

Very Rough Notes from Raya's comments  
on Marx and non-capitalist societies  
at Detroit local. Jan. 13, 1983

(by Mike)

Raya began by asking us to keep three words in mind. First, that absolutely nothing and certainly no revolution, is achieved without passion. Second, that Marx, after the defeat of the Paris Commune insisted that the need was to go lower and deeper. Against the British skilled trade unions, he pointed to the Jews of the East End of London, to the recent arrivals in the city like Irish peasants, to the unskilled. Third, that Reason, revolutionary Reason, is what comes out of passion.

She wanted to take up these words in relation to two periods in Marx and see the differences-- 1847 to 1857, from the Communist Manifesto to the Grundrisse. And then from 1873-1883, Marx's last decade. What is the difference between the two periods? Post-Marx Marxists have never worked it out. How could RL think she was following Mx on the National Question? Marx had praised self-determination for Poland, and RL says this is only because there was no socialist movement then, so you had to be for national movement. Now (1895-1919) there is a socialist movement in Poland, so why should you have to go along with nationalism? We have to go back to what Marx meant by new forces of revolution.

It is immediately tied up with what is Reason. In 1844 Mx points to the weavers' strike and says that it is greater than the French Revol. because in burning the deeds they issued a direct challenge to private property that even those of 1789 didn't. But the question is: what is the meaning of this specific phenomena? That is where Marx goes in the CM 1847. But even in that great work we find that he says that the "Orient is vegetating in the teeth of barbarism".

By the time the Taiping Rebellion breaks out (1850-53) the position is very much different and he is for Asia and against Europe. The question is what are revolutionary forces doing, and not only against what is, but what are they for? Here in the Taiping Rebellion you had a "backward" country encouraging the "advanced" to revolution-- and Marx repeats the formulation in Capital. Raya pointed to two new points of the Taiping Rebellion that attracted Marx: 1) it was against their "own" Manchu dynasty, and 2) it was early opposition to Europe carving up Asia.

The "National Question" in this way was followed by Marx into the 1860s in the establishment of the IWA on Poland and on support for Black America. The Polish freedom fighters of 1863 become the 20,000 heroes of the Paris Commune.

Where did all this get worked out in the 1850s? Look at the Grundrisse, even on something like artisans. To Marx they were suddenly greater than even artists because they combined mental and manual labor in one person. When Hobsbawm publishes Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations he has the nerve to say that what Marx wrote there isn't history. The only thing he and others saw in it was Asiatic Mode of Production. They had to deal with the fact that before they had repeated that all history moved from slavery through feudalism to capitalism. Now Marx was saying that in Asia there was no feudalism, but rather there was the Asiatic Mode of Production. In the 1920s and 1930s when the question first came up after China 1927, they tried to avoid the whole question and the debates became Trotsky vs. Stalin. Only in the 1950s did they finally have to discuss Marx's writings on it, and then they saw only AMP. But we have to see how Marx returns to Hegel in two ways in the Grundrisse. Raya said that the first is on the method of economics. Look at the last page of the work, where he decides to begin with the commodity, instead of what he has done for 900 pages. It is that the movement from Essence to Notion enters in right in the beginning. Rather than continue with the method he had worked out, of advancing from the abstract to the concrete, he wants to begin with the most concrete, the commodity. But it is also a return to Hegel on Subject, and in the highest way that sums up everything, when he says that mankind is in the "absolute movement of becoming".

Now Raya moved to a very different period, after Capital. In that work he had seen the fetishism of commodities in every society that ever lived-- not just in capitalist society. And he had shown the meaning

15681

of the domination of constant capital over variable, in the Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation. "Marxists" are saying it's a universal law, applicable to all societies.

But now Marx returns to non-capitalist lands in the last decade for very different reasons than the first time. He has seen all these new passions and new forces, but seen them in a way that he never saw before, very differently than 1844 when he wrote on Man/Woman. Raya recounted how she said Simone deBeauvoir had done something higher than Marcuse when she took up 1844 as Man/Woman. But what does she do with it? It is only to return to existentialism, to say that only existence counts, that the Other is the enemy Other (the Man), and then to stay with Sartre as the philosopher for our age.

So for Marx in 1844 he was saying that if you want to see how this society is really alienating, even for those calling themselves communists, you only have to look at how you treat the one you love. But now it is something very different: 1) First it is woman as the source of ferment throughout history; 2) it is that woman was freest in societies before capitalism like the Iroquois or ancient Ireland, yet the whole caste system came from within communism. The Iroquois women had the veto power over going to war. But they still could not make decisions or policy. (RD described how after a veto the chiefs would find another war to engage in, or whatever policy they wanted).

In the 1850s Marx had attacked the Asian village which produced all its own needs, saying that that was what prevented development and change. Despotism actually arose out of the common ownership of land and the centralization of control of water. Yet when he returns to this and all questions in the 1870s it is to Subject. He sends Dmitrieva to Paris to form the Committee for the Defense of the Commune. He puts Mme. Law on the CC of the IWA. He attacks the leadership of the IWA for wanting to remain based on the skilled workers only and points to new directions as "lower and deeper", from the Commune to the Russian edition of the CM.

The new moments of the 1850s for Marx were a profound universalization of the view of revolution. But the new moments of the last decade are seen as a concretization of what he had first projected in the Grundrisse as the "absolute movement of becoming".

# NEWS & LETTERS

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Feb. 10, 1983

Dear Raya:

I hardly know where to begin to write you this "Dear Raya" that is not the one you are expecting to read. A possible beginning to that one is attached. I never had so much trouble trying to write something for N&L, and I'm not sure I know why, so I hope you will have the time to help me figure it out by reading this missive. You know, when I sit at my table with stacks of books and xeroxes of articles around me, and scan through my two notebooks created on this subject, I suppose I have a little sympathy for Engels who got overwhelmed by all the new "data" of the anthropologists of his day, and couldn't put the "facts" to the kind of use Marx did. Somehow, it is very hard to find the right form, if form is the right category for the problem.

*RF*  
*Not the data given to Leacock & Vismar*  
*method*

I began to think the problem first was just a question of never having written a "Dear Raya" letter for the paper. How do you write to RD, who has written RLWLKM about the book in a way that really sounds like it's written to you, and yet doesn't assume that the readers have already studied the book? So first I was caught up in that shallow kind of form. But then it seemed to be another sort of problem: do I really know what I want the "subject" to be?

Not the Hegelian subject, but just whether I am concentrating on (1) what is in the EN vs. the view that the Origin incorporates the EN; or (2) what have today's post-Marx Marxists, whether in anthropology or women's liberation or history, etc, written about the EN (or declined to write); or (3) what original contribution to Marxism today has been made on the EN in this book by RD? Well, I think the last is the point, but how to get there, and in a letter addressed to you?

*write all*  
*WLM*

Maybe it would be a little more understandable if I tell you what I have in mind for the piece as a whole, at least the last outline I've tried to work from.

I. In the first part I wanted (it is attached) to set out the contradiction of 10 full years of the EN and the new revolutions that made it so "practical" vs. the overwhelming silence until RLWLKM was published. Here would be included such diverse tendencies as Leacock (the "orthodox"), Godelier (structuralism); and the WL theorists like Landes who have refused to comment on the EN, though they discuss the subject matter of it and discuss Engels all the time. The only way such diverse tendencies could be so united is to each be wedded to a Marx-Engels identity (which is really Engels as anthropologist) for their own reasons-- different ones each. But that in turn only becomes clear within the context of its opposite, namely your original category of PMM... So at that point we have to leave behind those who didn't write and concentrate on those who did and on the EN themselves.

II. There are ~~two~~ *not a but 2 as one K.H. & other* points on the EN where not only does Marx show a very different trail from Engels, but RD shows a very different 1980s view from all others who have written. I don't want to separate those two points. Rather I want to take them up ~~together~~ together on the Man/Woman relationship; on the "Third World" and the Asiatic Mode of Production; and on method, dialectics.

On WL, there is Krader who does the whole transcript plus intro, and yet never confronts "world historic defeat of the female sex"; the question of WLM never appears, thus he misses, despite all erudition, most of the points you chose in the EN on women in primitive commune as tied to the dualities in gens. No connection to living movement, as in relation of Iroquois and Ibo women. Here also vs. Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban who does, unlike WL writers, see major difference Mx/FE, but limits her thrust to getting rid of "matriarchy" and concludes with a call for co-operation between Russian and US anthropologists on "the facts".

