ustrukturowienie Czasu W Mysli I Doswiadczeniu" in Kultura I Spoleczenstwo (Culture and Society), Warsaw 1986; T Cloudsley: "Dialectical Time: Taoism and the process of Change", in Shadow, The Newsletter of the Traditional Cosmology Society, December 1986.

6.Fritjof Capra: The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture (Wildwood House, London 1982), pp 78-83

7.See also David Bohm: Wholeness and the Implicate Order (Ark Paperbacks, London 1983)

8). J. Needham: op. cit. (1986), p 109 quotes J H Woodger as follows "intuition is the indispensable cutting edge of intellectual inquiry but the ground won is not consolidated until it has passed from the stage of intuitive apprehension to that of logical analysis".

9). Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Defence of Poetry (The Athenaeum Press, Boston 1890) Ed. Albert S Cook, p 1.

10). D Bohm: op. cit., xiv.

11). J Needham: op. cit. (1968), p 45

12). L Graham: op. cit., pp 286-7

13). Jacques Merleau-Pounty and Bruno Morando: The Rebirth of Cosmology (Alfred A Knopf, New York 1976)

14). D Bohm: op cit., p xiv

15). Richard Dawkins: The Blind Watchmaker (Longman, England 1986)

16).Ibid., p 13

17).Ibid., pp 63-5

18). Brian Goodwin: A Structuralist View of Biological Origns in J T Fraser et al. (Eds.): The Study of Time, Vol. IV, p 88

19). Ibid., p 74

20).Ibid., p 75

21). Ibid., p 84

22). Ibid., p 82

23). R. Dawkins: op. cit., p 296

24). Ibid., pp 52-3.

25). Mae-Wan Ho and Peter T Saunders: Pluralism and Convergence in Evolutionary Theory in Ho and Saunders (Eds.): Beyond Neo-Darwinism. An Introduction to the new evolutionary paradigm (Academic Press 1984), p 8.

26). Ho and Saunders: "What is the Unit of Natural Selection", Evolutionary Theory 5, The University of Chicago, May 1981, p 171.

27). Peter Saunders: Development and Evolution in Ho and Saunders (Eds.): op. cit. (1984), p 243.

28). Ho and Saunders: "Beyond neo-Darwinism – An Epigenetic Approach to Evolution", J.Theor. Biol. (1979) 78, p 579

29). Mae-Wan Ho: Environment and Heredity in Development and Evolution in Ho and Saunders (Eds.): op. cit (1984), pp 267-285

30). Richard Levins and Richard Lewontin: The Dialectical Biologist (Harvard University Press, 1985) pp 105-6

31). B Goodwin: op. cit., 86

32). Ibid., p 225

33). R Dawkins: op. cit., p 50.

POETIC APPENDICES

ALL THAT IS, IS FOR GOOD REASON

All that is, is for good reason
And yet could be wholly different
The determinations from deep structures
In atoms, lie under the curl of waves
And complex inorganic processes
Explain every peak and pebble.
All the millions of living species
Can only be as they are,
Yet the entire foray has changed
In the sweep of geological eras;
Different wasps, urchins, ferns
Sliter into being through adaptation
To new condition, and billions of types
Of answer to existence are wasted and lost
In the vast, open evolutionary experiment
That started not by chance, but without intention,
Because a combining of conditions and factors
Happened thus on this little planet
After it had cooled from the sun
And from the wild vastness of galaxies
The motion of matter generated life
Whose tendencies made possible the ultimate amazement
Of intellect and human consciousness
Whether we will cap the final peak,
Set a last emergence of higher form
In the innermost Chinese box of the universe
Is our active question: whether we
Can move our existence within the hierarchy
Of cosmos, life, human history
Into harmony; understanding like no other thing
What we are; being in control
Of that huge knowledge in brilliant balance
So that the intimation of higher being
Called God, is met in our self-creation
As conscious, harmonious, beings of love
And highest peace: the Universe
Looking at itself in glory.

