

BATESON'S NAVEN: TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is an attempt to deal with two topics. The text consists of a detailed reading of Gregory Bateson's ethnography of the Iatmul of New Guinea, Naven (1936: 1958). In this classic work Bateson attempted to analyse a nexus of ritual and ceremonial activities among the Iatmul. The theoretical and methodological questions raised by Bateson in his book are of profound importance for anthropology in general, and for studies of "ritual" in particular. The tensions explored in Naven, between explanation and understanding, between action and interpretation and between intellectual coherence and social context, are crucial concerns for anthropologists working in the 1980s. Bateson's book was written at a time when structural-functionalism was the ascendant paradigm in British anthropology, and it dealt with problems which that paradigm was unable to formulate or to discuss. The thesis argues that many of the questions which anthropologists have raised about ritual would be better phrased as questions about performance, and it sets out to show that Naven can be read as a contribution to an anthropology of performance rather than as a contribution to an anthropology of ritual. This constitutes the second topic. The thesis considers critically the work of other scholars in this field, notably Edmund Leach, Clifford Geertz, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Gilbert Lewis, Victor Turner and Richard Schechner. Turner and Schechner have recently been responsible for the development of a "dramaturgical" model of ritual and of broader social contexts, and the thesis concludes with a critique of some of the pre-suppositions implicit in their work. The notion of performance is not offered as an alternative category to that of ritual, for this would only replace one essentialism by another. It is suggested that the development of a theory of performance would constitute a useful strategy in contemporary concerns with the decentering and deconstruction of traditional anthropological categories.

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FOREWORD

No writer writes alone. Friends, loved ones and teachers are not ancillary workers but prerequisites for any work at all.

My interest in Gregory Bateson stems from my time as an undergraduate at the London School of Economics. I have to thank my teachers at the Department of Social Anthropology there, particularly Dr Alfred Gell who, with an appreciation of the Grand Alliance which the author of *Naven* and the sometime husband of Margaret Mead would have appreciated, included a lecture on Bateson in a course on American anthropology. Dr Michael Sallnow's perceptive and imaginative teaching led me to an interest in theories of ritual and performance. I would also like to thank another of my teachers at the LSE, Dr Joanna Overing, for her continuing interest in my work as an undergraduate and as a research student. Her guidance and her friendship has been invaluable.

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I recall with warm appreciation my teachers at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art who inspired me with a life-long love for the performing arts, and for the theatre in particular. I would specially like to mention Keith Johnstone, who is not only a teacher of acting blessed with genius; he was also responsible for my first taking a serious interest in anthropology.

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This thesis is for Kathleen Bradley, 1906-1983. I owe her more, much more, than I can ever say.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

FIFTY YEARS AFTER its publication, Gregory Bateson's Naven remains arguably one of the great unappreciated classics of social anthropology. Indeed, his published work other than the ethnography of the Iatmul probably has a wider readership outside anthropology than within it. This is because from the mid-1950s until his death in 1980 Bateson became well known for his research in other areas, particularly animal communication, family groups of schizophrenics and ecology. His following during the 1960s amongst the radical mandarins of anti-psychiatry, ecology and the other movements which made up the 'counter-culture' had little or nothing to do with his reputation as an anthropologist. This is despite the fact that his earliest work, anthropological field-work carried out in the early 1930s amongst a stone age people living on the Upper Sepik River in New Guinea, contained the seeds of many of his later achievements.

This thesis is in part an attempt to demonstrate this continuity in Bateson's thought by means of a detailed analysis of Naven. In doing so, I hope also to show him to have been a seminal figure in the history of social anthropology, and one of crucial relevance for anthropologists working in the late 1980s. Further, the thesis is an attempt at an original critique of Bateson's Naven which examines the work as a contribution to the theory of performance in anthropology. In using this term I am referring to a disparate collection of writings which do not constitute an accepted corpus of literature but which I will use as references, particularly in this Introduction and in the last section of the text. These are largely drawn from anthropological studies of ritual in general and, more particularly, recent work which has employed the "dramaturgical" model not only of ritual but of society (or, at least, various societies) at large. I refer here in particular to the writings of Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz and Richard Schechner, as well as to the symbolic interactionist approach of Erving Goffman. The thesis also draws on philosophical perspectives from Derrida, Girard, Wittgenstein, Sartre and

Taylor. In using the term "performance theory" as a generic label for these and other references I may be setting a precedent, but I hope to show that it is a useful one for social anthropology. The thesis will, I hope, indicate something of the possible subject matter, scope and implications of an approach to performance.

In the main body of the thesis I hope to show that Naven (1936 1st edition; 1956 2nd edition) is a crucial early contribution towards an anthropology of performance. My basic argument here is that Bateson's text continually attempts to transcend a structural-functionalist model of ritual by opening up several lines of theoretical debate which, I suggest, can usefully be considered as pointing towards the possibility of an anthropology of performance. Even apart from this, however, I will try to show why this book proves Bateson to have been a major figure in social anthropology despite the self-confessed failures noted by the author at the end of his text and that these failures contribute towards, rather than detract from, the success of Naven as an exposition of anthropological argument. Further, these failures contribute in no small measure to the importance of the book as an exercise in an anthropology of performance, since the very theoretical closures which Bateson regretted not achieving by the end of his text would actually work against an anthropology of performance in my sense of the term.

Bateson himself does not use the notion of performance in his text, whereas the terms 'ritual' and 'ceremony' occur frequently. These terms are used as conventional common-places, and imply what can be called an essentialist meaning of 'ritual' and of 'ceremony'; that is, that all rituals and all ceremonies share a common essence which allows them to be placed within the same analytical categories. Bateson is thus open to the charge of the 'craving for generality' which Wittgenstein (1958) described. My thesis questions this essentialism, and attempts to add the dimension of performance to Naven by means of a detailed reading of the book which pays particular attention to the oppositions and tensions which haunt the original text. These oppositions are legion, but they include the pull between explanation and understanding, as well as the difficulties inherent in grafting theory on to description and the choices which have to be made between different modes of description in the first place

(and, in turn, the necessity of a theoretical schema - either explicit or implicit - within which such choices are made).

Finally there is the conflict between the structural-functionalist framework within which Bateson was working and in which he had been trained, and his own strong sense of the limitations of that framework. I suggest that Bateson's uncritical employment of an essentialist notion of "ritual" provides an important indication of many of his difficulties in the book, and I propose an alternative arena of a performance perspective as a means of examining the text of Naven afresh. This does not mean that I will attempt to replace an essentialist notion of ritual with an essentialist notion of performance. Rather, I will leave the term "performance" undefined except as an arena of descriptive and theoretical possibilities, and allow these possibilities to emerge as my reading of Naven progresses.

In focusing on the oppositions and tensions which form the foundations of Bateson's text, my reading will attempt a "deconstruction" of Naven. (I am applying the often imprecisely used term "deconstruction" here in the sense associated with the work of Jacques Derrida; see this Chapter, pp 19-22.) Later in the thesis reference will be made to Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language, and his stress on "use", as another strategy which has already proved useful in the re-examination of crucial categories such as "kinship" and "belief" and which might also be of assistance in a re-examination of the category "ritual". Here, I would only tentatively suggest that it is possible to view any field of performance as a series of representations - or re-presentations - in which action, and therefore use, become crucial considerations in the description of any one performance. In the remainder of this Introduction I will consider the implications of the various strategies which can be termed deconstructive, in the light of the work of Derrida, Foucault and Girard, while outlining some of the difficulties facing anthropologists at the present time in the notion of "ritual".

The notion of performance has not received much attention in anthropology. This is in contrast to ritual, which has constituted a central analytical category in social anthropology since the beginning. In recent years several scholars have raised important, and disturbing, questions as to the validity of other anthropological categories; Leach (1961) and Needham (1971) on kinship and marriage, Needham (1972) on belief and Sperber (1975) on symbolism are prominent examples of such "rethinking". Some of the questions which I hope this thesis will raise have already been stated by Sperber in the opening words of his critique of anthropological theories of symbolism:

'What is a theory of symbolism? What conditions must it fulfil? What general properties must it account for?' (1975: x)

Substitute 'ritual' for 'symbolism' here and the quotation becomes a statement of many of the concerns of this thesis. For reasons to be discussed I do not wish to suggest however that we should abandon the analytical category of "ritual" altogether.

In a recent article, the psychiatrist and medical anthropologist Roland Littlewood draws attention to the useful comparison which can be made between psychiatry's category of "neurosis" and the anthropological category of "ritual":

'One in a hundred adolescent girls takes an overdose every year and it is now the most common reason for the admission of women to hospital. What are the symbols such rituals articulate? How are they constructed, validated and employed? How do we go about assessing such instrumentality? If psychiatry has in the past pathologized wholesale such normative social rituals as 'possession states', anthropology has built up a sophisticated body of theory to approach 'ritual' ' (1986: 11)

Littlewood then argues that the characterization of such behaviour as taking overdoses as 'manipulative' and 'neurotic' can be viewed in the light of functionalist explanations of 'possession states' in non-Western societies.