15683

III. When one moves to the question of the "Third World" and takes those who are sympathetic to the idea that Marx's last decade was an important new development on this question rather than a "slow death", like Vitkin, nevertheless the presentation is of a Marx who had to break with his own "Europcentrist" past as it supposedly didn't measure up to either new events or new theory (in this case Darwin's articulation of UPI!!). ~~How~~ How far off the rails to go after such great beginnings on "principled new moments". But what it focuses on is the actual relationship between Mx 1850s and 1880s-- that is, as a concretization of revolution in permanence. No one else but RD does this -- in fact whether they dismissed Mx's last decade or praised it as "break", none saw it as connected to a continuing working out of "R in P". Central to that is the key point Mx makes in the EN, which is most incompletely expressed by Krader-- that of no unbridgeable gulf between civilized and primitive. Only when you see this attitude can you also see that Engels' view of the primitive commune is the forerunner of an uncritical "Third Worldism", and see instead its opposite in Marx's letters from Algeria where Moslem resistance to all authority is stressed, but so is the need for a revolutionary movement. (The reference to the Arabian Nights in letter to Lafargue is most intriguing, since previous refs. to it were while writing Grundrisse-- vs. Vitkin.) Here I'm sure I'd never have time to develop what you quote on Mx on Maine's nonsense on Ireland and Irish women, but it is fascinating to follow in EN, since the interest in Irish land and women's rights is exactly at the moment of the Irish Land League uprising and his letters to FE and Jenny on it.

method what I think is crucial to point out is that the divergence of Mx/FE <sup>snf</sup> alone one of WL or Third World, but a question of transitions and the relation of concrete to universal in the EN vs. Origin. Even though Krader sees some of this, it is neither in relation to Subject, nor fully vs. Engels, except as FE's worldview is different than Mx's. Thus there is no category created of Post-Marx Marxists, thus no reason to not stop the quote of Ryazanov before "inexcusable pedantry!"

Vs. PMM is the vision of Marx's last decade as M-Hism was able to express it. In other words, the quote from RD p.187: "How total, continuous, global must the concept of revolution be now?" is not only description of Mx in EN, but of RD in RLWLM.

Dear Raya, I just wrote this "outline" up to give you some feel for the ideas I've been working with. I can't get over the "miracle" of compression that enables you to present the EN in some 10 pages total and really present the key points of Marx in context of the philosophy of revolution 1841-83. I contrast it to even the painstaking Krader and his 80 plus pages who misses so many of the relationships you see. So I wish I knew how to make a miracle of compression that will enable me to present some part of the topic above in 26" or so. Any help you might have time to give would be much appreciated. But if your agenda is too jammed, which it is, I know, I will be sure to get a column in on Feb. 17.

Yours,

DRAFT

Dear Raya:

I hope you will forgive me for confining my letter to one focus of your new book, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution; your treatment of the manuscripts Marx created in the very last years of his life (1880-82) <sup>all</sup> ~~and which we now call the~~ Ethnological Notebooks. That even such a seemingly restricted topic as Marx's excerpts and commentary on new studies in anthropology by Morgan, Maine, Phear, Lubbock and others can nevertheless offer a view of the whole of your work was suggested to me when I realized that this Marx centenary year we have ~~some~~ <sup>not</sup> only come 100 years since the Notebooks were created, ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> a full decade since they were finally transcribed and published in 1972.<sup>1</sup> Looking at the Ethnological Notebooks now, ~~as you have posed~~ <sup>as you have posed</sup> them in your book, thus offers at once a view both of new moments in Marx's last ~~decade~~ <sup>decade</sup> and of today's Marxist and feminist writers in ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> last decade as they were tested: once the Notebooks ~~were~~ <sup>are</sup> available, ~~either with Marx's text or~~ <sup>either with Marx's text or</sup> ten years ago an "audience" seemed ready for such a publication-- an audience that included newly-radicalized anthropologists who had seen Third World ~~revolutions~~ <sup>revolutions</sup> first-hand; feminist ~~writers~~ <sup>writers</sup> and activists who were issuing a stream of works critiquing social science, literature and the Left; as well as Marx scholars who for the first time could view the whole of Marx's work. And in the years since then the upheavals in Southern Africa and Portugal, Iran and Poland, Lebanon and Central America have repeatedly

*(It surely must be since we seem to be very nearly alone = those who had a writer, whether the leader was his or transcribing to the Godeler plus a very different original in the sense of Russian to be - V. I. Lenin - have hardly concerned themselves either with Marx's text or our age's relationship to it)*

*but not*

*M*

*Lucy H. Schick*

*Lucy H. Schick*

offered new challenges to revolutionary thought, often in precisely the areas Marx had probed in the Notebooks-- on the oppression and liberation of women; on the relation of non-capitalist lands to technologically advanced countries; on the peasantry and its forms of organization, on

the world Black Dimension, even in far-off Australia. But today it still remains ~~largely~~ largely unstudied, esp. as of Marx's <sup>work</sup> ~~work~~. Yet today one would have to say that the predominant

attitude of the past decade toward those Notebooks has been

that of a diversity of voices united in silence. The con-

tradictory nature of this diversity is itself revealing,

when it can include: 1) an Eleanor Leacock, who as the ed-

itor of the current English edition of Engels' Origin of

the Family... "updates" and defends Engels and expounds

the long-accepted "Marxist" view that Engels' work "incor-

porated" Marx's Notebooks; 2) "structuralist-Marxists" like

Maurice Godelier, who sharply criticize Leacock's argument,

contending <sup>instead</sup> that in all societies the "top places in the

power hierarchy" have been "occupied by men"; 3) such fem-

inist writers as Joan Landes who cursorily dismiss the Note-

books and re-unite Marx's and Engels' positions in order

to charge them together with "an image of society that

does not differ dramatically <sup>from</sup> that found in patriarchal

theory".

Searching the literature, one asks why, from such di-  
vergent views is there consensus <sup>to</sup> "willfully disregard"

Marx's last writings? Why is there an undercurrent that  
Engels "wrote anthropology", while Marx left us "fragments"?

That each tendency <sup>was driven by a</sup> ~~was~~ determined <sup>to preserve</sup> for its own pur-

poses ~~preserve~~ the myth of a Marx-Engels <sup>(theoretical)</sup> identity ~~is~~

More of a  
struggle  
between

But today it  
is not really  
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raised.

only became clear to me in ~~as~~ I considered it in the light of its <sup>opposite</sup> ~~opposite~~ -- your own explosion of that myth in Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.

That Marx and Engels left us two very different legacies is now proved through a close examination of the Ethnological Notebooks in the context of Marx's body of work in the years after the Paris Commune. Linking together as you do the "Unknown Ethnological Notebooks, the unread drafts of the letter to Zasulich, as well as the undigested 1882 Preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto" and contrasting it to what has been accepted ever since as "Marxism" -- Engels' Origin of the Family, Anti-Duhring, Feuerbach -- ~~clears the way for today's revolutionary~~ thinkers to finally re-discover Marx's philosophy of revolution in its last and most concrete ~~and~~ expression.

*Handwritten notes:*  
This should be...  
How can they be...  
the...  
+ some

*Handwritten notes:*  
Here I circled for transcription to around this place provided the when you force of gets concretized into the...  
It took to mark out Ph W K M  
in some this new moment  
new the creative that <sup>50</sup> ~~Asiatic mode of prod. are not left as "Asiatic" + not in 1850, great as that was, but 3rd World, ex. Algeria, Morocco as KM saw~~

*Handwritten notes:*  
could extend to what none had seen before, incl; R D coupled of feminist dimension, <sup>3rd</sup> forces of rev. both as KM extended and that may lay ground for others, <sup>end of asking certain questions who is to write next, the name</sup>

Mike  
In Nov  
please bring me 1 causal clippings or 5 single pages or article

I

Qs asked by Mike: Do I really know what I want the subject to be? Is it EN vs. Origin? Is it what post-Marx Marxists have written about the EN or have declined to do so? No more thore you know it type of not much  
Is it WL and what they wrote about it or declined to write? type of not much  
Or what original contributions to Marxism have been made on the EN in RLWLKM? The real question is how to get there. That is the alone is the question

II

The attached beginning of a draft tried to present the contradiction of 10 full years of EN and the new rev's vs. the overwhelming silence until RLWLKM. The specific persons to be considered: Leacock, Godellier, Landes, Caroline Fleuhr-Lobban The only way such different tendencies could be so united is that each is wedded to the M/E identity .

To x  
p3

Noting  
There are points on the EN where not only does Marx show a very different trail from Engels, but RD shows a very different 1980s view from all others who have written. "Man/Woman; Thore you know it type of not much  
World; Asiatic mode of prod.; method, dialectics.