A DIVINE DESIGN

Ah love, I am here it is sure;
Not proof that all is Design,
But here, mysteriously part of all that i
Apprehend: the sizzling light on the green
Moving leaves of this sunblazed day
The jittering shimmering dancing midges
And the warmth I feel, memory flowing
As eternal streams of sound and vision
I am a being that has been produced
In evolution, not Design; but by god life makes itself
As much as it is made
And being able to know this
Makes the universe Divine.

THE CASE FOR A MARXIAN ONTOLOGY OF NATURE

(Paper to the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association, Nottingham, April 1986)

Dialectical materialism came conceptually into being through the critique of Feuerbach's critique of Hegel.[1] Through this intellectual process, new ontologies for both society *and*

nature were born. The limitations discovered in Feuerbach´s metaphysical materialism crystallize in his pseudo-conception *Man*, which is part inorganic matter, part physiological being (both mechanistically conceived), and part an abstract, unhistorical ("anthropological") general human nature. Marx and Engels in their critique explode Feuerbach´s static conception of *being* determining thought, bringing into consciousness the concept of *social being* existing in dialectical relation to thought in the self-transforming history of human societies.[2] Simultaneously, the mechanical materialist conceptions of matter and organic life are also exploded, and the dualistic ontologies of previous philosophies of nature are seen as expressions of human self-estrangement. Dualism in thought is seen as having its basis in the alienated division of mental from manual labour: it reached its apogee in Hegel´s active, dialectical idealism and Feuerbach´s passive, mechanical materialism.

From the critique of Feuerbach´s Man a static ontology of "human nature" is transformed into real human practice, concrete history; matter and biological life are analogously transformed into natural dialectical processes. For just as the critique finds that "Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the essence of Man" (Sixth *Thesis on Feuerbach*), replacing an idealist metaphysics with a materialist metaphysics of history, so it also implies that the "resolution" of God, or the Idea, into nature as inert, unchanging matter or life, as in mechanistic conceptions, is a materialist metaphysics of nature. Process, development and change cannot be explained by mechanistic materialism; idealism is brought back again in new disguise through abstract, eternal "laws" or with a presumed prime cause (just as in determinist forms of social science – including "vulgar Marxism" – the dynamic of historical change is inexplicable and necessitates an implicit, idealist *deus ex machina*). The separation of nature into matter or life on the hand, and God, or Spirit, or energy, or immaterial laws on the other, entails the same inadequacy as do previous conceptions of society: "materiality" is grasped passively, inertly, and mechanically (as in Feuerbach) while its active, self –developing side is grasped idealistically (as in Hegel).

Dialectical materialism replaces a mechanistic ontology of matter and life with one that grasps totality, dialectical process and development, and unity (unity here meaning non-dualism, but recognizing irreducible levels of reality that emerge from development). Certainly, this ontology of nature cannot be seen as a mere inversion of Hegel´s dialectical idealism as Colletti and Althusser are concerned from their different perspectives to demonstrate. In the *Aufhebung* of Hegel his "rational kernel" is transformed as it is "extracted" and "saved".

The *Aufhebung* of Hegel is a resolution of the contradictions within Hegel himself; it is not a mere discarding of metaphysical elements whilst rational elements remain unchanged. For Hegel´s own dialectic is contradictory: on the one hand he recognizes totality, dynamic flux, continual contradiction and process, on the other hand the Idea is a prime mover, unmoved itself. Though he conceives of complex concrete totalities -

unique structural wholes - yet he frequently restricts his theorization of the process of structural change to simple sets of opposites. At the level of social being Hegel conceives an "end of history" in the contemporary state, in complete contradiction with history understood as dialectical process; while his great achievement - the recognition of a dialectical unity of thought and being, overcoming dualism - is only formal, as *being* is always finally dissolved into thought.