'Whereas personal responsibility for the reaction and any pragmatic motives can be displaced on an intruding spirit, the notion of disease in the West may serve similar functions' (1986: 11, author's emphasis).

The criticism of the use of the category "ritual" is not that the category exists, but that it has often been used to explain either too little or too much. The tenor of my argument is reflected in one of Gregory Bateson's 'Metalogues' with his daughter:

'Daughter: Daddy, what is an instinct?

Father: An instinct, my dear, is an explanatory principle.

D: But what does it explain?

F: Anything - almost anything at all. Anything you want it to explain.

D: Don't be silly. It doesn't explain gravity.

F: No. But that is because nobody wants "instinct" to explain gravity. If they did, it would explain it. We could simply say that the moon has an instinct whose strength varies inversely as the square of the distance...

D: But that's nonsense, Daddy.

F: Yes, surely. But it was you who mentioned "instinct", not I' (1972 (a): 38).

In this thesis I do not want to suggest that one "explanatory principle" (ritual) should be replaced by another (performance). I do, however, wish to reflect on why the category of ritual has been so powerful throughout the history of anthropology, and why the notion of performance has been so little encouraged. Littlewood's comparison of the creation of a discourse about neurosis by psychiatry and that of the discourse about ritual by anthropology is reminiscent of Foucault's history of the discourse about madness, and the fact that for Foucault this discourse, as with all discourses, is constituted by what it excludes - which, in the case of madness, is Reason itself. Or rather, Reason is initially defined in terms of what it excludes, namely "madness" (1967). One of the questions addressed in what follows is therefore, what has the anthropological discourse about ritual excluded? Or to use Foucault's style of argument, what has it excluded or marginalised?

In order to put such questions in context it is necessary to recall earlier usage, in particular Durkheim's use of one of Kant's most crucial formulations: the distinction between the sensible and the intellectual. This distinction was taken up by Durkheim and repackaged as an inherent tension between the demands of society and the demands of the individual's organic nature. This enabled Durkheim to claim that such a tension provides the dynamic which infuses and informs all "collective representations"; in The

Elementary Forms of the Religious Life his claim is applied to the collective representations produced through religious activities, through, that is, ritual. Religion does not create society, but religion is the collective expression of the continual creation of society by the group. Symbols are powerful because they transcend the individual; rituals likewise. For Durkheim, the distinctive trait of religious thought is the division of the world into two separate domains, namely the sacred and the profane (1915). The Kantian metaphysical dualism of the intellectual and the sensible is sociologised into that between the sacred and the profane. For anthropologists, this dualism has traditionally been implicated in another; that between experience, or "belief", and "action", or "ritual". Ritual action from this perspective is viewed as "expressive", as opposed to "instrumental", in the light of Parsons' dichotomy. Thus, we see a continuum of oppositions in anthropological writing about ritual which can be traced back to Kant, i.e. sensible/profane/technical on the one hand, and intellectual/sacred/expressive on the other. Much anthropological debate about the nature of ritual, whether of an 'intellectualist' or a 'symbolist' type (Skorupski 1976), have arguably centred around these dualisms. It is my contention that the notion of performance indicates the possibility of a number of strategies which would be able to avoid the privileging of either side of any experience-action axis. Rituals and other performances could then be freed from the burden of "belief" which often vitiates anthropologists' attempts to understand activities which they have, rightly or wrongly, labelled as "ritual".

A strenuous attempt to overcome Durkheimian dualisms was made by Leach in the first chapter of his ethnography of Highland Burma and in a later article. But in both works ritual action is displaced by ritual statements; "doing things" gives way to "saying things". Almost every human action can be divided into a 'technical aspect which does something and an aesthetic, communicative aspect which says something' (1968: 523). Here Leach transforms the Kantian opposition between the sensible and the intellectual into an opposition between a category defined as "the technical", congruent with "doing" and a category defined as "the aesthetic", which is

congruent with "the communicative".

This is a restatement of the position Leach had earlier outlined in his ethnography of Highland Burma, where he wrote 'from this point of view technique and ritual, profane and sacred, do not denote types of action but aspects of almost any kind of action' (1954: 13, author's emphasis). A Kachin religious sacrifice may be regarded as a technical, economic act. But Leach continues:

'...from the observer's point of view there is a good deal that goes on at a sacrifice that is quite irrelevant as far as butchery, cooking and meat distribution are concerned. It is these other aspects which have meaning as symbols of social status, and it is these other aspects which I describe as ritual whether or not they involve directly any conceptualisation of the supernatural or the metaphysical' (1954: 13).

Leach thus defines 'ritual' as a residual category, that which is not technical. Ritual is decentred by being defined in terms of technical activity from which it is excluded, just as for Foucault the West has defined madness in terms of what it is not, i.e. Reason. A similar decentering of "emotion" in terms of a privileged "intellect" can be traced throughout the history of the West.

Myth and ritual, Leach claims, are two ways of saying the same thing. He criticises the

'classical doctrine in English social anthropology ... that myth and ritual are conceptually separate entities which perpetuate one another through functional interdependence - the rite is a dramatisation of the myth, the myth is the sanction or charter for the rite' (1954: 13).

It is this approach which has made it possible for myths to be discussed as isolated entities, and as 'constituting a system of belief' (1954: 13). This has given rise to much 'scholastic nonsense' concerned with elucidating the 'content of belief and of the rationality or otherwise of that content' (1954: 13). Ritual and myth are interdependent, according to Leach, but not because of any functional interplay between them.

'As I see it, myth regarded as a statement in words "says" the

same thing as ritual regarded as a statement in action. To ask questions about the content of belief which are not contained in the content of ritual is nonsense' (1954: 13-14).

Ritual, therefore, is a means of communication but not of action and it is still, despite the closely argued disclaimers made in the Highland Burma book and in the 1968 article, an analytically discriminable category of 'aspects' of actions, if not of actions per se.

A similar dichotomy is to be found in the recent body of work produced by Clifford Geertz which attempts an exegesis of Balinese symbolic and ritual life after the manner of a cultural hermeneutics. The apotheosis of this view results in a picture of Balinese performance as a reflection of symbols or beliefs, encapsulated within a ritualised 'theatre state' (1980(b)). Hobart has criticised this picture as an ethnographic 'freezing' of the subjects of anthropological enquiry in the writing of what he calls 'c~~on~~ogenic texts' (In press:8). Geertz's concern with symbolism as a system of all-powerful essences reduces Balinese actors literally to the status of actors in the theatrical sense. In this analysis, according to Hobart, the Balinese themselves are denied a voice, for Geertz believes that

'a description of collective representations (is) the necessary and sufficient explanation of human actions' (Hobart 1987: 12, my parenthesis).

Whereas Leach had attempted to confine ritual efficacy to a demarcated arena of communication, for Geertz ritual has become the locus of social activity in Bali; a "total social fact" in the classic Durkheimian sense, a fact which is so totally social that individual action and interpretation and, thereby, the possibility of any reworking of the "system" is precluded. There are similarities between Geertz's analysis of the Balinese and Turner's of the Ndembu. The 'cults of affliction' described by Turner in his earlier works (1957, 1968) are elaborated into 'social dramas' through which, in societies all over the world, transition is achieved from civitas to communitas and back (1969). Here again, ritual becomes an essentialist explanatory principle which moves not only the inhabitants of Ndembu villages, but those of the world at large. I shall discuss Turner's work at some length in my Chapter 11.

It is useful to compare the work of Geertz and Turner with a neo-Marxist statement on ritual by Bloch (1974). There are remarkable and important similarities between his position and that of Lévi-Strauss, whose work I will examine later in this Introduction. Both writers have attempted a radical critique of anthropological debates on the topic of ritual, and both focus on the notion of "ritual language".

For Bloch, the power of ritual language is to be found not in its content but in its form. The media of ritual carry no meaning whatsoever, at least not in the logical sense. This is because ritual language and behaviour are excessively formalized, and they thus drastically limit the choices available, in both speech and behaviour, to ritual participants. The formalized language used in ritual carries what Austin (1962) refers to as illocutionary force, which is to say that it does something in the world by using a conventional, persuasive, "performative" force. It does not convey information about the world. Promises and apologies could be considered as speech acts of the illocutionary kind. Ritual language, according to Bloch, is impoverished by the absence of locutionary speech acts which, unlike illocutionary speech acts, carry propositional force. They are descriptive and informative, and attempt to '...corner reality by adapting communication to past perception and connecting this with future perception' (Bloch 1974: 67).