Vitkin sees the new moments as a break from KM's past and his Europa-centrism. The whole thing is on the relationship between Marx in 1850s and 1880s. In a word, nobody sees it as a continuing, though it is most incompletely expressed by Krader, especially on the question that there is no unbridgeable gulf between primitive and civilized. Key to everything is being able to develop the little word "when"; "at the moment of" (incidentally RD would like to know exactly when was the Irish Land League uprising. (Cf. last sentence of III). Is every thing a question of transition and the relation of concrete to universal in the EN vs. Origin. Not exactly





The Savage Mind. In a word, what ~~XXXXXXXX~~ I am now going to quote is

What I liked is the way SD articulates academically what we would call Levi-Strauss' concept of the "backwardness of the masses." "Levi-Strauss reveals himself as a partisan of the unique theoretical superiority of an immaculately abstract and analytic logical-deductive science of the ultimate forms of reality which has reached its senith in Western civilization." He brings in how Karl Marx gives the West credit for technological revolutions to how he hates them so much that he prefers the Irish peasants: "Marx anticipated and worked toward a revolution ..." "Even historical materialism was, of course, not conceived as a contribution to academic social science; it was supposed to sharpen its wits in praxis and lose itself in revolutionary success.

I do completely disagree with making Marx the completer of the tradition of Rousseau, but he never gives up on the critique of academia. Thus, on p. 421 he writes: "Relativism is the bad faith of the conquerer, who has become secure enough to become a tourist."

(Result of the penultimate para. on p. 422 on Levi-Strauss as the "anthropologist of his time".)

(Incidentally, though he hasn't made me like FEmore, he does quote a para. I do not recall that is quite excellent on the Zulus who did greater things than the European Army. It's from the 1902 ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ edition of O of F. pp. 117 to ? )

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March 11, 1983

Begin  
LTP  
P2

Dear Raya:

In asking for a few paragraphs and some quotations from Godelier and three others (American) anthropologists, and then specifying that they must be formal academicians, bourgeois, the task is very difficult indeed. The fact is that in the 10 years since the EN was published very little comment at all by bourgeois anthropologists has been made on the EN-- whether friendly or critical. It is some importance to note that the American Anthropologist (the loftiest and oldest of the anthropological journals) never reviewed the EN. This despite the fact that they review some 200-300 works a year, at least briefly. Nor has any comment on the EN of any substantial nature appeared in any article in AA since 1972. (They did review Krader's AMP in 1977 in an article by Michael R. Dove of Stanford, who offered virtually no comment on the Marx Notebooks on Kovalevsky included.)

This does not mean that there is no discussion of Marx (or Marxism) in anthropology today. For the first 90 or so years since Marx, his name really was anathema in anthropology, except to a small group of mostly CP-oriented ones. Even the "Morganists" (like Leslie White) kept far away from anything on Marx. The best-known exception was V. Gordon Childe, whose Man Makes Himself was cast in a Marxist mold (at least Childe said so). But the main tradition was exemplified by such as Robert Lowie, whose 1937 History of Ethnological Theory was explicitly anti-Marx. In 1968 Marvin Harris (Columbia Univ.) wrote a new history of the field called the Rise of Anthropological Theory in which he stated: "it would have been closer to the truth had it been stated that cultural anthropology developed entirely in reaction to, instead of independently of, Marxism". This oft-quoted sentence was used by the "new wave" of Marxist anthropologists to emphasize their break with the past. Harris himself expressed the view that Marx's method needed to be purified of what he termed the "Hegelian genkey on Marx's back" if it was to be useful, and he called his school of anthropology "cultural materialism". It is an entirely empiric, eclectic approach based on his interpretation of base/superstructure in the CCPE. You might run into followers of Harris at New School, such as Jefferey Ehrenreich, who is currently writing that Marxists in anthropology should concentrate on "infrastructure causality". None of these anthropologists has written on the EN.

That appears to be the case also with the French (structuralist-Marxists), of whom Maurice Godelier is clearly the best representative and most influential. I can't find any reference by him to the EN, though I haven't been able to see all the writing in French. (nothing in English translation anyway.) However, you are familiar with his 1981 article in NLR on the "Origins of Male Domination", where he attacks Leacock's illusions on women's freedom in pre-class societies, and paraphrases Marx: "We might say that the dominant ideas in most societies are the ideas of the dominant sex, associated and mingled with those of the dominant class. In our own societies, a struggle is now under way to abolish relations of both class and sex domination, without waiting for one to disappear first."

In his collection of essays, Perspectives on Marxist Anthropology (Cambridge 1977), there is a long extract from the introduction he wrote to a Marx/Engels collection, Sur les sociétés precapitalistes (1970). Here it is called "An attempt at a critical evaluation", and is limited to 25 pp. Much of Godelier on Marx is con-

cerned with a critique of Marx on "infrastructure and superstructure" i.e. that institutions are analyzed by function; kinship, for example, functions as "relations of production" (as Godelier says, in most pre-capitalist societies) they are included in infrastructure, if they function as ideology, they are superstructural. But I think this one essay on Marx is much more interesting than the bulk of Godelier, since he has to take up Marx's texts, including some mention of writings in the last decade, if not the EN. The essay I'm referring to is pp. 99-124. Extracts follow:

"In 1880 analyses of the Russian Commune (which had ~~increased~~ increased since 1870), the former Teutonic community reconstituted by Maurey and revealed to Marx in 1868, and knowledge of Kovalevsky's works, all lead Marx to elaborate a new concept, the rural commune, and to incorporate a far more complex scheme: the position and significance of the Hindu, Russian, Teutonic, etc. communities."

"Asia becomes rejuvenated in this scheme and agricultural communities appear in a more dynamic light..."

Godelier then says: "In 1883-84 the discovery of Morgan's work changed this scheme of primitive history again! No Marx's abstract, much less EN, and there is no separation at all between Marx and Engels. In fact, Anti-Duhring is given credit for independently generalising the idea of functional power being transformed into oppressive power and by outlining two ways of arriving at the State-- one leading to despotic forms of the state, the other to western forms of class societies..."

Godelier says that Marx's "evolutionary scheme" from 1845 to 1884 (Origin) is distinguished by continuity: "On India and the Orient, Marx's wealth of reflections is such that to this day, he, together with Maine (!) may be regarded as the first to have drawn Asia into the forefront of historical consideration" Godelier goes on to say that Marx's "theoretical richness" is explained by the fact that he and Engels "were ready to receive with open arms all discoveries made by others". He then goes into many pages of showing how new data made many of Marx's or Engels' anthropology now out-dated. He does cite Marx's answer to Mihailovsky against anthropologists who want to say that Marx puts all primitive communism into one group, arguing that "to call them (ancient Ghana, Polynesia, Aztecs) all examples of primitive communism is to disregard essential differences..."

There is also a discussion of Asiatic mode of production which calls it a "transition from classless to class societies", emphasizing not the central power, but communities with collective possession of the means of production. Using this definition, he says, the AMP has great application today. However, in his attempt to separate the "dead parts" of Mx and FE from the living, he says that the dead was Mx's idea that the AMP represented 1,000 years of stagnation: "Of course, in 1881, the rural community, the basis of 'oriental despotism', appeared in a new light, dynamic, rejuvenated; but the weight and influence of previous arguments outbalanced this new aspect which was not developed".

Not surprisingly he ends by saying that we don't have to argue whether to return to Marx, since we have already gone beyond him in scientific terms.

To return to the USA and its anthropologists, there has been one arena where discussion of the EN is at least existent. That is in the "respectable" journal Current Anthropology. Much of the discussion, which has been persistent nearly every year since 1976 has been stimulated by Krader, but others have commented as well, including a lengthy controversy over Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban's 1979 work "A Marxist Reappraisal of

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the Matriarchate" (vol. 20: 341-359). Fleuhr-Lobban does have a long discussion of the EN as the main basis for her jettisoning the concept of the matriarchate. She does pose sharp differences between Marx and Engels (mostly from Krader), and does separate their relationship to Morgan: "A reading of Marx's excerpts from Ancient Society in the EN reveals that while Marx was generally more favorable to Morgan's work than to that of Lubbock, Phelar and Maine, he did not have the same regard for Morgan as did Engels. The centrality of private property of "civilized" society in Morgan's scheme was for Engels a reason to claim that Morgan independently discovered the materialist interpretation of history. Marx was more skeptical." Also: "Marx's perception of the dialectic in early human society focused on the contradictions in the internal structure of the gens and not on the struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal forces".

However, Fleuhr-Lobban ends up with the quagmire of "facts", suggesting that Cooperation between US and Russian anthropologists on data may shed light on the origins of male domination, since the Russians have for some time viewed Morgan's work critically. (By the way, they didn't return the compliment, but attacked her.)

In the debate which followed, which included CP'ers, women's liberationists, Godelier followers, and conservatives, Joan Landes expressed the point of view of feminist social science vs. (or independent of) Marx. There is a whole school of anthropologists (she cites many of them) who more or less reject Marx (which is usually Engels) and then go on to theorize from a 1970s WL perspective (Dalla Costa, Rowbotham). In this case Landes is the one, and she denies serious differences between Marx and Engels, saying that he was not entirely free of the prejudices of his age regarding women in society or their position on the "original" families of the human past. It is hard to believe that she read the EN because she attacks the idea of unlimited women's freedom in primitive communism as though that were Marx's idea, contending that women have been oppressed in all societies (vs. Leacock). She charges that in German Ideology Marx and Engels posed a "natural division of labor, based on sexual differences and the ability of women to bear children. This image of society does not differ dramatically from that found in patriarchal theory."