Now Marxism cannot maintain a pre-dialectical, mechanical conception of nature while revolutionizing the conception of society. By no means can nature remain within the province of bourgeois ontologies of mechanism or positivism. But this is what Colletti wants; he argues that Marx´s ontology is closer to Kant´s "phenomena" than to Hegel´s "finite". Now this is impossible to sustain in respect of either society or nature. Certainly Hegel´s dialectical process - reality conceived as continuous transformation in which every concrete constellation of relationships is transitory - is mystified, i.e. the finite is always passing into the infinite, the only final reality. However, Hegel´s formulation that every finite both "is" and "is not", is taken over into Marxism in concrete form, which in respect of nature entails its being understood as dynamic interacting processes: this is a real, concrete, unitary matter or life in flux. Both matter and life are active, evolutionary, and creative – in senses specific to each and different from their meanings in human history.

Colletti is correct to contrast Hegel´s giving priority to the logical process over the process of reality - whereby the subject or substratum of reality is always the Idea, with Kant´s acceptance of real existence as prior to thought, which latter is the "elaboration of perception and representation of concepts" through which reality is appropriated. Nevertheless, in spite of Kant´s superiority over Hegel in this, the point is that Kant´s notion of thought appropriating phenomena in science is empiricist. Kant has an historical, passively contemplating mind that appropriates reality: and this (phenomenal) reality is the atomistic mechanical universe of Newtonian physics that obeys eternal laws of cause and effect. Kant´s scientific epistemology and his ontology of nature are bounded by eighteenth-century bourgeois horizons. Thought as a practice within history, that transforms the subject and the object as a part of the totality of human practices, is not to be found in Kant, and hence his categories of "understanding" are eternal. For Hegel however, although thought is projected from consciousness into the Idea, subject and object interpenetrate. Though mystified, Hegel opens up the possibility of a dialectical epistemology and ontology; Marx and Engels understood that when the confusions between consciousness and existence were untangled Hegelian dialectics could be super ceded by materialist dialectics.

As for Althusser, his view on the relation between Marx and Hegel is confused in other ways. In the essay on Contradiction and Over determination in For Marx [4] two distinct issues are tackled, which he sees as inseparable. On the one hand he seeks to show that Marx´s dialectic is not the same as Hegel´s that the rational inversion of Hegel in no

respect saves Hegel´s dialectic is both mystified in his idealism, and internally contradictory. But the argument in defense of Marx´s debt to Hegel over the dialectic is in no way predicated upon the view that Hegel´s dialectic is maintained in Marx in unchanged form: in Lukacs for example whom Althusser condemns, the dialectic is thoroughly reworked in materialist terms. [5]

Althusser`s insistence (valid in itself) that historical materialism is no simple turning over of dialectical idealism is confused with another issue. The concept of "overdetermination" is developed in order to analyze the specific conditions that make possible a proletarian revolution. Althusser is concerned to show that revolution occurs only when a multiplicity of contradictions in a capitalist formation have simultaneously arrived at a critical juncture. In his view, failure to grasp his has depended on the simplistic notion that one central contradictions between Capital and Labour is the "cause" of revolution. This vulgarizations of Marxism is seen as the theoretical basis of economistic determinism in both passive, social democratic reformism an Stalinism, which he seeks to expose. But it is doubtful whether either have even their theoretical roots in a simple inversion of Hegel – i.e. on the substitution of a single central contradiction whiting capitalism for Hegel's process of negation in a single "moment" in the progress of the Idea. Rather, the theorical grounding of determinist degenerations of Marxism lie essentially in mechanism, the return to a pre-dialectical, one sided materialism which fails to grasp history as an active process. Certainly for Lenin, the theoretical underpinning of mechanism and passive economist (and their associated reformism and political pragmatism) lay not in any such Hegelian "deformation" of Marxism but rather, on the contrary, in a failure to grasp the dialectic in Marx. Thus, when the Social-Democracy of the Second International had led the European proletariats into the mutual slaughter of the First World War, is was to Hegel's Science of Logic that Lenin turned, claiming that it was "necessary to organize a systematic study of Hegel" and that for lack of this "fifty years after Marx the Marxist have not understood Marx." [6].