Bloch equates ritual language with that of traditional authority, a language in which the appropriate responses to any given statement are already stipulated. Ritual language is thus limited, mystificatory and, literally, non-sense. Since the rules which generate the propositional, logical, content of speech, or the 'features of articulation', are negated in illocutionary utterances, illocutionary force is non-logical, since for its expression logic demands the dialectic of argument, counter-argument and resolution. To put it simply, Bloch writes:

'we can say that logic depends on the flexibility of the features of articulation in language and if there is no such flexibility there can be no argument, no logic, no explanation, and in one

sense of the word, no semantics' (1974: 66).

Thus when anthropologists ask, "What is the meaning of ritual?", they are actually asking, "What is the meaning of illocutionary speech?" in the sense of, "What does it explain?" Bloch concludes that

'To ask this question assumes a function of traditional authority and religion which it cannot have and draws attention away from other possible functions which it may have, e.g. to hide reality' (1974: 67).

Bloch draws on a particular ritual, the circumcision ceremony of the Merina of Madagascar, for his argument. Again, a particular ethnographic example is used to construct an essential, general theory of ritual. I would question whether Bloch's logical positivist stance, in the form of his use of Austin's linguistic philosophy, limits the sense in which the concept of "logical communication" is used to "convey information" about the world. Is it really true that all kinds of locutionary utterances convey legitimate information about the world, whereas all illocutionary utterances are mere shadows, mere empty gestures? (1) What, precisely, is the mix of locutionary and illocutionary utterances in the newsreader's script? Is it not often the case that in certain kinds of social situation, the predominance of supposedly 'factual', 'informative' exchanges can be evidence of a disjunctive poverty of communication, rather than of a clarity and wealth of it? At the heart of Bloch's analysis is another opposition which privileges one term ("information") at the expense of another ("performance"). This reaches its apotheosis in the claim that singing and dancing are at the far end of the illocutionary spectrum and that art itself is to be equated with illocutionary utterance. The so-called creativity of the artist is a fiction, since what really happens is that when the complex generative potential of language or bodily movement has been forbidden

'the remaining choices left are so simple that they can suddenly be apprehended consciously. Creativity has suddenly become controllable, hence enjoyable...art is...an inferior form of communication' (1974: 72-73).

In one of the few examples in the literature of a coherent recognition of the possibilities of a 'performative approach to ritual', Tambiah has lucidly criticised latter-day restatements of the functionalist position which sees ritual as serving only to bolster a pre-ordained social order. Here Tambiah takes issue with Bloch's proposition that formalized communication, common to both traditional authority and religion, serves to 'hide reality' (Bloch, 1974: 67). Tambiah writes:

'My quarrel is not with a Marxist formulation as such but with that kind of formulation which sees a prior "real world" of "brute facts" that religion, as a mystification, seeks to hide, as if there are some privileged orders of institutional facts which have a pre-symbolic or pre-cultural existence...Moreover, for me, the exciting kind of analysis is that which sees ritual involution not so much as a diabolic smoke-screen but as an ideological and aesthetic social construction that is directly and recursively implicated in the expression, realization and exercise of power' (1981: 153).

In a footnote Tambiah pushes his point home:

'Certain neo-Marxists and adaptation ecologists use the epithet of 'mystification' too facilely as an excuse or cover-up for either not seriously investigating or not comprehending ritual symbolism and ritual patterning; they merely see functional and utilitarian uses for ritual action' (1981: 153).

I hope to show in the main body of the thesis that Bateson would have been in sympathy with Tambiah's statement.

An attempt to dispose of the problem of ritual as an analytic category altogether, to destroy ritual as a locus of meaning from a perspective which shows interesting similarities to Bloch's, has come from Lévi-Strauss. In his 1968 article cited above, Leach declared that Lévi-Strauss 'is inclined to see ritual as integral with processes of thought...Such an approach implies that we should think of ritual as a language in a quite literal sense' (Leach 1968: 524).

But Leach is referring to the Lévi-Strauss of The Savage Mind; by the time that Leach was writing, Lévi-Strauss himself was denying such an implication. In the Finale to his final volume of his studies of myth, Lévi-Strauss wishes to entirely dissociate ritual

from the arena of structuralist analysis. Lévi-Strauss's argument here can be viewed as a paradigm for an intellectualist dismissal of ritual activity. I shall, therefore, refer to it at some length. Mythology, Lévi-Strauss argues, 'exists in two clearly different modalities', sometimes as explicit, ranking as 'works in their own right' and sometimes as mere fragments which are 'linked to a particular phase of the ritual, on which it serves as a gloss, and it is only recited in connection with the performance of ritual acts' (1971: 669). At one level of analysis, therefore, we cannot separate ritual from myth which, disastrously, many anthropologists concerned with ritual have attempted to do. Victor Turner is one such. What anthropologists should do, if they wish to study ritual in terms of its specific characteristics as a separate entity from myth, is to remove from it the 'implicit mythology' which 'adheres to it without really being part of it' (1971: 669).

This implicit mythology is nothing less than 'those beliefs and representations which are connected with a philosophy of nature' (1971: 669). But I would argue that this could refer to just about anything which might be referred to in any ritual anywhere. Lévi-Strauss continues with the warning that anthropologists like Turner who claim to wish to adduce a non-verbal language of ritual symbolism should be wary of the error committed by Leach when he asserts on the one hand that ritual transmits and communicates information about the world, and on the other hand that primitive symbolism is highly charged emotionally (1971: 669-670). I suggest that Lévi-Strauss is here adopting the structuralist strategy which privileges conceptuality as against emotion; there are similarities here, too, with Bloch's analysis. Lévi-Strauss claims that the two possibilities are contradictory, for there can be no cognitive meaning in ritual acts per se. For it is only true mythology, mythology untarnished by 'ritual fragments', which is attached to language. But Lévi-Strauss does not indicate his criteria for deciding what 'true mythology' is. Mythology in its essence has 'articulate language as its vehicle' (1971: 670). Music marks a breaking away from language, although vocal music still retains an affinity with it, 'an affinity which is demonstrated by the fact that myths are often chanted or

sung' (1971: 670). This affinity gradually lessens, however, in the movement from purely vocal music to singing or chanting with musical accompaniment. When we get to pure instrumental music, we are no longer in the realm of language at all.

Lévi-Strauss then offers a parallel with what occurs in the transition from 'pure mythology' to 'pure ritual'. Explicit ritual is literature 'in the full sense of the term'. But in implicit mythology we see that 'fragments of discourse' are mixed in with 'non-linguistic actions', and when finally we get to 'pure ritual' we find that all contact with language has been lost. Here again there are striking similarities with Bloch's account of the Merina circumcision ceremony. Pure ritual, according to Lévi-Strauss,

'consists either of sacred formulae - incomprehensible for the uninitiated, or belonging to an archaic tongue that is no longer understood, or even of utterances devoid of any intrinsic meaning, such as are often used in magic - or of physical movements or of the selection and handling of various objects. At this point ritual, like music at the other extreme of the system, moves right outside language, and if we wish to understand its distinctive nature, we have obviously to consider this pure form, not the intermediary states' (1971: 671).

What, then, is ritual all about? Lévi-Strauss's answer is stunningly simple. Ritual represents a failure of language or, rather, a failure by people to use language correctly. Ritual gestures and the handling of ritual objects are 'a substitute for words...The performance of gestures and the manipulation of objects are devices which allow ritual to avoid speech' (1971: 671-672). Here Lévi-Strauss adopts what Derrida (1976) would call the logocentric position that ritual usurps the "correct" use of language; in Lévi-Strauss's analysis, ritual occupies the same degraded position with regard to speech as does writing in Derrida's critique of Western metaphysics. I will deal more fully with Derrida's important notion of logocentrism with particular reference to his critique, or "deconstruction", of Lévi-Strauss's structuralist anthropology, later in my Introduction.

But there is an obvious objection to Lévi-Strauss's proposition which he himself raises; this is that rituals usually contain a

great deal of speech. Again, the argument sounds remarkably like Bloch's. Our next step, says Lévi-Strauss, is to examine not what ritual words say, but how they say it (1971: 672).

Ritual language makes use of two essential procedures. These are 'parcelling out' and 'repetition'. In the first case, ritual 'has no concern for the general' and is obsessed with the minutiae of taxonomical categories, be they categories of plants, animals, human beings, natural objects or whatever. The slightest difference in the explication of such taxonomies is seen as crucial in ritual practices (1971: 672). In the second case, ritual 'goes in for a riot of repetition; the same formula, or formulae similar in syntax or assonance, are repeated at short intervals...the same formula must be repeated a great many times running' and so on (1971: 673). (2) Lévi-Strauss claims that far from being in opposition to each other, the two procedures of parcelling out and repetition are equivalents. Repetition in fact represents the extreme development of parcelling out. Differences between things are emphasised and restated ad infinitum; then these differences are made to disappear altogether: 'differences which have become so small as to be infinitesimal tend to disappear in quasi-identity' (1971: 673).