The most popular book of this school (widely used now) is Rayna Rapp Rether's Toward an Anthropology of Women (Monthly Review, 1975). It is a collection of essays with varying perspectives, including a re-examination of the Origin, but not a word on the EN. Rayna Rapp is now at New School (as is Diamond).

You might want to know something of the comments of three others as they appeared in the debates in Current Anthropology. One is Peter J. Newcomer (Univ. of Manitoba-- Vitkin's school). His comments against Ernest Gellner center on Marx's distinction between "exploitation" and "division of labor". Newcomer cites the EN as showing that "exploitation has a history, and is in no way an eternally necessary aspect of the human condition." The EN show, he says, that primitive society was non-exploitative, since surplus-product was not extracted without the needs or wishes of the producers. (Current Anth. 16:607, 1975)

Another who is prominent is Morton Fried (Columbia), well-known non-Marxist. Fried takes the same section on Theseus that Marx commented on in the EN, and uses it to show Morgan a "materialist" -- i.e. on "property relations" as the key to class development. He doesn't

*True!*  
see anything on what this means for Marx's very sharp difference with both Morgan and Engels on the theory of the gens: "It is clear that Engels did not misrepresent Morgan, and we can readily understand the basis for Marx's admiration". (Current Anth. 22:33, 1981).

Lastly, I just want to note that most of the comment on Marx by anthropologists even today is not of the type cited above. The predominant opinion is expressed as a view that Marx writings on anthropology were "fragments"; that he didn't know much; that the field was new then and now they know so much more; and even (a very important element) that Marx shared racist, sexist, Euro-centered views with most others of the day. Rüdiger Schott (U. of Münster, West Germany) got a lot of support for his attack on Marx and Engels in (1976). Denying anything but the highest esteem for Morgan on Marx's part and identifying him with Engels, Schott went on to charge that Morgan's division of the world into savages, barbarians and civilized people was Marx's also: "Has it ever occurred to any Marxist that these categories reflect the ideology of European colonialism and imperialism?" He cites Lowie's (1937) attack on Marxism.

Raya, I know that you wanted more substantive direct comments on the EN by those other than Krader, Vitkin, Diamond and Rodinson. There isn't much, frankly, so I hope that what I've given you has been of some help.

Yours,

Mike *Mike*

Key ST3 *discussibility = 1/11 "begin" Vision [1, 2] report*  
*Wenker ... "EN" = Mediated Ground*

Mike's letter to me of 3/11/83 on anthropology, beginning with the oldest journal, American Anthropology, which never even bothered to review the EN, tho it did praise his "Asiatic Mode of Production!"

✓ Marvin Harris, Columbia U., 1968, extolled his "cultural materialism" IN OPPOSITION TO MARX'S.

✓ Jeffrey Ehrenreich, New School, called upon "Marxists" to concentrate on "INFRASTRUCTURE CAUSALITY." *off freedom, no against*

\*\*\*\*\* *leave figure 2, recent*

✓ MAURICE GODELIER: (1) The article I do know from the NLR 1981 with a good name and a horrible context: "Origin of Male Domination" and (2) "Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology," 1977 which quotes at length from his own introduction to the 1970 collection of Marx-Engels writings on pre-capitalist societies, which this time he

calls "an attempt at a critical evaluation" pp 99-124. He supposedly opposes what he attributes to Marx, a simplistic infrastructure/superstructure, by claiming ~~kinship~~ KINSHIP is the equivalent of "a relation of production" in pre-cap societies. *then we can call it an infrastructure, and*

*if* infrastructure is equivalent to ideology, then it is super-structure. The only thing that is interesting is the way that

MG, in summarizing the decade 1870-1880, shows Marx basing himself on the latest, first on Maurel, which KM came to know (1868) and thus a form of Neutonic reconstruction, then KM

got to know Kovalesky, and finally EN. WHERE MG HAS THE GALL TO SPEAK OF KM & THE ENTIRE PERIOD FROM 1845-1884 OF "KM TOGETHER WITH MAINE", but does say that on the basis of that last decade

*HZ*

KM elaborated A NEW CONCEPT OF THE RURAL COMMUNE: "Asia becomes rejuvenated in this scheme, and their cultural communities appear in a more dynamic light." Funniest here is that when he gets to ancient society, which makes that structuralist MG speak of yet another "scheme", he then says that it was not KM, but FE *who/ly* in Anti-Durhing who should be given credit for "independently *show*" generalizing the idea of functional power <sup>v.05</sup> that transformed into ~~the~~ oppression, so that you have 2 ways of arriving at the concept of state, ~~and~~ leading to despotic forms, and the other ~~to~~ Western forms of class society. No wonder all he can conclude is that Marx is outdated!

Caroline Fleur-Lobban's 1979 "A Marxist Reappraisal of the Enslavement" does recognize the existence of the EN and the difference between KM and FE, only to end with the "great discovery" that what is really needed is for the U.S. and Russian anthropologists to work together.

On the other hand, Joan Landes calls for the feminist social scientists to work independently of Marx and begins basing herself on the 1970 writings of Rowbotham and Della Costa.

The most popular so-called Marxist (of Monthly Review variety) RAYNA RAPP REIDER, "Toward an Anthropology of Women." Her 1975 work she has not a word to say on the EN. She may be to New School.

Finally, Peter J. Newcomer, who is with Vitkin at Manitoba in Current Anthropology, (1975) claims that the EN shows primitive society to be non-exploitative. Finally, 2 other

Marxists in 1981, were Morton Fried, Ch. H. + L. ...  
Ridiger Schitt



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May 24, 83  
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Dear Neda:

Here are some notes on The Savage Mind by Claude Levi-Strauss (1962). But first it is necessary to say that Levi-Strauss is quite influenced by the writings of Saussure, a 19th century French structuralist (neo-Grammarian). Saussure believes that language precedes all human thought rather than being secondary to it. It is the relation between units of language that forms thought. To him, language only consists of signs and signifiers (concepts). It is the code set up by institutions which gives everything a sign and a meaning (concept). Only the institutions can create codes (this is called the act of encoding); the role of the rest of the society is to "decode", i.e. interpret signs according to the code set up from above. Most people are code users rather than code creators, and the most they can do to create their freedom is to play around with grammatical structures.

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For Levi-Strauss who comes from this background, all history is a conceptual system, a code. It is not "praxis" but the code which leads to "practice". There is no revolutionary change. Rather, new pieces of information graft on to the old original principles and modify the code. Levi-Strauss calls this book The Savage Mind however, because he is very excited about the way primitive human beings explain the world by classifying all phenomena. The whole book thus consists of L-S's research and experiences with different tribes and their systems of classification. The primitive mind, takes natural phenomena to create myths (a very important category in this book). It divides categories into elements and then species. It creates one scheme which leads to other schemes. Thus, LS views human history as the end process of the human mind creating conflicts, myths and yet more conflicts. For him, it becomes quite acceptable to view society as an organism with different parts. All social divisions become acceptable. In many instances LS does discern the divisions in the primitive commune giving rise to greater divisions in later societies. For example totemism (fetishizing one object) leading to the caste system. Or divisions between the chief and ranks or the fact that in Yoruba, the verb for to eat, and to marry is expressed in a single verb: to win, to acquire (I'm bringing out these examples but LS doesn't emphasize them). However, such divisions are used to show the genius of the human mind in creating classifications. Moreover, LS doesn't see any differences between a scientific division (eg. classifying flowers into different species) and a social division.

In our society, class conflicts are again temporarily overcome by the human mind constantly creating myths in order to live through capitalism. These myths allow us to transcend the contradictions. We over-value and under-value some aspects of life. Marxism for example, is a myth in so far as it overvalues the proletariat. LS here doesn't see any revolutionary consciousness on the part of the people. "Codes" are not fundamentally changed, systems are not overthrown, they are just modified.

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What is key to LS in the process of modifying codes is analytical reason. In a long argument with Sartre, he proves that dialectical reason is nothing but analytical reason. The more you attempt to discover dialectics in history, the more facts you need. And these facts would in turn bring about new facts until you realize that no conclusions can be reached about the movement of history until you go back to the biological, hormonal, chemical, physical origins of human actions. Thus, as opposed to Sartre who claims that you can restore all details to history and still maintain a dialectical structure, LS believes that in discovering details there is no dialectic. Only units of information and classification are to be discovered.