Lenin also criticized Plekhanov's tendency toward mechanistic materialism, linking it with his failure to grasp the carrying over of the "core" of Hegel's dialectic into Marxism; later he considered Bukharin "not yet fully Marxist" due to his lack of dialectical understanding, for it was clear to Lenin, even though the all-important "early works" of Marx were not available to him – the 1844 Manuscripts, The German Ideology and also the Grunrisse – that prior to Marx it had been idealism that had grasped the active side of history, albeit metaphysically: "intelligent idealism is closer to intelligent materialism than stupid materialism. "The distortions" that Althusser seeks to explore in the history of Marxist theory are therefore misunderstood; scientism and mechanism crept into the "Marxist" reading of Capital in a way that was indissolubly linked, on the theoretical level, to their ignorance of the Hegel-Marx relation. The notion of an inevitable resolution to the Capital/labour contradiction arising passively in history was a retreat to posivistic mechanism. Althusser fails to see this, and thus despite all his claims in fact

resurrects a new, more refined scientist mechanism - multileveled to be sure, but a mechanism nonetheless.

Althusser therefore sees "history as process with no subject": social transformation is the consequence of a complex of determinations between structures which, even though they are termed "practices", are actually grasped only passively mechanically. Though insistent that revolution takes place through practice on number of levels, the active dimension of social self transformation is lost in Althusser`s ontology and thus he fails to remedy the root problems of economistic determinism. Instead of understanding the "levels" of a social formation as mental categories for the appropriation of reality in thought, they become reified, externally related entities in reality. Both the integrally interwoven and enfolded totally of dialectical materialist ontology, and an understanding of categories as changing mental images that abstract from the interwoven flux of the totality i.e. dialectical materialist epistemology – are lost.

Marx's transcendence of both mechanism and idealism grasped reality as both structure and activity; reality is conceived as organic processes in contradictory totalities. Althusser misunderstands how this conception derives from a critical appropriation of Hegel, thinking instead that a recognition of continuity from Hegel to Marx on this level necessarily means taking over Hegel's dialectics as simple oppositions. In a veiled critique of Soviet realities, he argues that Marxism is no mere inversion of Hegel's positing the State as historical expression of the Spirit. But it is not clear who ever argued it was – surely not the "Hegelian Marxists" it was Feuerbach who simplistically inverted the Consciousness/Being relation in Hegel. Economistic and mechanistic "Marxism" (including Stalinism and post-Stalinist Soviet Marxism) are returns to Feuerbachian materialism. If Althusser were to follow this line of thought his whole position would fall apart; he would have to take the Theses on Feuerbach seriously, and with them Marx's emphasis on sensuous activity. Althusser`s notion of "overdetermination" would have to encompass the active side of revolutionary praxis; class struggle enacted on all levels of the social totality. This would necessarily entail a conception of social totality - in a Marxist, not a Hegelian sense. This is a concrete, dynamic totality, infinitely rich in contradictions; it does not entail carrying over "shreds" of Hegel's essence and phenomena – the latter being mere secondary (for Hegel illusory) manifestations of the essential, single contradiction in an "expressive totality" metaphysically conceived.

It is due to Marx´s definitive critique of mechanism and idealism that the concept of totality no longer entails an essence/phenomena distinction. The whole is real and concrete; it is more than the sum of its parts. Any part is implicated in the activity of any other part, and in the whole; there is no separable core which determines the totality "in the last instance," to use Engels unhelpful phrase. The ontology of Marxism is one that allows, for history and for the various levels of nature, and understanding of qualitative development in dynamic contradictory, concrete totalities. Structural determination and creative activity; the "matter" of pre-dialectical materialism and Spirit, vitality, purpose,

or energy as understood by idealisms of various kinds: these dualities are superceded, transcended, moved beyond in the new ontology.