Mythology, therefore, points towards the differentiation of reality and is thereby allied with language. Ritual is placed at the opposite end of the continuum. It seeks to return to the pure undifferentiated which had existed before the moment of mythology, the moment of language. The argument is capped by the summary relegation of ritual to the hither side of the structuralist enterprise in the statement that

'the opposition between rite and myth is the same as that between living and thinking, and ritual represents a bastardization of thought, brought about by the constraints of life ...This desperate, and invariably unsuccessful, attempt to re-establish the continuity of lived experience...is the essence of ritual...' (1971: 675, my emphasis).

Lévi-Strauss is here appealing to what can be described as an authentic lived reality, coterminous with a language which is

faithful to 'the constraints' of that reality. This is opposed to the 'bastardization of thought' represented by ritual. Lévi-Strauss thereby places ritual outside any discourse of reason - as does Bloch, although for different polemical purposes - but he insists that mythology be enthroned within reason, since for him mythology announces "the moment of language". This is the ultimate expression of a rationalist enterprise which has run all the way through Lévi-Strauss's work, and which fittingly culminates in the Finale to The Mythologiques. Lévi-Strauss wishes to indicate the presence of a pure language, an authentic speech which is untainted by the meaningless, repetitious and indulgent excesses performed by the participants in ritual.

I now turn to Derrida's powerful comments on Lévi-Strauss's structuralism. In two essays, Derrida offers a subtle critique - or in his terms a "deconstruction" - of the use by Lévi-Strauss of the oppositions which have always been crucial to the latter (1972, 1976). In Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences, Derrida shows that the opposition between Nature and Culture can be traced, albeit in a variety of different guises, through the entire history of Western philosophy and that indeed it is central to it (1972: 252). But in The Elementary Structures of Kinship, Derrida points out, Lévi-Strauss places this opposition in doubt even as he assigns it a crucial and universal importance. The incest taboo, claimed by Lévi-Strauss to be both of nature and of culture, cannot be lodged within the opposition. According to Derrida, the taboo therefore escapes

'the domain of traditional concepts; it is something which escapes these concepts and certainly precedes them - probably as the condition of their possibility. It could perhaps be said that the whole of philosophical conceptualization, systematically relating itself to the nature/culture opposition, is designed to leave in the domain of the unthinkable the very thing that makes this conceptualization possible: the origin of the prohibition of incest' (1972: 253-254).

Later in the same essay Derrida turns his attention to The Savage Mind in which Lévi-Strauss presents the opposition between the bricoleur, that collector of ready-made objects and concepts responsible for the "totemic operator" and the collective creations of

mythology, and the engineer who constructs his own language in the form of a self-sufficient syntax and lexicon. This opposition too can be turned against itself. Derrida writes that

'the engineer is a myth. A subject who would supposedly be the absolute origin of his own discourse and would supposedly construct it "out of nothing", "out of whole cloth", would be the creator of the verbe, the verbe itself. The notion of the engineer who had supposedly broken with all forms of bricolage is therefore a theological idea; and since Lévi-Strauss tells us elsewhere that bricolage is mythopoetic, the odds are that the engineer is a myth produced by the bricoleur' (1972: 256).

Derrida can now suggest that the domains of the bricoleur and the engineer, far from displaying the opposition claimed by Lévi-Strauss, actually interpenetrate each other:

'From the moment that we cease to believe in such an engineer and in a discourse breaking with the received historical discourse, as soon as it is admitted that every finite discourse is bound by a certain bricolage, and that the engineer and the scientist are also species of bricoleurs then the very idea of bricolage is menaced and the difference in which it took on its meaning decomposes' (1972: 256).

Elsewhere, Derrida focuses on a particular ethnographic example from Lévi-Strauss's Tristes Tropiques (1973) in order to unpack the opposition between speech and writing, and the "violence" of the latter, mournfully described by Lévi-Strauss in his account of the Nambikwara Indians. Against Lévi-Strauss's claim that the Nambikwara were without writing in their indigenous, pre-contact state, Derrida attempts to show that writing is already fully implicated within Nambikwara culture (1976: 101-140). For Derrida, writing is the precondition of language and not, as thinkers from Plato to Rousseau and beyond have claimed, an inferior or supplementary version of it. According to Derrida there is no innocent, authentic speech untainted by writing and the violence which Lévi-Strauss claims has been brought to primitive societies by writing. Societies everywhere are marked by writing in Derrida's sense, by what he describes as 'the violence of the arche-writing, the violence of difference, of classification, and of the system of appellations' (1976: 110).

It is on the latter that Derrida focuses in the essay under consideration; according to Lévi-Strauss the Nambikwara are not

allowed to use proper names in speaking to each other, but children often disclose the proper names of others in hostile play. For Derrida the 'arche-writing' which allows the 'impropriety' of the use of the 'proper name' indicates the hostility and violence already present within Nambikwara society, a hostility and violence which is not brought to the Nambikwara by the white man's writing but which has always existed (1976: 110-118). Derrida's argument has been lucidly summarised by Norris:

'The "nature" which Rousseau identifies with a pure, unmediated speech, and Lévi-Strauss with the dawn of tribal awareness, betrays a nostalgic mystique of presence which ignores the self-alienating character of all social existence' (1982: 40).

Derrida's critique of Lévi-Strauss and of other writers questions the truth of what the former describes as a metaphysics which determines 'being as presence' (1972: 249), or a metaphysics which attempts to reach a truth self-present to itself beyond the arena of language. As Norris puts it:

'deconstruction works to undo the idea - according to Derrida, the ruling illusion of Western metaphysics - that reason can somehow dispense with language and arrive at a pure, self-authenticating truth or method. Though philosophy strives to efface its textual or written character, the signs of that struggle are there to be read in its blind-spots of metaphor and other rhetorical strategies' (1982: 19).

This is linked to Derrida's notion of logocentrism, or the deep-seated belief that truth and self-presence are to be located in the sphere of authentic, lived speech rather than in that of its poor inauthentic relation, namely writing. According to Norris

'For Derrida, this is yet another sign of the rooted Western prejudice which tries to reduce writing - or the 'free play' of language - to a stable meaning equated with the character of speech. In spoken language (so the implication runs), meaning is 'present' to the speaker through an act of inward self-surveillance which ensures a perfect, intuitive 'fit' between intention and utterance' (1982: 23, author's emphasis and parenthesis).

Derrida's critique of Lévi-Strauss can thus be read as a deconstruction of the latter's privileging of an authentic speech governed by the pure self-present structures of reason which determine the rift

between Nature and Culture and which ensures the very existence of Culture itself.

Having introduced Derrida's critique of self-presence and logocentrism - and, hopefully, in the process indicated something of the style of argument associated with deconstruction - I will now briefly consider an analysis of Lévi-Strauss's comments on ritual in the Finale by René Girard, a contemporary of Derrida and a critic and philosopher also linked with post-structuralism (1978). Girard points out that ritual is concerned with differentiation quite as much as mythology. In initiation rites, for example, the subjects are no doubt placed in an undifferentiated state, but only as part of a preliminary phase of a process which ends with an explicit (re-)differentiation in the form of a new, stable, social identity. The rite of sacrifice, too, can be read as a means whereby the regeneration of difference is assured and socially accepted (1978: 155-156). But if ritual is often concerned with differentiation, it is also true that myth is also implicated in undifferentiation. Myth as well as ritual resorts to make-believe in order to join together entities which have been differentiated by language (1978: 156). Girard goes on to say that both myth and ritual employ representations of something which language cannot express.

'In myth, the same representations are praised (by Lévi-Strauss) at least implicitly, since we would not even know without them that the myth intends to distinguish certain objects. We must have that first moment when these objects are supposed to be stuck together. In reality the undifferentiated plays the same role everywhere' (1978: 157, my parenthesis).

Lévi-Strauss's attempt to explain the presence of the differentiated in myth as the remnants of 'bastardized myths that are primarily the account of some ritual' is not adequate to defend the

'assimilation of myth with differentiation and of ritual with the undifferentiated...The two are always present together and their juxtaposition produces the standard profile of both myth and ritual' (1978: 157).

Why then, Girard asks, does Lévi-Strauss attempt to deny this so vehemently? Part of the answer lies in the privileged position structuralism accords to language. But, according to Girard,

Lévi-Strauss has other aims in mind. Through his dismissal of ritual, Lévi-Strauss is able not only to extol language, but he is also able to assimilate non-verbal practices to religious behaviour, since 'Lévi-Strauss is almost as eager to castigate religion as to extol language' (1978: 158). Lévi-Strauss's ambivalent attitude towards metaphysics provides a further motive.

'This third bête noire is also assimilated to ritual. The definition of ritual as 'a nostalgia for the immediate' has a curiously philosophical ring for an anthropologist. One of the reasons could be that it is also Lévi-Strauss's definition of philosophy' (1978: 158).