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Next, LS attempts to prove that there is a fundamental anti-path between history and systems of classification. "Thought is powerless to extract a scheme of interpretation from events long past" because a scheme would imply that you censor some information and automatically present a biased view. Structuralism which only goes to the past in order to discover more details is thus an alternative to historicism which only discovers certain details. There are therefore too many classifications and too many contradicting human desires which do not let us any conclusions about the trend of human history: "(I) reject the equivalence between the notion of history and the notion of humanity making historicity the last refuge of a transcendental humanism as if men could regain the illusion of liberty on the plane of the 'we' merely by giving up the 'I's that are too obviously wanting". As LS says: "a truly total history would cancel itself out" when it realizes that a historical fact or what "really" took place in that past is just a limited point of view. LS admits that there is a before and after in history but the significance of these two categories lies in their reflecting each other. "In so far as history aspires to meaning, it is doomed to select". That limited point of view is only a point of departure: "history may lead to anything provided you get out of it".

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With such an absolute disregard for oppressive social relations, much less a theme of revolt in human history, it is not surprising to see that LS views civilization heading toward a "magic equilibrium line". Since all human mind and history is a process of digitalization and classification, when the system comes to a halt, it will do so "not because of unforeseen obstacles or jamming of its mechanism but because it has completed its course and wholly fulfilled its function" i.e. because all has been digitalized and there is nothing left to do!

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For the time being and before everything in the system is classified, LS wants to restore some aspects of the primitive society as a solution to the "conflict between cultures" existing in the present world.

By restoring the savage mind, a more active relation of classification can be forged between cultures and nature. This savage mind, far from being domesticated like today's human beings, wants to classify everything and create new codes.

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2. Some remains of the savage mind can still be traced in art which attempts to analyze and synthesize at the same time.

3. Scientism is a parallel to the savage mind because it classifies and reclassifies nature.

Ultimately LS vies our salvation in science and analysis. But his method of thought is one whose consequences we are facing in today's nuclear madness and inhuman scientism.

S.

Ude (#1)

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Dial. Anth 1: 1-5  
1975

Journal of Anthropology 1 (1975) 1-5  
Mouton Scientific Publishing Company, Amsterdam Printed in The Netherlands

### THE MARXIST TRADITION AS A DIALECTICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Stanley Diamond

This journal is a significant episode in a... effort to resurrect and redefine the... tradition, and constitutes the beginning... comprehensive critique of the anthropo-... aspect of academic social science. But... neither difficult nor particularly courageous... destroy the pretensions of academic social... there is more at issue here than that... goal is to re-evaluate the whole tradition... here I must speak for myself in the... that express the common sense of the... of which Marx became the critical... That tradition gathers social... the eighteenth century, in the paradig-... and wide-ranging work of Rousseau... among the utopian socialists in bour-... revolutionary Europe, and is trans-... a conscious revolutionary under-... Marx several decades later with the... of industrial capitalism. The under-... is critical and dialectical, both with... reference to method and praxis. Its purpose is... revolutionary reconstruction of contem-

... understood this continuity well. Already in... therefore, we find not only a sequence of ideas... which corresponds exactly with the sequence developed in... that the correspondence extends also to... using a whole series of the same dialectical... Marx used: processes which in their nature... contain a contradiction, are the transfor-... extreme into its opposite; and finally, as the... whole process, the negation of the negation... Rousseau was not yet able to use the... was certainly, twenty-three years before... deeply involved in the - S.D. ] dialectics

Professor of Anthropology, Graduate... of Social Research, New York.

porary Western civilization in all its basic... related aspects: the dialectical method and the... deep historical perspective illuminate the need... while contributing to, that end.

The tradition which Marx inherited, trans-... formed, and furthered is the only significant... context for radical thought and action. And it... has so saturated the modern consciousness... that even bourgeois apologists, wittingly or un-... wittingly, are prone to use its language, and... sometimes plagiarize its concepts, while bowd-... lerising its intention. No other modern thinker... has been so quoted and misquoted, appropriated... and misappropriated, rejected and embraced... invoked, in the religious, or better, magical... sense. This sort of reification is entirely con-... trary to the spirit of Marx which needs to be... rescued from the compulsive attentions of the... official and unofficial fetishists. Marx is no... more responsible for the crimes committed... in his name than Freud is for the excesses of... custodial psychiatry, or primitive Christianity... for the Crusades, the Inquisition, or the Index.

It is a sign of the desperation of the modern... consciousness, of the rage to believe against... the ground of despair, that so many people... and so many political establishments converge... to so few seminal ideas, trimming and manip-... ulating them to their own ends. The distortion... of Marxism is a result of its incorporation into... dominant power structures, and the consequent... reduction of its method to a tactic, of its... perspective and purpose to an iconography.

Marxism, then, must be distinguished as a... critical instrument from the ideological... Marxism which has become a rationalization

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Marxist anthropology about... *(Handwritten notes)*

*(Handwritten notes on right margin)*

throughout the Third World and the tremendous Chinese experience have already shattered the dogma that Euro-America's present, or better, past, is the necessary future of most of the people of the world -- should they be fortunate enough to attain to capitalism out of their "feudal" history or, in so-called socialist terms, to attain to capitalism in order eventually to negate both it and their archaic heritage. But the human and cultural resources of the people whose future is so easily theorized about have been overlooked; and anthropology, even in the Marxist tradition, has a certain responsibility for failing to formulate the question except in a positivist or grossly relativistic perspective.

Although there is no Marxist ethnology in the sense I have been talking of, there is a Marxist anthropology. The Marxist tradition can be taken as an anthropology which was ported by the rise of academic social science, including academic Marxism, and the stultifying division of intellectual labor involved in the very definition of the civilized academic structure, whether right, left, or center. (I have already alluded to the parallel phenomenon, namely, the reduction of Marxism to a tactical ideology.) In order to further clarify the position I am developing, I tentatively propose the following perspective on Marxism, which defines the inherently anthropological range and meaning of the tradition, but is not intended to exhaust or supplant the well-known classic definition: Marxism is the dialectical method for discovering the self-reinforcing and/or contradictory connections among all significant aspects of sociocultural life in the order of their importance (their "concrete totality"), in particular times and places, with reference to the possibility and necessity of revolutionary social change. Marxism conceives these institutional connections as developing historically, beneath the surface of the human consciousness which they determine. Its purpose is to bring this ensemble of social life into the forefront of consciousness, so as to reveal the dynamics and the sources of the exploitation

of self and other, the diminishment of what Marx, adopting Feuerbach's phrase, called "species being." Marxism is, therefore, a dialectically sophisticated historical anthropology with a revolutionary conscience, an anthropology that refuses to isolate theory from practice and rejects the notion of the privileged position of the observer.

Marx, of course, was neither a practitioner of any particular discipline nor a professional academic. His lifelong purpose was to concretize the vision of human possibilities which he developed as a young philosopher. This involved a search for the basis of social exploitation, the ruthless shearing off of mere rationalization and fantasy about the human condition, the refusal to accept the authenticity of any solution to the problem of civilization that was not grounded in institutional reality. He was compelled to study the whole range of social phenomena in order to locate the oppressive realities, no matter how masked, evaded, or ideologically "resolved." In this anthropological endeavor he called upon the human past in order to understand the present and develop a project for the future. He began with a vision and ended, just before his death, with the ethnological notebooks.

This sequence, mediated by the *Grundrisse*, helps dispel the notions of those who believe in a schizoid split between the young and old Marx. What we are confronted with is a maturing Marx, whose later years were devoted to the hard work of bringing his hopes and speculations down to earth. It is not useful for Althusser, for example, to tell us of the two Marxes (young and idealistic, old and materialistic), while rationalizing the chronological overlap in terminology, concern, and perspective by doubling back -- denying the importance of chronology -- then referring to the "break" as representing the two sides of Marx's nature, the inferior versus the superior. Of course, all reflective human beings in civilization reveal this two-sidedness -- a vision of the possible.

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translated into a program for achieving it. But Marx realized this dialectically and on an unprecedented scale, emerging as he did at a critical moment in the conflict between a libertarian intellectual tradition and the development of imperialist society: his thought, and his language, thus attained a universal dimension.

But Marx no more considered himself infallible than he considered history as essentially determined; he denied that he had worked out "a historic-philosophical theory of the general path that every people is fated to tread." His communism lay in his politics; the basis of revolutionary change; his politics lay in his understanding; his understanding flowed from his vision, his experience in the world, and his hard, grinding, endless, detailed work as philosopher, sociologist, historian, economist, psychologist, critic, and political activist. As all of these and, because all of these, none of these (anticipating his holistic definition of humans in a communist society), he grew large enough to regenerate the tradition which had generated him. In his work he realized the integral task of anthropology and chose himself as a marginal man at the very moment that the traditions which had impelled him were beginning to shift into a reductive and academic professionalism.