Through Marx´s critique of Feuerbach´s Man there came into existence the new concept: social being. This is an active historical reality, not a static entity. There is no fixed human nature; there are only real societies in continual development. Social being means dynamic human relationships; it entails consciousness in its inherent nature. Thus the economic base is not a discrete entity in reality, nor a "prime mover" nor a metaphysical essence: the Marxian "economic" is not the "economics" of bourgeois thought. Neither the economic nor forms of consciousness can be conceived of as existing independently; an economic level entails real, thinking human beings engaged in all other levels of social activity. As Althusser fails to grasp this ontology of social being, naturally he is quite unable to ask whether there is also an analogous Marxian ontology of nature.

Colleti is typical of Marxists who rejected a dialectical materialist ontology of nature, I his lumping together the work of Engels, the materialism of Second international Marxism, the views of Lenin (especially in his Philosophical Notebooks), and later Soviet "Diamat". In Engels there are some posivistic tendencies which incline toward history being seen as an extension of determinist "laws of nature", thus contradicting a view of human labour and consciousness, sensuous activity, as creative amd open-ended. In some of his formulations "dialectical laws" are pictured as being applicable to both nature an history as a kind of reified, contradictory Spirit that works its way through both. Yet, it is clear that Engels central intention was not to force metaphysical, dogmatic schema onto phenomena; he himself commented that "outrageous treatment (arises when dialectics are) forced on nature and history (rather than) deduced from them." [7] His concern was to see whether the natural sciences did or did not bear out or necessitate a dialectical materialist ontology and epistemology. In concluding that they did, his mode of expression had, as Loren Graham puts it, "the unfortunate effect of tying Marxism to three codified laws of nature rather than simply to the principle that nature does conform to laws more general than those of any one science, laws that may, whit varying degrees of success, be identified".[8] It is worth noting that these three "laws" (Transformation of Quantity into Quality, Mutual Interpenetration of opposites, Negation of the Negation), which if regarded as general principles of highly abstract nature are valuable and undogmatic guides to thought arise from simplification and reduction of the Hegelian dialectic of a kind which Hegel himself specifically warned against turning into a formula, as reality could be known "only by going through the whole process of self-knowledge." [9].

It is possible therefore to undertake a critical reading of Engels yet uphold his central intention of developing a dialectical materialist ontology of nature on the basis of knowledge provided by scientific research. It is important to distinguish between an attempt to find "the dialectic in nature", from a recognition that the most developed contemporary knowledge of nature conceptualizes it in terms of dialectical processes. For the first, which has been expressed in official versions of Soviet Diamet, "dialectical

laws" are eternal and objective. The second allows knowledge to be seen as part of praxis, and truth as the process of progressive endeavour to forge the unification of subject and object. The emancipatory transformation of social being into a condition of free, collective self-determination entails the simultaneous development of a collective consciousness which renders social being transparent; likewise the conscious evolution of a form of social being that exists in a harmonious metabolism with nature entails a dialectical form of knowledge of nature. The most objective knowledge of available in the contemporary stage of development of social being, coincides with natural scientific project that is orientated not toward domination in society and over nature, but toward social emancipation and non-destructive interaction with nature. It is precisely this aspect of dialectical materialism that is frequently rejected as irrational both within and without Marxism, as in this: we are confronted with the animism and romanticism of the thesis of a dialectics of nature, and here perhaps we can see an important source of thesis` appeal.

The conception of a dialectics of nature seems to promise that, with communism, man realizes himself by harmoniously "fitting into" an overall teleological natural schema. The idealist overtones of this promise should be evident."[10] But it is not at all clear why the idea of social revolution having as its goal the emancipation of humanity in a harmonious metabolism with a dynamic, evolutionary cosmos must be idealist: it is a conception that Marxism takes over from some romantic traditions and transforms.