What Lévi-Strauss ends by doing, according to Girard, is to reverse the metaphysics of Bergson, who had hoped that a future natural science would be able to transcend the inadequacy of rigid differentiation. Lévi-Strauss thinks that the recent discovery of the genetic code indicates that the precise opposite will take place. The genetic code is an assurance that he can now put a name to

'that principle of discontinuity that governs the works of nature as well as of culture; this principle moves the entire universe and finally becomes conscious of itself, first in a crude mythological form, later in the works of science' (1978: 159). (3)

Thus, says Girard, Bergson's old élan vital has been reconstituted and renamed by Lévi-Strauss as an élan différenciateur, or codificateur. Both Bergson and Lévi-Strauss replace reality and the mind by a metaphysical principle. But 'differentiation' here becomes a blanket term whose amorphous ubiquity covers a studied vagueness on Lévi-Strauss's part.

'Reality's being assimilated to a pure undifferentiation does not suggest in what manner it should be carved. It provides no guidelines to the differentiating principle that operates in the void. Any mode of differentiation is as good or bad as any other' (1978: 159).

But Lévi-Strauss himself denies such metaphysical substitution on his part. When he becomes aware of it, he attributes it to myth itself. 'Mythic thought' triumphs yet again for 'we realise that the reading of mythology depends even more on metaphysics than my previous remarks have already made clear' (Girard 1978: 160). Lévi-Strauss's

argument is flawed not because of his two categories of differentiation and undifferentiation; they are an important contribution. The problem for Girard is that Lévi-Strauss cannot utilize them fully because he makes them into metaphysical absolutes. (I would add that Lévi-Strauss also makes them into cross-cultural universals.)

Girard continues by saying that Lévi-Strauss

'does not give credit to the conjunctive elements in his own symbolic network; we must not follow him when he says that myth alone is 'good to think', when he excommunicates ritual from anthropology, and when he equates the undifferentiated with ritual' (1978: 163).

Girard then proceeds to incorporate his critique of Lévi-Strauss into his own argument as to the nature of ritual, an argument he had set out at length in a previous work (1977). Briefly, Girard sees all symbolism, and that contained in ritual practices in particular, as evidence of a "mimetic crisis" that is always at work in human reality. Social life constantly produces experiences and behaviour which are imitative; so, the desire for the other is the desire to be like the other. In mimetic rivalry, this desire is transformed into its opposite, namely the desire to be as unlike the other as possible and, ultimately, the desire for the elimination of the other. The figure of the scapegoat looms large here. Both myths and rituals reveal at their centre a moment of resolution in which the crisis reaches its height. This is the point at which the many subsume their individual rivalries in the creation of a sacrificial subject who is endowed with all the evil which has, thereby, been expelled from the community. In the act of sacrifice or, if you like, of ritual murder, the sacrificial victim is transformed from being the incarnation of transcendental evil, to that of transcendental good. This transformation achieves two results; it eliminates the guilt of the community, and it reincorporates the victim into the community by making him the guarantor of the future peace of the community (Girard, 1977).

In his later article, Girard claims that Lévi-Strauss treats ritual as just such a scapegoat. Ritual for him has become the solution to the problem of 'those phenomena that do not respond

properly to the structuralist method' (Girard, 1978: 166) (4)
 In ritual Levi-Strauss has found an institution which is 'a senseless revolt against the very essence of human intelligence' (1978: 167). What does Lévi-Strauss do here? Girard's answer is that Lévi-Strauss takes all differentiation away from ritual and gives it to mythology; at the same time, he takes away all undifferentiation from myth, and gives it to ritual. This redistribution is however not entirely symmetrical, for

'in order to turn myth into the sacred temple of differentiation, some of the undifferentiated must be kept there, acknowledged as such, or almost as such' (1978: 167).

Lévi-Strauss's undifferentiated, his villain of the piece, remains evil until a little bit of it is seen to necessarily remain in myth. When it is seen to be so, it is claimed by myth for its own. So 'ritual is expelled as the sole and complete embodiment of the undifferentiated' (1978: 168). But this is not all. The undifferentiated elements necessarily allowed to remain in myth undergo a dynamic transformation.

'Left to itself, the undifferentiated is pure disintegration; once transmuted by expulsion, it holds the key to the structure of myth as a self-organizing system' (1978: 168).

Girard sees Lévi-Strauss's manipulation of the 'undifferentiated' as a parallel with Plato's denouncement of writing in The Phaedrus as analysed by Derrida (1981). Ritual is Lévi-Strauss's pharmakon; if taken in large doses it is poison, but if taken in small amounts as prescribed, it is medicine. Girard goes on to say that we should also view Plato's expulsion of the poet from the Republic as being on a par with Lévi-Strauss's expulsion of ritual from the temple of structuralism. For Girard, as against Lévi-Strauss, ritual is 'an earlier effort to expel the "evil mixture" and make culture safe for differentiation' (1978: 169). Girard's next move marks the culmination of his argument. For all ritual expulsions must themselves be expelled - expelled, that is, from consciousness. Lévi-Strauss's expulsion of ritual must itself be expelled by him. Like those religious texts which claim to deny violence but which in reality are written only to conceal it, so too

'the Lévi-Straussian text is generated by a new expulsion, in many respects identical to the ritual one; what is expelled is the expulsion itself, but so it is already in the religious forms' (1978: 169).

For Girard 'the truth of the expulsion' lies in its being 'the essential taboo of human culture; far from transgressing it, the second-generation expulsion reinforces this taboo' (1978: 169). What is thereby generated is a new text, in which the newly fabricated metaphysical notions introduced by way of explanation and 'demystification' operate in exactly the same way as that which had formerly been expelled. All post-ritual institutions, Girard concludes, are generated in this way. They all operate on the basis of second-generation expulsions that 'expel the former agent of expulsion' (1978: 169). He specifically mentions the theatre, philosophy, the judicial system and all political institutions.

I accept Girard's critique of Lévi-Strauss's position, and in particular of the latter's dismissal of ritual activity as a locus of coherence and intelligibility. I would suggest, however, that Girard's privileging of ritual (exemplified by his notion of the universal expulsion of the scapegoat as 'the essential taboo of human culture') is comparable to Lévi-Strauss's privileging of language. For Girard, ritual becomes an analytical category par excellence, and he thus opens himself to a critique of essence just as Lévi-Strauss is open to Derrida's critique of logocentrism.

In this Introduction I have adduced various examples of anthropological analyses of ritual in order to show that there are problems associated with any attempt at a universal, cross-cultural theory of ritual. Rather than attempt a comprehensive survey of the history of the anthropological category of ritual, which would have been unmanageable and inappropriate in this context, I have focused on recent attempts to re-define (and/or to devalue) the notion of "ritual" in the light of contemporary trends. I would suggest that there are also problems in any attempt to construct a universal theory of performance, which is why I stop short of attempting a definition of the latter and why I prefer to merely state an intention to open up the subject for the empirical investigation of the different rituals and performances which take place in different cultures. My stress on performance arises from

an attempt at a re-examination of existing anthropological categories.

It is my contention that Bateson's Naven can usefully be read as an early text in an anthropology of performance; I also suggest that it is a text which continually attempts to deconstruct itself - or to unfold its own tensions and oppositions - in ways which find sympathetic echoes in the anthropology of the post-structuralist era. For these and other reasons, Naven is a crucial text for anthropologists of the 1980s and 1990s. After presenting a brief summary of Bateson's background, in the main body of the thesis I will pursue a deconstructive reading of Bateson's text. I will therefore follow it closely, chapter by chapter. In the concluding section of the thesis I will review some of the more recent works which seem relevant to a performance perspective and, in the light of these and of my detailed consideration of Naven, I will assess the possibilities of an anthropology of performance.

NOTES to Chapter One

- (1) For a "deconstructive" critique of Austin's speech act theory, see Derrida (1977). A lucid exposition of Derrida's argument, and the subsequent debate between Derrida and Searle, is provided by Norris (1982: 109-112).
- (2) I would comment here that according to a theme which runs all the way through the Mythologiques, myth too "goes in for a riot of repetition".
- (3) It might be profitable to compare Lévi-Strauss's extension of the notion of 'discontinuity' to 'the entire universe' with Bateson's claim that the processes of 'mind' and of 'evolution' are coterminous. See FORM, SUBSTANCE AND DIFFERENCE in Bateson (1973).
- (4) It will perhaps be evident from my reading of Naven in my later chapters that Bateson himself was not innocent in this respect. For a philosophical consideration of a similar, and no doubt connected, problem see Rorty (ed. 1980). The tenor of much of the work in this volume is that emotions in the West are defined purely negatively, as the absence of cognition. This, of course, is exactly how Lévi-Strauss treats ritual in his Finale.

CHAPTER TWO: GREGORY BATESON - THE BACKGROUND

EVEN A CURSORY reading of Bateson's biographical details suggests a number of possible reasons for, as Adam Kuper put it, his 'rather... strange reputation in British anthropology' (in Bateson 1973: 9). Born into a prominent Cambridge academic family in 1904, Bateson graduated from his father's college, St John's, in natural science, changed to anthropology and carried out field-work in New Guinea where he met Margaret Mead. They were married in 1936, the year Naven was published, and then Bateson and Mead carried out joint field-work in Bali. In 1940 Bateson went to the United States, which was to be his base for the rest of his life. He was made an American citizen in 1956, and he did not return to England until 1968 when he took part in the Dialectics of Liberation Conference in London. The United States remained his home until his death in 1980.