I conclude that Marx cannot be reduced to the text which is subject, like all texts, to both contrary and complementary interpretations, based in part on the paradoxes that vein every major intellectual effort, in part on impenetrable passages, the flexible use of words and the passion that lies behind them, a passion that is never so evident as when it seems to be missing in the unsentimental, dense, and relentlessly accurate prose. What interests us is Marx's intention, not the search for the word, nor the ferreting out of exotic details, nor Jesuitical exegesis. They result in paralysis and, perhaps by design, they lead to the substitution of academic debate for action, or any particular action. The dialectic between theory and the

immediate life of a particular time and place is thereby broken: theory is diminished to speculation, speculation to semantics, semantics may finally descend to grammar, so that the meanings of the text ultimately dissolve in the study of the text itself.

Nor can Marxism be reduced to an economics. Marx used, while sharpening, certain analytic tools in order to lay bare the fundamental nature of exploitation, primarily in modern Western civilization. But he did not reduce human existence to a series of economic, much less ecological, imperatives. He worked as an economist not becoming an economist - because under capitalism persons had in fact been reduced to alienated economic objects on a scale, and in a depth, hitherto unprecedented. That is the distortion in the web of social relations, the inhibition of the creation of culture. Therefore it became, and remains, necessary to explore every ramification of this socially repressive economic determination of our lives. Marx deployed economic analysis not as a positivistic disciplinarian, not in an irresponsible and impossible effort abstractly to prove this or that theory, but as a revolutionary student of humanity concerned with the emancipation of the species from economic bondage, the antithesis of its reduction to an economic reflex.

Correlatively, Marxism cannot be reduced to a science in the Western, abstract-academic, logic-deductive, hypothetical-propositional, ultimately positivistic, sense. I need not repeat that Marx was a dialectician who denied the existence of laws determining a universal history.

More fully, Marx states in response to the Russian populist N.K. Mikhailovsky: "I have to transform my sketch of the origins of capitalism in Western Europe into a historical-philosophical theory of a universal movement necessarily imposed upon all peoples, no matter what the historical circumstance in which they are placed, and which will lead, in the last resort, to an economic system in which the greatly increased productivity of social labor will make possible the harmonious development of man. But I must protest!"

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And certainly Marxism cannot be reduced to the reflections of a salient revolutionary personality on its discoveries, meanings, implications, possibilities. Lenin's Marx was not Stalin's Marx; Mao's Marx is neither Lenin's nor Stalin's, nor even recognisably "Western" in important respects. We even hear that Engels' Marx (Engels - his lifelong friend, collaborator, supporter, and executor of his manuscripts) did not reflect the Marx that Marx intended, or did not do so nearly as well as this or that commentator. And that may very well be the case: the onion can be peeled indefinitely. For there is no essential Marx: Marx cannot be reduced to the essence of Marx, as Marx himself rather impatiently indicated. There is only a man of "genius" designation which he would have devaluated who immeasurably deepened our historical sense of human possibilities at a time when the crisis in modern capitalism both at home and its imperial hinterland was becoming evident. And in the course of his reflections he became revolutionary.

There is Marx-Engels  
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Thought & reflection

He left us an implicit and explicit vision of humanity, a refined and fruitful method of social analysis, a catalogue of social insights, a profound sense of history, the framework of an anthropology, and a revolutionary purpose. That is the spirit in which this journal is offered. Anthropology cannot exist detached from the Marxist tradition and the Marxist tradition cannot survive its detachment from an anthropology that stubbornly insists on searching out the needs, possibilities, and revolutionary imperatives of the human race.

NOTES

- 1 Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1939), pp. 153-154
- 2 Engels, Letter to Karl Kautsky (November 12, 1882), in Lewis S. Feuer, ed., *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1969), pp. 509-510.
- 3 Reply to Mikhailovsky, in Bottomore and Rubel, eds., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (London, 1963), p. 37.

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does me too much honor, and at the same time discredits me. Let us consider an example. In *Capital* I have referred on several occasions to the fate which overtook the plebeians in ancient Rome. The Roman proletarians did not become even poorer by an idle class more abject even than the proletariat of the southern States of the U.S. They were given up a system of production which was not capitalist, but was based on slavery."



One of the limitations of anthropology is that such dimensions can be neglected (p. 836). An implication of such an interpretation would be that anthropologists do not have the right to raise philosophical and ethical issues entailed by acceptance of responsibility. In the early days of the cold war, Kenneth Burke cogently envisioned the consequences of such a view (1950:27-31). One would think that we are all too familiar with them now.

Perhaps to consider such a dimension part of anthropology is to seem to advocate a doctrinaire orthodoxy. Yet previously Kaplan criticized my personalist view, and at the end of his review comes close to the view which informs the book, seemingly without recognizing the fact. His penultimate paragraph sums up well with just two small changes. Kaplan wrote:

Each of us, I believe, has to work out his own answers to these questions, in terms of the moral traditions one considers relevant, as best he/she can. For to demand of anthropology that it provide us with a moral and political code by which we can order and conduct our lives is a form of scientism.

We need only to change it as follows in order to see the similarities:

Each of us, I believe, has to work out his own answers to these questions, as best he/she can. For to demand of anthropology that it ignore the moral and political codes by which we can order and conduct our lives is a form of scientism.

Kaplan refers at one point to "intellectual traditions now so harshly maligned and dismissed" (p. 830). I would hope that my use of *Bas* as reference point would make clear that blanket rejection of traditions has nothing to do with my own views, even if acquaintance with my work in the history of anthropology and linguistics did not. I do not think that the charge applies to most other contributors either. I am proud of the depth of humanistic concern that the authors bring to their essays.

Finally, I am sure that Kaplan regrets the reference to Aryan science against Jewish physics (p. 829), and the comment on Diamond's view of primitive culture that is open to interpretation as "red-baiting" (p. 825), thus fainting the book with the ghosts of Hitler and Stalin. The first seems particularly unfortunate in that several of the contributors are Jewish and some are refugees from Hitler's Europe. As to the second, it is clearly stated in the book (p. 8) that "Only a few of the contributors to this book

would associate themselves with that tradition." Of those who would, that tradition includes both aspects of Marx but also Stanley Moore with which I class my remarks, indeed, explicitly rejects what Kaplan seems to impute.

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1950. A Rhetoric of Motives. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

AA 77-870-875 (1975)

Anti-Kaplan:

Defining the Marxist Tradition

STANLEY DIAMOND  
New School for Social Research  
BOB SCHOLTZ  
University of Minnesota  
ERIC WOLF  
Lehman College, CUNY

One does not anticipate a knowledge of the response from any establishment that is under attack. Academicians who are reluctant to inquire into their own motives are ill equipped to assess radical and dissenting alternatives to analytic scientism in cultural anthropology. They distort or suppress the past intellectual tradition that coincides with *Vico* and *Rousseau*, pass through *Herder* and *Kant*, becomes explicitly dialectical in *Hegel*, politically committed in *Marx*, and re-oriented contemporaries with *Lukács*, *Sartre*, and many others. Like all exclusively analytic thinkers, Kaplan deals in discrete and rigid entities: self and other, subject and object, committed or uncommitted, scientific or metaphysical beliefs.

In his review of *Rousseau*, *Levi-Strauss* (1972:114, 123-124) writes that we are voluntaristic, that we are subjective and therefore irrational, idealistic, metaphysical. Such a psychological reduction of what is in fact an epistemological argument is impermissible. The separation between subjectivity and objectivity does not exist in the dialectical tradition; such a categorical separation reflects mechanistic imagination, which, in turn, betrays an essential idealism.

Kaplan's remarks about Diamond's essay and the interpretation of Marx are symptomatic of his *modus operandi*. First of all Marx is nowhere treated as an "inspirational

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76-870-875 (1975)

Quin in Diamond's essay for any where else in the book) is conceived, rather, as the paradigmatic figure of the revolutionary. In the non-academic, intellectual tradition of the nineteenth century, a constellation of the enlightenment and he is approached with a different attitude. Although Diamond's essay is substantially addressed to the question of an analogy in the mode of Rousseau and Marx, his definition of Marxism, far from avoiding the "contradictions of capitalism," as Kaplan maintains, is as follows:

If [Marxism] can be defined at all it is as a theory of social possibilities. It is, therefore, dialectic in method and must be distinguished from all types of educative materialism or technological determinism... that is, Marxism is based on the social process of exploitation in terms of class conflict; the question of class consciousness becomes the critical political question... it is only when men act politically, not only through aesthetic or religious symbols to change the economic basis of their lives, in accord with their "truly human" interests that they may begin to make history [Hymes 1972:416-417]

For a discussion of surplus value which Kaplan claims to put part of his review lexicon, we refer to the review of the book (1974, esp. pp. 9-12) which concludes that Marxism, indeed all revolutionary theory must base itself on the fact of "surplus" exploitation. This does not mean that the conventional Marxist analytical categories are invariably applicable to the understanding of primitive societies since such categories have developed within the revolutionary critique of capitalism. How ever, the ethnological project remains Marx-ist precisely because it is a project that may be applied to the analysis of the primitive. (1972:114, 123-124)

More generally, Kaplan is concerned about the relationship between the early and late Marx, a question which he connects the early Marx to Rousseau, whose name as usual seems to be invoked as an epithet. But in *Anti-Dialectic*, Engel (1974:9) (p. 154) distinguishes between Kaplan's chronology and interpretation, stating that:

Already in Rousseau, therefore, we find not only a sequence of ideas which corresponds exactly with the sequence developed in Marx's *Capital*, but that the

Rousseau using a whole series of the same dialectical developments as Marx used [italics added]. *begin*

... does not mean that Marx thought of himself as the heir of the French tradition of revolutionary and socialist thought. As the subtlety of his revolutionary insight developed, and his grasp of capitalist imperialism increased, he became more Eurocentric in his thinking than ever so as he came to see the world as a whole.