Collette's view that a dialectical materialist ontology of nature is a metaphysics, a merely formal substitution of material contents for logical categories in Hegel's dialectical idealism,. Is not adequate to understand the "dialectical materialism" of a second International Marxism or Soviet Diamat either for the Hegelian terminology of a Bernstein or a Kautsky, or of Stalin, is largely embroidery around an essentially mechanistic evolutionism these "materialist" theologies are able to gain partial support in Engels, selectively drawn upon, but they are not inevitable developments from Engels (though Colletti is undoubtedly correct that Engel's early critique of Hegel took a different from from that of Marx, and that Engel's early critique of Hegel took a different form from that of Marx, and that his later, less thorough critique made its way into Second International theory when the The German Ideology and other works of Marx were still unpublished). But when Lenin in 1915 "rediscovers" Hegel, rethinks Marx's thesis that idealism has grasped the active side of history, he comes to see Second International evolutionism (social and natural) and also his own previous materialism as tending toward passive mechanical materialism, lacking dialectics in both ontology and epistemology. He retraces, to an extent, Marx´s arrival at historical and dialectical materialism, before Marx's early work available. In criticizing Second International "dialectical materialism" Lenin is not laying the basis for later Soviet Diamat. He is attempting to restore the Marxian dialectic, derived from Hegel and allowing for a nondogmatic dialectical materialism.

The Marxism of Kautsky is one in which history is subject to determinist laws: the goal of history (Socialism) is something predetermined in the sense that positivistic mechanism presumes specific effects are inevitable consequences of given causes and conditions. Though such an outlook could be expressed in an apparently dialectical terminology, and could be made compatible with Hegelian teleology and the imposition of logically deduced stages upon history, it is essentially a thesis of historical necessity derived from pseudo-Darwinian evolutionism. It is not a furthering of Marx`s "Hegelianism" (though as Colleti argues it may come partially from Engels). Lenin from 1915 onwards, and Lukács, Korsch and Gramsci in the 1920´s, rightly reemphasized that Hegel's dialectic is carried over and transformed in Marxist materialism.

The reformist practice of the Second International was linked to a theory of the inevitability of Socialism; the passive awaiting of a pregiven necessity is embedded in a posivistic "prediction" that capitalist relations will "cause" Socialism to come into being. Theory lacked a real dialectic – the "rational kernel" Marx found in Hegel. The notion of contradiction an unity or interpenetration of opposites, which allows the base/superstructure relation to be understood as complex of interactional processes, could be replaced by a narrow economism. The active side of history could be lost: proletarian revolution as conscious intervention, bearer of "aufhebung" or new synthesis from contradiction, a going beyond, a transcendence in a qualitative leap. The failure to grasp society as an active totality allowed an ignoring or underrating of practice outside the restricted spheres of "economics" and "politics":11 reification of consciousness and commodity fetishization of culture were dimly perceived as obstacles ot the active creation of Socialism. Hence the seminal importance of Lukács´ History and Class Consciousness of 1923: whatever its shortcomings, this work saw that socialist revolution must entail the proletariat grasping the totality in consciousness, breaking through reification and fragmentation; carrying the totality into a new form of social being where the collective subject comes to control its life and reappropriate its own powers. In this, philosophy becomes one with the practice of the proletariat: revolutionary praxis reintegrates the totality, reunites thought and being, negates alienation; transforms quantity into quality, formal rationalized reified time into subjective creative time and development, exchange-value into use-value. The lap beyond reification entails an activity and aspiration for a new world, something more than a practice conditioned by narrowly-conceived "objective" determinants of "self-interest".