Bateson was thus both English and American and the combination was crucial, not only for the external events of his life, but also in terms of his intellectual development. Bateson was taught anthropology as a postgraduate at Cambridge by Haddon, who had himself been trained as a zoologist before the famous 1898 expedition with Rivers. After his early British education and natural science and anthropology, he met and married Mead, whose training had been in the very different Boasian school of American cultural anthropology.

By the time he wrote Naven, Bateson had already discussed with Mead her ideas and those of Ruth Benedict, Mead's contemporary and another student of Boas. Further, while in the field in New Guinea, Bateson had access to a copy of the manuscript of Benedict's Patterns of Culture which the latter sent out to Mead. Benedict and Mead had both been students of Franz Boas, often regarded as the founder of American anthropology, which in contra-distinction to British "social" anthropology was avowedly "cultural". Boas' school of "historical particularism" had been inspired by German Romanticism and the writings of Kant and Dilthey. This resulted in the development of an anthropology in the United States which was closer to what some would call "the humanities" - with an attendant interest in aesthetics, cultural style and Freudian and gestalt psychology - than the scientific, or

pseudo-scientific, structural-functionalism of the British school (Harris, 1968: 250-289).

The collision between the structural-functionalism of Bateson's early training in both biology and anthropology and the humanistic, interpretative, tenor of the American Boasian school provides one of the essential tensions in Naven. This tension contributed in no small measure to the fact that many, if not most, of Bateson's contemporaries found the book unreadable at the time of its first publication in 1936, a verdict with which Bateson himself rather disarmingly agreed in his Epilogue to the second, 1958, edition.

Another reason for Bateson's peculiar, if not invidious, reputation in British social anthropology is that even in the first edition of Naven he revealed a taste for transdisciplinary analysis which made his book at best difficult to read for those expecting an ethnography in the style of Argonauts of the Western Pacific or The Andaman Islanders, and which led him within a few years out of anthropology and into other areas of research.

The incomprehension which greeted the publication of Naven - despite an appreciative and encouraging review by Radcliffe-Brown (1937: 172-174) - served to alienate Bateson further from an academic establishment with which he already felt disenchanting (Lipset 1982: 139, 146, 151, 156). The usual progression of the career of a social anthropologist, then as now, was in the order of field-work, writing up field-work notes, completion of a thesis and the award of a PhD or similar doctoral qualification followed by teaching and publication. Bateson did not fit into that mould neatly. He taught for a while at Cambridge in the 1930s, and subsequently held many prestigious posts in America as well as being the recipient of a number of successive research grants for his various projects. But he was never granted a doctorate and he was never accepted within the ranks of the profession of British social anthropology. His self-imposed exile in America must be counted as only one reason for this exclusion.

How far this was a matter of personal choice cannot be said, but Lipset's biography (1982) indicates that Bateson had little interest

in joining those ranks. There can be little doubt that, as Edmund Leach wrote in his obituary of Bateson, 'he was never a conventional academic' (1980: 9). His career switched from anthropology to cybernetic research to psychiatry to animal ethology to ecology; often he was working in two or more areas at the same time. This was his outstanding feature as a thinker, for he was arguably at his best when standing in the no-man's-land between two domains and trying to draw ideas from each. Leach has confirmed that in the 1930s

'in the working situation in social anthropology in Cambridge at that time...there was no one who really understood what Gregory was talking about' (Leach, quoted in Lipset 1982: 140).

In his 1980 obituary Leach agrees that Naven is 'virtually unreadable' but he adds:

'it contains enough original ideas to fill a library...A great deal of contemporary social and cultural anthropology which is commonly thought to have its roots in the writings of Lévi-Strauss, and in reactions to varying styles of ethnology and sociobiology, in fact comes from Bateson and especially from Naven (1980: 8-9).

In terms of quantity, Bateson's published work as an anthropologist is slight. It consists of Naven (1936: 1958), the book he wrote in collaboration with Mead, Bali: A Photographic Analysis (1942), and the half-dozen or so articles of direct anthropological import included in the collected papers Steps to an Ecology of Mind (1973) together with other papers published in various scholarly journals. Bateson's biographer, David Lipset, wrote:

'I often heard him decry the trappings of greatness - a systematic theory, or an organized school of students, or even a thick set of collectable works - because he felt they generated dogma' (1982: 304).

There is, however, good reason for believing that Bateson was never actually happy with his track record as an anthropologist. The evidence comes from his own words, as witness these telling lines from the closing pages of Naven:

'It is clear that I have contributed but little to our store of anthropological facts and that the information about Iatmul culture which I have used in the various chapters does no more

than illustrate my methods...my supply of facts is meagre, and I certainly cannot claim that my facts have demonstrated the truth of any theory...none of my theories is in any sense new or strange. They are all to some extent platitudes' (Bateson 1936: 278-279).

This self-effacing apology reads like an unsatisfactory excuse for rather thinnish, or at any rate untidy, field-work notes and contrasts dramatically with Leach's panegyric quoted above. In later years, certainty as to his own place in the scheme of things seems to have eluded Bateson. In 1970, at the age of 66, he told an audience of linguists, social scientists and others

'I am not a very well-read philosopher, and philosophy is not my business. I am not a very well-read anthropologist, and anthropology is not exactly my business' (Bateson 1973(e): 423).

He goes on to attempt a definition of what exactly has been his business and it is worth citing:

'I have studied the area of impact between very abstract and formal philosophic thought on the one hand and the natural history of man and other creatures on the other. This overlap between formal premises and actual behaviour is, I assert, of quite dreadful importance today' (1973 (e): 423).

This sounds, on the face of it, a rather grand claim. It certainly sounds far removed from what are considered the more usual, and more modest, concerns of a social anthropologist - that is to say, to convey something about the social organization, way of life and ways of thought of the members of a particular society. But any anthropologist's picture of a society hangs on a theory or group of theories, and these theories are necessarily epiphenomena of assumptions which the anthropologist, knowingly or unknowingly, carries around in his head. All ethnography is based on theory, if for no other reason than that all ethnography requires selection of facts from the wealth of collected data (which in itself had been selected in the field) and presentation; or in other words, framing. There is no such thing as an unframed description. So that we can say perhaps that in the 1930s Bateson's 'very abstract and formal philosophic thought' had been his own, and the 'natural history of man' had been represented in his anthropological work by his data on the Iatmul and the Balinese.

Later, Bateson became concerned with problems arising out of the general epistemology of Western culture, although this concern is apparent already in the pages of Naven. In the 1950s, for example, he applied his epistemological concern to an attempt at understanding distorted patterns of communication in the families of patients who had been diagnosed as mentally ill. In this work the dichotomy between formal premises and actual behaviour became that of Western culture, if not the human species per se (1973(d):173-198 and passim). It might appear from this that Bateson did not escape a common fate of social anthropologists, that of extending his anthropological net to include everybody and every society. How far was he guilty of the secondary ethnocentrism against which Leach protested in his Rethinking Anthropology? Was Bateson still working out a model of Iatmul social dynamics in his work on the use of cybernetics in social research in the 1940s? Did the double bind theory of schizophrenia which he pioneered in the 1950s owe its origins to the application of bits and pieces of Iatmul and Balinese ethnography?

When Bateson's career is viewed in its entirety it is possible to discern a pattern which subtly resists any attempt at translation into a simple "grand theory". There is no Batesonian model of mankind to set beside Lévi-Strauss's homo sapiens structuralis. There is however a recognisable Batesonian methodology with its unique combination of biology, systems theory and a humanist aesthetics which seeks to privilege neither behaviour nor creativity but to see one reflected in the other. There are a number of important themes which run all the way through his writing, from Naven to the posthumously published Angels Fear (1987). These include the relationship between culture and nature; the differences in forms of explanation, understanding and interpretation in science, art and anthropology and psychiatry; and mental process as the workings of a hierarchical order immanent in both thought and in evolution. For Bateson, it was important to view mind and nature, as he put it in the title of his last book, as a 'necessary unity' (1980). In words written at the end of his life, he described how he saw rigour and imagination, 'the two great contraries of mental process', as analogous to genetic replication and mutation respectively (1980: 233 and passim).

Whatever his reputation as an anthropologist, Gregory Bateson remained a natural scientist all his life. He was never exclusively one nor the other, but a combination. It must be said that the anthropologist and the natural scientist were often at odds, but the resulting tensions produced some remarkable work. These tensions have been convincingly and evocatively traced to their origins in Bateson's family background by David Lipset in the latter's detailed intellectual biography (1982). Lipset's preface refers to the cultural milieu of late Victorian England as one in which

'ecclesiastical society was strained by the emergence of modern knowledge, statuses, sex roles, family, and education. An abundance of highly charged polarities marked thinking then: spiritualism - evolutionism, idealism - materialism and classicism - modernism' (Lipset 1982: xii).