... publication of *Capital* (labor theory of value) returned to a reconsideration of the primitive commune and its potential because of its increasing relevance for the capitalist system, thus repudiating his earlier rejection of imperialism on the basis of its effect on pre-capitalist societies (1960:191). And Krader, in his introduction to *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, shows how Marx used the comparative method as the best tool for the critique of the present civilized condition, and the perspective upon the future of society (1972:25).

It is in the understanding of the historical process of "between scientific and ideological

And it is this primitive communism which Diamond treats as the "hierarchy of social rank" the attributes of civilization, and most particularly of the state, in order to bring light on the social process of the state.

the impression Kaplan tries to convey does not imply a return to the fact books of primitive society by Diamond (1972:114, 123-124). Rather, it is a return to an earlier, more fundamental level of social classlessness, a return to the basic means of production, integration of labor and related processes. Curiously enough, Kaplan himself, in his review of the book, states that the latter's approach appears to approve of this in formal dialectic.

It is clear that Marx was not a student of the abstract academic, but a student of the hypothetical proposition, ultimately positive sense. As Krader properly observes, he "opposed... the (positivist) conception of science as classification and definition, and consequently... (the) separation of science and politics" (1972:12-13) Correlative

definition of the term, he did not believe that facts speak for themselves. He was a theoretician, and a historian, who practiced a particular discipline but focused on the whole range of socio-cultural phenomena in order to discover the key to the exploitation of man by man. His scientific (or realistic) as opposed to Utopian socialism included the necessity of political action based on class consciousness and conflict, in society at large. But Marx did not subscribe to universal, positivistic laws. In 1870 he stated:

Comte is known to the Parisian workmen as the prophet in politics of [imperialism] [of personal dictatorship], of [capitalist] rule in political economy, of hierarchy in all spheres of human action, even in the sphere of science, and as the author of a new catechism with a new Pope and new saints in place of the old ones [Harrison 1971:14].

In 1877, Marx denied that he had worked out "a historical-philosophical theory of the general path that every people is fated to tread." In response to the Russian populist N. K. Mikhaïlovsky, he had argued that

he has to transform my sketch of the origins of capitalism in Western Europe into a historical-philosophical theory of a universal movement necessarily imposed upon all peoples, no matter what the historical circumstance in which they are placed, and will lead in the last resort, to an economic system in which the greatly increased productivity of social labor will make possible the harmonious development of man. I must protest. He discredits me [Bottomore: 1963:37].

Thus when Diamond supposes that abstract, non-historical, reifying social science will disappear in a classless, communitarian society, he is arguing in a dialectical, rather than an academic mode. For the cognitive categories and related organization of academic social science are symptoms of alienation, of particular social circumstances. But the identification of the structure of the academy with that of civilization itself, and thus the effort to eternalize both, is an old illusion; it goes back to Plato. Any serious attack on the academy is thus perceived as an attack on civilization, and we find Kaplan in the typical stance of the apologist, charging us with opposition to all institutions as such. Unfortunately for our critic, we are not "anarchists" but critical socialists in the Marxist tradition engaged in the task of analyzing the salient structures of exploitation.

eventual demise of the alienated expert and the consequent freeing of social intelligence from disciplinary constraints and monopoly control. This is what Comte meant in stating that any cook should be able to run the State. Demystification of the historical structure and position of the academy remains a radical and critical task. Accordingly, we find it understandable that Kaplan fails to mention Levi-Strauss, whom Diamond characterizes at length as the academic anthropologist—a formalist, reductionist, and "scientific" relativist who denies the connection between theory and practice, and insists on the privileged position of the Western Observer. For it is such a definition of science that is rejected in the Marxist tradition. This rejection is no retreat into subjective idealism, but quite the contrary. For the turning of man into an object is both an idealist and a mechanical materialist fallacy ("inverted Platonism," as Lukacs 1971 affirms), a fallacy nowhere more evident than in the sector of anthropology for which Kaplan speaks. Correlatively, we note that the reviewer has overlooked Diamond's appreciation of Boas and his achievement, and of aspects of the work of Lowie, Kroeber, and Radin, both in this book (Hymes 1972:422) and elsewhere, not to mention similar statements by Hymes and other contributors, since they do not square with his contention, that such people have been "harshly maligned and dismissed."

Kaplan thus demonstrates his lack of anthropological understanding of anthropological traditions. He separates logic from sociologie. He riffs the texts of the ethnological theory at the expense of understanding the contexts of ethnological praxis. Logically, this distinction is entirely arbitrary; "criteria of logic are not a direct gift of God, but arise out of, and are only intelligible in the context of, ways of living or modes of social life" (Winch 1968:100). Sociologically, it exhibits that Western scientific ideology which has always pretended to an ultimate objectivity, autonomy, and superiority. Ethnologically, it is inexcusable. What, after all, is more anthropological than the recognition that "... histories are multiple and ... (that) all sciencings occur in the course of histories and are themselves histories" (Nelson 1974:17)?

The limitations of Kaplan's sense of history are further evident in his treatment of Wolf's suggestion that the construction of American industry evoked Social Darwinism as "its dominant mode of intellectual response" (p. 252) and that American anthropology "responded to the intellectual

evolutionist theory." Kaplan calls this a "somewhat mechanical sociology of knowledge approach that tends to reduce all ideas to 'rationalizations,' and, moreover, is highly selective in its treatment" [p. 831]. He stresses that the roots of cultural evolutionary theory lie most directly in the writings of certain French and Scottish Enlightenment social philosophers; that Darwin's thought was not isomorphic with Social Darwinism; and that neither Morgan, nor Tylor, nor Maine were Social Darwinists. All true, though selectively misplaced. To say that Social Darwinism was a "dominant mode of intellectual response" does not assert that it was the only mode. Elaboration means a "process of working out carefully, developing in great detail," rather than "originate." Modern evolutionary theory quite probably has its roots in the Enlightenment, though it is misleading to say this without reference to capitalism which stimulated that notable movement (see, *inter alia*, Gay 1962; Highshawm 1962; Horkheimer and Adorno 1971; MacPherson 1962). It is also true that Darwin was no Social Darwinist and that Marx and Engels praised him. It is equally certain, however, that in their praise they also warned against a biologizing materialism which saw the driving force of human life in the "struggle for survival, without reference to the changing characteristics of the historical process" (Kaplan, Vol. 1:89, 319). Yet this is precisely what Social Darwinism did, and why it became the dominant mode of Capitalism in the United States. The interested reader is referred to the quote from Hofstadter in Wolf's article (p. 253) to Hofstadter's book on *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (1965), and to Gruber's authoritative article, "Racism and the Idea of Progress in the 19th Century" (Gruber 1975). The main exponents of the Social Darwinist mood in American Anthropology were Powell and Brinton.

Wolf, moreover, speaks of "intellectual moods" and "intellectual responses"; it is Kaplan who suggests that Wolf deals with intellectual traditions, as "though the cognitive component in those traditions didn't exist" (p. 833). Surely Kaplan is not suggesting that ideas lead a life of their own. One may readily concede the existence of a cognitive logic. What is in question, however, is not the logical working out of a set of ideas, but the successive replacement of one set of dominant ideas by another when many of the displaced ideas were, and still are, useful and fruitful. What is argued, moreover, in Wolf's paper—and constitutes

the successive sets of dominant ideas in American anthropology, avoided contact with certain problems, notably the combined problem of political power and economic exploitation. They are interesting not only for what they said, but for what they did not say. The explanation of this notable absence invites explanations in terms of factors external to the ideas themselves.