Second international mechanistic "Marxism" was passively orientated to the inevitability of Socialism arising from the logic of capitalist development. Hence anything that upset the smooth growth of the Party – forced it back into illegality or lost it credibility among the working class – was failing to work "with history." The actual becomes necessary and desirable in some long-term sense for Socialism. Hence Kautsky, even though he did not see militaristic imperialism as necessarily the only means through which capital could secure its expansion, did not insist that the proletariat should resist the First World War and push for a different outcome to the historical crisis.

Notwithstanding Lenin´s dialectical understanding, Bolshevik theory after the October Revolution also became dominated by mechanical materialist conceptions, well-expressed in Bukharin's natural phases of historical development, his belief in the long-term inevitability of the peasants turning to Socialism, his tendency to view productive forces as neutral, his theory of "equilibrium" of industry and agriculture and his empiricist judgments about the relative strength of industry & agriculture as deduced from output statistics. Dialectics are lacking in such conceptions of development of the "economic base" that do not perceive it as mass-determined self-transformative praxis. For the rational interpretation of present constraints cannot predetermine all future possibilities on the other hand policies must help ensure the peasants turn consciously and voluntarily to Socialism. Productive forces cannot be advanced "neutrally"; capitalist forms must be transformed and socialist forms produced. Questions of agricultural and industrial priorities must be seen in terms of a developmental process involving active, voluntarily participating masses: a social, political, cultural as well as economic mancipation and collective determination. In Stalinist mechanism creative dialectics ate fully purged: the "laws of nature" and its subsystem, history are determined by the leadership. The contingent becomes wholly necessary: a forced mobilitzation from above in social, political an cultural spheres is presented as the "natural", (mechanically) unfolding consequence of a similarly forced development of the "socialist base", undertaken by the state.

The mechanistic materialism of Kautskyism and Stalinism is inherent in their ontologies of both history and nature. It is a mistake to link dogmatic historical evolutionism to any commitment to an ontology of nature whatsoever – to blame, on the theoretical level, dialectical materialism for these degenerations of Marxism. What is needed is a restoration of the dialectical, developmental, active an creative dimension in both history an nature. This is linked to the recognition that the natural sciences (like productive forces) are not "neutral": western science in its development from the Renaissance onwards, resting upon a dualist, atomist positivist ontology, is a component of the bourgeois project of domination over society an nature. It is qualitatively different from a dialectically conceived natural science, which is the counterpart to an harmonious metabolism with nature undertaken by "freely associated producers" As noted, this does not involve the dogmatic imposition of "dialectical materialism" upon science, or upon its findings as if from "outside" and schematically. It involves, once again, asking whether modern science is itself unwittingly developing an epistemology and an ontology that are harmonious with dialectical materialism.12 Then, if the answer is in the affirmative, it is to suggest that this ontology and epistemology might usefully inform the orientation of research, might incline investigation in fruitful directions (noting that science is always implicitly informed by some theory); might warn against such errors as reductionism. The Marxian ontology cannot itself determine the direction of scientific research nor decide on the correctness or otherwise of any particular scientific findings; indeed it should maximize an undogmatic orientation to new findings in a spirit of

"doubting everything". It should be clear that the Soviet State's attempts to transform such an ontology into a justification for political directives within science have been features of the peculiar history of the U.S.S.R. Contingent history has been enchained in "objective laws" of nature: dialectical thought has been distorted in ways that allow an arbitrary application of "dialectical principles" to bolster State preferences.