There were clashes between priests and scientists, and between fathers and sons, and many uncompromising attitudes were taken up. But there were a few individuals whose destinies required an attempt to resolve these and other dualisms. Gregory Bateson was one such individual: he was not

'a man who found his niche, nor...one who fit neatly within social and professional life. Rather, (he was) ... a doubly anachronistic man, who was both ahead of and behind his times' (1982: xii, my parenthesis).

Bateson was born in 1904, the youngest of three sons to the prominent Cambridge biologist William Bateson. The latter, a brilliant scientist who coined the term "genetics" and whose pioneering work in that field made him a leading figure in the post-Darwinian natural sciences, was a connoisseur of art and literature. Bateson's father saw art as not only a healthy antidote to scientific rigour, but as a kind of precondition for it. Lipset quotes Bateson senior as having written:

'If there had been no poets there would have been no problems, for surely the unlettered scientist of today would never have found them. To him it is easier to solve a difficulty than to feel it. It is good, besides, that the Science man should be made to know that there was a people as sharp as he is, who saw the same Nature as he sees, who read it otherwise with no less confidence than he' (William Bateson, quoted in Lipset 1982: 19)

For Gregory Bateson, however, the relationship between what might be termed aesthetic appreciation on the one hand, and intellectual appreciation on the other, was to prove less comfortable and more problematic than this. If the father noted and even applauded the dichotomy, it was left to the son to attempt to resolve it. Indeed, it can be argued that the tension between these two ways of seeing the world provides one of the basic themes of Naven.

Gregory Bateson's later concerns are prefigured elsewhere in his father's comments in 1908 on Mendel's theory:

'We are accustomed to think of a man, a butterfly, or an apple tree as each one thing. In order to understand the significance of Mendelism we must get thoroughly familiar with the fact that they are each two things, double throughout every part of their composition. There is perhaps no better exercise as a preparation for genetic research than to examine the people one meets in daily life and to try in a rough way to analyze them into the two assemblages of characters which are united in them' (William Bateson, quoted in Lipset 1982: 36, Bateson's emphases).

In his scientific work, William Bateson was convinced that division lay at the heart of heredity and variation. He wrote in 1909:

'In the symmetry of the dividing cell the basis of that resemblance we call Heredity is contained. To imitate that morphological phenomena of life we have to devise a system which can divide. It must be able to divide, and to segment as - grossly - a vibrating plate or rod does, or as an icicle can do as it becomes ribbed in a continuous stream of water; but with this distinction, that the distribution of chemical differences and properties must simultaneously be decided and disposed in orderly relation to the pattern of the segmentation' (William Bateson, quoted in Lipset 1982: 23).

This corrective force he described as a kind of 'polarity' which

'cannot be a property of...material, as such, but is determined by a force acting on the material, just as the polarity of the magnet is not determined by the arrangement of its particles, but by the direction in which the current flows' (quoted in Lipset 1982: 23).

Twenty-five years later, in his major work on Iatmul society and culture, Gregory Bateson was to augment this notion of symmetrical division with that of a complementary pattern. It is possible to argue that the first intimations of the model of schismogenetic

social interaction are to be found scattered in the writings of Bateson's father.

Around the turn of the century William Bateson introduced the principles of Mendelian selection to England, and in 1905 he and his colleagues proposed to call their study of heredity and variation "genetics". Lipset's account shows that the inspiration for this new science of genetics sprang from a source which was distrustful of both materialism and utilitarianism. A belief in the 'rhythmic order' of nature was a foundation for all Bateson senior's work.

'He tried to express this in terms of visual and formal analogies to phenomena which possessed rhythmic order and contained undulatory motion, or what he came to call vibrations. Sand ripples on the beach, the zebra's stripes, waves, and organic segmentation all offered themselves as instances of both form and periodic oscillation which Bateson suggested were "comparable" to the series of segments formed by "the communication of vibrations in an Elastic Body" ' (Lipset 1982: 22-23).

I mention here in passing Lipset's observation that at least one historian of science, William Coleman, has argued that Bateson's notion of 'rhythmic order' owed much to his life-long friendship with the philosopher Whitehead. The two men

'shared not only interest and understanding of art and the classics but concern for a pressing problem, how to reconcile pattern or form, the product or companion of changeless geometry, with the inescapable dynamism of nature' (Coleman 1971, quoted in Lipset 1982: fn 22).

This is of interest, not only because it prefigures Gregory Bateson's own concerns with the dual demands of 'rigour and imagination', but also because Whitehead was the co-author with Bertrand Russell of Principia Mathematica. This work, and in particular the theory of "logical types" which issued from it, was to exert a considerable influence on Gregory Bateson's thinking. I will be dealing with this topic in my Chapters Ten and Twelve.

Gregory Bateson passed the Natural Science Tripos at Cambridge with first class honours in 1923, and in January of the following year he was chosen to retrace Darwin's steps in the Galapagos Islands as temporary naturalist on the yacht of a vacationing millionaire. After spending his 21st birthday thus engaged, he returned to Cambridge rather at a loss as to what to do next. Family pressures seemed to be increasingly irritating him, as well as a growing feeling of awkwardness with his position within the Cambridge academic elite as a "Bateson". He resented the path, albeit a brilliant one, which had been mapped out for him. Lipset quotes him saying, about this period:

'I moved out of zoology - to get into something in which I was me and not son of...It bothered me that I was named Gregory, after Gregor Mendel' (Bateson, quoted in Lipset 1982: 113).

Readers of Naven may recall the legend recounted in the Foreword, to the effect that Bateson was introduced to anthropology by A.C. Haddon 'telling me in a railway train between Cambridge and King's Lynn that he would train me and send me to New Guinea' (Bateson 1936: ix). It seems from Lipset's account that Bateson was drawn to anthropology more in a spirit of the elimination of alternatives than by a positive impulse; he had dipped into psychology and found that it 'didn't make much sense' (Bateson, quoted in Lipset 1982: 114). Haddon's own background seemed an instructive example to Bateson; like many other early British anthropologists he had originally trained as a natural scientist. On the expedition to the Torres Strait in 1898 he switched from marine biology to anthropology. By the time he collared Gregory Bateson in 1925, Haddon was becoming, with Seligman and Rivers, a member of an older generation of British anthropologists, a generation which, via an intermediate enthusiasm for "diffusionism", had left behind the speculative historicism of the Tylor - Frazer era for a new concern with society, or rather with particular societies, studied intensively at first hand by means of the new method of field-work - or "participant observation" - established by Malinowski in the second decade of the twentieth century. In the terms of a later parlance, diachrony was giving way to synchrony; British anthropology was becoming British social anthropology.

The new school in British anthropology was called "functionā-ist" by Malinowski and his followers. Later, Radcliffe-Brown would claim that his "structural" approach had developed a more sociological foundation for the classic period of British field-work in the late 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. (1) In the mid 1920s British anthropologists were keen to establish their subject as a science in its own right, but when Gregory Bateson started attending Haddon's lectures at Cambridge he found little or no theoretical foundation in them. Bateson wrote in a letter in August 1925:

'It is terrible to find how shaky all the ground is on which the elements of anthropology...are based, and it will be so much more difficult to absorb the facts, there being no structure of theory upon which to hook them' (Bateson quoted in Lipset 1982: 114-115).

As for ethnography, there was little of the new anthropology in print in 1925. Malinowski had published The Family Among the Australian Aborigines in 1913 and the first of his works on the Trobrianders, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, in 1922. The founder and leading proponent of functionalism was just beginning his influential career as a teacher at the London School of Economics. Radcliffe-Brown, who was also to become a teacher of major influence in British anthropology, was teaching at the University of Cape Town. His monograph The Andaman Islanders had been published in 1922.

Functionalism, then, of an embryonic, crude and uncertain nature was the nascent trend in British social anthropology in 1925 when Gregory Bateson commenced his training in the subject. Along with classes in interview techniques, elementary phonetics and the collection of genealogies he was taught how to measure skulls with calipers. Lipset records Bateson's impressions of Malinowski as follows; the quotation throws interesting light on Bateson's later disquisitions on the inadequacies of functionalism in Naven.

'My view was that he (Malinowski) was rather an amusing man, but a lousy anthropologist, a lousy theorist...The whole (Malinowskian) functional theory of human needs, that if you make a list of human needs, and then you dissect the culture on how it satisfies them - this seemed to be to me absolute balls. It being true, of course, that if the culture does not provide

the people any food, the people die. But that is not the same as saying that the food is provided to keep them alive; the food can be provided to give them social status, to ornament festivals, or any number of things' (Bateson, quoted in Lipset 1982: 123, author's parentheses).