This then brings us back explicitly to the question of objectivity. We can only agree that reality exists. Yet if it is important to distinguish between men, as agents who transform reality, and reality itself, it is equally important to recognize that the opposition entails a relation which presupposes that the experimenter is part of the experiment. There are, indeed, various meanings of the term "objectivity." One kind of objectivity consists in the examination of modes of cognition which men bring to bear upon reality and strives to understand the social, cultural, and psychological determinants of these modes. A second type of objectivity grants the integrity of reality, of the object, and respects that integrity. This aesthetic mode of cognition puts "naïve" observation, perceptual cognition before abstract analysis. Yet there is a third meaning of objectivity—and this is the mode of objectivity favored by Kaplan. It is, however, also the most grossly subjective. It is away with an interest in the cognitive cognition practiced by a socially and culturally determinate group in relation to socially and culturally determinate objects, and substitutes for this a set of historically disembodied scientists, thinking "thoughts without thinkers." These non-personal philosopher kings, moreover, proceed to dismember the objects of their study into abstract components which are then assigned the status of the "true reality" as against that which is held to be merely "subjective" or superficial.

"Objectivity," Kaplan writes, "refers to the process of applying nonpersonal critical procedures and canons to the assessment of knowledge claims" (p. 827). What are we to say of an anthropology that takes no account of its mode of cognition? How do we assess the knowledge claims of a discipline which writes accounts of "cultures" abstracted from the contexts of capitalism and imperialism, racism and domination, war and revolution? What are we to say of a discipline which goes to great lengths to construct uneven samples of geographically and historically isolated cases in the name of science and for the purposes of mathematical comparison, without once asking ques-

tions about the possible distortion of the sample because of the existence of a common political economy? These are hardly questions which can be answered by reference to anthropology as a disengaged community of scholars.

In sum, Kaplan's arguments against the dialectical tradition all presuppose the "innate" virtue of an essentially ethnocentric, technocentric, and merely pragmatic rationality.

As Horkheimer (1947:82), echoing Marx, states:

By its identification of cognition with science, positivism restricts intelligence to functions necessary to the organization of material already patterned according to the very commercial culture which intelligence is called upon to criticize.

Positivism proceeds by insisting on such so-called transcultural and "objective" criteria as economy, efficiency, elegance, and "value-free" explanation. Kaplan seems to glory, as Mannheim wrote (1939:101),

in his refusal to go beyond the specialized observation dictated by the tradition of his discipline, be it ever so inclusive; (he) is making a virtue out of a defense mechanism which assures him against questioning his presupposition.

To invoke Popper does not help one iota. His rationalism is no more critical or substantive than Kaplan's; it is a simple article of faith. Being scientific, it severs facts from values. Being liberal, it extends scientific methodology to the political domain (e.g. social engineering in the "open" society). Being undialectical, it separates the problem of validity from the question of socio-cultural genesis. It is not, by definition, critical: "questions of fact are prejudged in the form of methodological decisions and the practical consequences flowing from application of such criteria are excluded from reflexion" (Habermas 1968:250).

Finally, Kaplan fails to acknowledge that most often anthropologists have been self-selected rather marginal persons who have gone in search of that "common humanity" (Kaplan's phrase) which contemporary Western Civilization, contrary to his sentimental conclusion, has systematically deformed and failed to define except on its own terms. It is a measure of the bureaucratization of the vocation that Kaplan should deny the relation between the alienation of persons in our society and the alienation of anthropologists from their studies.

exploitation, to imply that it is a human constant is also a sign of the times for it enables him to ignore the specific structure of exploitation, which, as Marx pointed out, have reached their peak in the world that Capitalism created. Examining, assessing, and seeking to replace such structures is not the result of "guilt," but of historical understanding, and a consequent, freely assumed, historical responsibility. Professionals of Kaplan's type may try to discredit such an intent by reducing it to neurotic guilt, but they will find that in the world which we all share, that sort of thing no longer works. The ultimate purpose of anthropology is, we conclude with Rousseau, the revolutionary scrutiny of our own society.

Notes

<sup>1</sup> As Sartre (1963:33) puts it,

There are two ways to fall into idealism. The one consists in dissolving the real into subjectivity; the other in denying all subjectivity in the interests of objectivity. The truth is that subjectivity is neither everything nor nothing; it represents a moment in the objective process (that in which externality is internalized), and this moment is perpetually eliminated only to be perpetually re-born.

In this connection we note that Marx's comments on the Paris Commune reveal that in 1871 (certainly not the early or "Rousseauian" Marx) he was anticipating both the resolution of the state apparatus which had finally achieved the status of a thing in itself during the Second Empire, and the defeat of the dominant bourgeoisie. As David Fernbach makes clear in *The First International and After*, Marx uses the terms Commune and State as opposites. (Marx described the Commune as a revolution against the State itself (1974:38); the hypocrisies of the bourgeois state was the result of class conflict, but the Commune was to be a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life.

Obviously, Marx's attitude to the Commune is of a piece with his dialectical understanding of primitive communism, that "primitive condition" which, as Krader documents "he did regard as an end in itself as a critical weapon to be applied against the antagonisms built into and arising out of a civilized society" (1972:61). This we should note is the point of Diamond's recent book (1974) and of his critical work in general, which bears no resemblance to Kaplan's sentimentalization of it as a pragmatic

books makes it possible to oppose the condition of primitive men in particular societies to the life of man in the divided, industrial, urban societies" (Krader 1972:21).

<sup>3</sup> This would not include a return to infanticide (Kaplan's implication), but rather a development of the means and relations of production that would render that usage which has never been ascribed to cruelty unnecessary. Still, Kaplan might well reflect—as did Marx, Engels, and Rousseau—on the depth and extent of civilized crimes against children—crimes cited for their cruelty and senselessness (although they must be socially contextualized and understood).

Correlatively, it would certainly be a mistake to equate the "dismantling of the industrial apparatus" (Kaplan's phrase) with the socialist transformation of capitalism to which we ascribe, but it is not our mistake. Neither Diamond nor anyone else represented in *Reinventing Anthropology* has ever suggested that industrialism as such is the enemy. That is a conclusion in the style of our adversaries; we do not feel social institutions or technology, and we are certainly not Luddites. The process of dialectical return that we have outlined constitutes the basis of the Marxist historical method. It is nowhere more evident in Marx's work than at the end of his life (the *Ethnological Notebooks* were written in 1880-82; Marx died in 1883).

As Maurice Godolier states, "Marxism is not evolutionism, and history is not the unfolding of a seed" (1975:10).

<sup>4</sup> This famous statement is a letter from Marx to Engels, June 18th, 1862, in payment: *KM to E, 6/18/1862*.

It is remarkable how Darwin recognizes among beasts and plants his English society with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, inventions, and the Malthusian struggle for existence. It is Hobbes's "bellum omnium contra omnes," and one is reminded of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, where civil society is described as a "spiritual animal kingdom," while in Darwin the animal kingdom figures as civil society... [Schmidt: 1971:46].

<sup>6</sup> Thus Diamond states that a few anthropologists may become partisans in the task of national liberation and socialist reconstruction among the peoples whom they have hitherto "studied" but they will be no anthropologists, not... [Schmidt: 1971:46].

The process of...  
Diamond's...  
DISCUSSION AND DEBATE  
historical method  
not evident

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ing back home when their son and daughter are on their own and his Social Security benefits start coming in. He's patient. "What's a little patience?" he says.

"Thirty-two years," Magda says. And they leave it at that, for now. □

#### ANTI-SEMITISM AND IDENTITY

## Jewish State, State of Jewishness

STANLEY DIAMOND

*Leopards break into the temple and drink the sacrificial chalices dry; this occurs repeatedly, again and again: finally, it can be reckoned upon beforehand and becomes part of the ceremony.*  
—Franz Kafka

If Jews have earned anything in their tormented history it is the right to identify themselves. They have been defined in so many ways by so many others—as heretics and as chosen, as devout and debased, as killers and cowards, as passive and aggressive, as arch-capitalists and architects of communism, as intellectuals and buffoons, as geniuses and brokers. But above all, they have been defined as subverters of civil society (and that, at least, is a beginning). T.S. Eliot thought that free-thinking Jews were necessary to a proper society, but that their number should be limited.

These people, who live everywhere and are, in the last analysis, at home nowhere, nonetheless maintain a capacity to recognize one another almost instantly. To non-Jews, this must seem uncanny—all those different languages, but always a single language; all those apparently distinct customs, and yet what seems to be a unifying consciousness. It is this isolating opiquity, this rootlessness, that lies behind Sartre's statement that Jewish suffering is the worst of all suffering. He was referring to the nature of the suffering. Obviously, the brutality of oppression is not confined to Jews. But Sartre's meaning, as I understand it and my own, reflect the universal scattering of Jews, the lack of a cultural center, the absence of allies when allies are desperately needed, the accumulating pressure on the dispersed few for 2,000 years. Hence the incessant and curious question—what is a Jew? Who am I? The answer: a people without a culture (a text is not a culture), without a society, haunted by archaic references, trying to live in abstractions and, hav-

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*Kelly's  
do get in  
issue for me*