Marxism develops a new conception of "matter and of non-conscious organic life. Whatever the inadequacies in the Marxist formulations of this conception from Engels onwards, the conclusions of Alfred Schmidt, Colletti, Kojève and others that effectively there is no concept of nature in Marx (other than being something that is humanized by society), or that belief in the "dialectics of nature" is a matter of choice as for Sartre, are unacceptable. Inasmuch as the ontology of nature is left to bourgeois (or state technocratic) natural scientific definitions, nature is assumed to be an undeveloping mechanism, metabolism within which can only entail an ever-extending destructive domination. Thus whilst we can agree with Monika Reinfelder in the substance of the following the conclusion, which denounces dialectical materialism as inevitably metaphysical, we cannot:

"It was Engels who first formulated the technicist version of the Marxian legacy. Paradoxically, it was the well-intentioned concern to argue that Marx's thought was nor just ´economic´ which led Engels astray: rather than arguing in the (admittedly daunting) direction that the natural sciences should, via a critique of their theorical status, be incorporate into historical materialism, Engels took the opposite direction and reduced historical materialism to the status of an ´application´ of a broader metaphysical system which, not unreasonably, has become known as ´dialectical materialism´… (which) beings not with specific societies, nor with society in general…. But with ´the most general laws of all motion, laws which must be "valid just as much form motion in nature and human history as for the motion of thought" … Within this metaphysical system, the technological ensemble appears in the indeterminate form of an objective application of man's "rapidly growing knowledge of the laws of nature"; thus "in the most advanced industrial countries we have subdued the forces of nature and pressed them into the service of makind". In this perspective, socialism appears as the relatively simple task of centralized, conscious planning of production… Such is the essence of technicism as bequeathed to Marxism by Engels".13 The question of what were Marx´s views on a dialectical ontology of nature, is interesting but not central. The implications of his critique of philosophy can be worked through whether he was aware of them or not. In fact it would appear that there was uncertainty in his mind on the issue. His close collaboration with Engels and the likelihood that he contributed to the writing of Anti-Duhring (more that in the chapter Engels explicitly attributed to him) suggest that he was in sympathy with the "project" but may not have endorsed Engels´ approach overall or in particular details.

NOTES

1. More precisely, the origins of the Marxist viewpoint are to be found simultaneously in this philosophical critique, the study of history, the assimilation of perceived implication in contemporary developments in the natural sciences (at first in biological evolutionary theory and subsequently in others), and in the identification of the proletariat (in the broadest, universal, i.e. non-empiricist sense) as the potential agent of transformation from alienated and explicative social forms into conscious and free human existence. The unity of thought and reality, of subject and object, is thereby rendered as *praxis*, I take dialectical materialism to denote the new epistemology and ontology of Marxism, and historical materialism as the concrete science of history and society.

2. See T. Cloudsley: Totality and Alienation in Marxist Cultural Theory, paper to the Political Studies Association, Marxism Specialist Group Third Conference September 1985.

3. See especially. L. Colleti: Marxism and Hegel, NLB, 1973 and the Introduction to Karl Marx: Eartly Writings, The Pelican Marx Library, Penguin 1975

4. L. Althusser: For Marx, Verso, 1979

5. See especially G. Lukacs: The Ontology of Social Being, The Merlin Press, 1978

6. Quoted in R. Dunayevskaya: Marx's Capital and Today´s Global Crisis, News and Letters, Detroit, p.19

7. Quoted in J. Hoffman: The Dialectics of Nature: The Natural Historical Foundation of our Outlook, in Marxism Today, January 1977, p,17

8. L. Graham: Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union, Allen Lane, 1966, p. 52

9. Hegel: Encyclopedia of Philosophy, quoted in L.Graham: op cit. p. 51

10. R. Gunn: Is Nature Dialectical? In Marxism Today, February 1977, p.51

11. See T. Cloudsley: Culture in Socialist Strategy for Advanced Capitalism: Some Considerations from the History of Marxist Revolutionary Politics, paper to The international Conference of The Centre for Socialist Theories and Movements at the University of Glasgow, April 1985

12. See T. Cloudsley: The Social Structuration of Time in Thought and Experience, paper to the Association for Social Studies of Time, Institute of Community Studies, London, April 1984.

13. M. Reinfelder: Introduction: Breaking the Spell of Technicism, in P. Slater (Ed.): Outlines of a Critique of Technology, Ink Links Ltd. 1980. pp. 12-13.