After his initial training, Bateson set out for the field in January 1927. His destination was New Guinea, but his first attempts at ethnographic research - among the Baining and the Sulka - proved less than successful. It was only some two years later, in February 1929, that a cruise to the Sepik River region led him to the villages of the Iatmul (Lipset 1982: 125 - 130).

NOTES to Chapter Two

- (1) For a useful account of this early period in British social anthropology, see Kuper (1983, Chapters 1 & 2).

CHAPTER THREE: THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

MY ACCOUNT OF NAVEN will necessarily be incomplete, for it is a difficult book to summarise adequately. Part of this difficulty stems from the fact that it is not really one book, but several texts joined together in an elliptical, improvised way. The wording of the sub-title suggests as much. It reads: 'A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn From Three Points of View.'

Naven was written as an account of field-work. It took its title from the name which, according to Bateson, the Iatmul of New Guinea gave to a series of activities which took place particularly between close consanguineal and affinal kin. These activities seemed to be generated by achievements of social importance on the part of youngsters, specially boys. From his consideration of what he takes to be the relevant ethnographic details concerning these celebratory activities, Bateson develops his over-all 'Composite Picture' of Iatmul society and culture. But this is only one of the threads of the book. Interwoven with the ethnography, at times inextricably, is an argument about the framing of ethnographic data which, in places, becomes convoluted and, some might say, tediously obscure. The reader is constantly thrown between data and theory, and between varying models of the anthropological project, with such intellectual dexterity that it is easy for him or her to get lost. For every theoretical suggestion there seems to be a counter-suggestion; Bateson not only theorises, but he theorises about his theories. From the vantage point of 1989, Naven is a truly modern work. It was not, however, the kind of book which fitted the atmosphere of the British social anthropology of the 1930s.

Most ethnographers now tacitly admit, for better or worse, that all field-work reports are necessarily theoretical and that no anthropologist's observations are without bias of one kind or another. It has become a common-place that the anthropologist in the field is the product of a culture like anyone else, and that anthropologists carry as many preconceptions around with them as the members of any other

culture. Needham put the matter succinctly when he wrote that

'problems do not present themselves phenomenally: they have to be conceived, and this means the formulation of categories' (1971 xvi).

This dilemma, that the anthropologist enters the field with his intellectual baggage and that his bias will still be operating in his writing up, has been a core issue in post-war debates about the nature and integrity of the ethnographic enterprise. But when Bateson was working among the Iatmul the issue of conceptual ethnocentric bias had hardly been raised. In Naven this is not stated ostensibly, but it is a crucial theme.

The book is as much an intellectual autobiography as a work of anthropology. Argumentative coherence is often almost lost in the interweaving between these two threads. The question which links them, and which provides the raison d'être for Bateson's project, is: how is an adequate description of alien modes of life possible? Implicit here are two further questions: what form would such a description take? and what do we mean by description?

Bateson seems in no doubt as to the convention within which he is working. He assumes that a bedrock of security is provided by the idea of science. If we do science properly, he often seems to be saying, a proper description will emerge. It is science which will lead us to a precise kind of understanding which the art of the novelist, for example, can never provide us. Thus on the first page of his text, Bateson tells us that an artist is able to leave many of the 'premises' of a culture implicit in his description; the creative novelist can rely on 'emphasis'. The method of the artist is essentially 'impressionistic' rather than 'analytic', and his technique is foreign to the methods of science (1936: 1). This introductory chapter is a declaration of intent. The intent is avowedly scientific.

The first sentence of the book presents a picture of Bateson's ethnographic ideal, and it is worth quoting in full.

'If it were possible adequately to present the whole of a culture, stressing every aspect exactly as it is stressed in the culture itself, no single detail would appear bizarre or strange or arbitrary to the reader, but rather the details would all appear natural and reasonable as they do to the natives who have lived all their lives within the culture' (1936: 1).

He then polarises science and art as the two possible means by which this ideal can be attempted. Art, in the person of the 'creative novelist', is taken to task. The particular form of science developed by anthropology - by which Bateson means the structural-functionalism of the 1930s - has

'paid greatest attention to those aspects of culture which lend themselves most readily to description in analytic terms. They have described the structure of several societies and shown the main outlines of the pragmatic functioning of this structure' (1936: 2).

But there has been an important failure. For functionalism has

'scarcely attempted the delineation of those aspects of culture which the artist is able to express by impressionistic methods ...no functional study can ever be reasonably complete unless it links up the structure and pragmatic working of the culture with its emotional tone or ethos' (1936: 2).

Bateson's own text will show that this, as well as the other tasks he sets himself, is far from simple and that its execution involves a drastic explication - or, as one might say in a "postmodernist" age a "deconstruction" - of the very terms employed in stating the problem.

At the beginning of the book Bateson expresses a fundamental difficulty. If the success of the science of functionalist anthropology lies in the description and analysis of 'structure', or the 'pragmatic working of the culture', how can this be linked with a valid account of the 'emotional tone' - ethos, in Bateson's terminology - of the people? It is clear from these opening remarks that Bateson considers this issue of supreme importance. Is it possible for the anthropologist to produce a scientific account of the emotional lives of his subjects? The tension between the need for a description of social structure on the one hand, and of emotional tone on the other, introduces a theme of one of the major conflicts which the book

attempts to resolve. But this tension exists not only in a space between the anthropologist and the object of anthropology; it itself constitutes the primary problem for the anthropologist who has to mediate between his own subjectivity and an objectified subject, or group of subjects. In some sense, the object of the anthropologist's own subjectivity is constituted by a field of other subjectivities. In 1936, Bateson was unable to formulate the problem in this way, but by 1958 and the Epilogue to the 2nd edition of Naven, he could write:

'It is this fact - that the patterns of society as a major entity can by learning be introjected or conceptualized by the participant individuals - that makes anthropology and indeed the whole of behavioural science peculiarly difficult. The scientist is not the only human being in the picture. His subjects also are capable of all sorts of learning and conceptualization and even, like the scientist, they are capable of errors of conceptualization' (1958: 292)

Bateson goes to painstaking effort throughout his text to resolve the tension between "structure" and "ethos", and in the process he drives functionalist analysis to its limits and attempts to transcend it altogether. Whether he succeeded in this or not is debatable, but at any rate the theoretical by-product of the struggle resulted in a text which has enduring value for both the past history and the present debates of social anthropology.

Despite the book being littered with the words "science" and "scientist", as if he is constantly reminding us that anthropology is a science and that the anthropologist is, necessarily, a scientist, nowhere in the book does Bateson define what he means by "science". This might be due to his taking the notion for granted; at the same time, it appears from his text that he was increasingly uncertain, not so much as to whether his search for a truly scientific anthropological method and style could prove successful, as to what kind of language such a scientific discourse would employ. It is this complex search, for a method, a style and a language, and the subtle interplay between them, which makes Naven such a difficult work, and at the same time such an important one.

Much of the tenor of the writing in the book is displayed in the opening sentence of the Epilogue to the first edition of 1936.

'The writing of this book has been an experiment, or rather a series of experiments, in methods of thinking about anthropological material' (1936: 257).

But experiments are attempts to validate hypotheses. What are the hypotheses that Bateson is attempting to validate here? A major irony of the book in the terms of the above quote is that Bateson thought that its conclusions did not in fact "prove" anything, unless perhaps it was that social anthropology is not a science and can never be one. I suggest that this is one of the book's major strengths; but Bateson, at least at the time of the first edition of 1936, obviously felt that any such conclusion would indicate that he had failed.

'It is clear that I have contributed but little to our store of anthropological facts and that the information about Iatmul culture which I have used in the various chapters does no more than illustrate my methods. Even for purposes of illustration my supply of facts is meagre, and I certainly cannot claim that my facts have demonstrated the truth of any theory' (1936: 278 - 279).

But this note of pessimism should be read alongside the Epilogue to the second edition of 1958. By this time Bateson's search for a valid scientific method in anthropology seems to be on firmer ground. (1)

I have extracted four main themes from Bateson's Naven. The first is his attempt to apply the classic structural-functionalist model of social structure to his material. He recognises the inadequacy of this model from the beginning, and an important early section of his text is devoted to an exploration of the concepts of "structure" and "function". A rigorous critique of these concepts leads to my second theme, which is developed through Bateson's need to substitute his own models and his own theoretical concepts. These concepts go far beyond what he perceives as the limitations of functionalism. Three important such concepts can be listed; namely ethos, eidos and schismogenesis. I deal with each of these

in my Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten.

A major contribution to the concepts of ethos and eidos is provided by the third theme, namely the influence of the American school of anthropology represented by Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. Benedict's concept of "configuration" was a major inspiration for Bateson's "ethos" and "eidos". This third theme is important for an understanding of Naven, for Benedict and Mead showed Bateson that there was an alternative approach to anthropology from the British functionalism in which he had been trained and which, at the outset, he had seen - albeit with suspicious eyes - as a valid scientific methodology and a logical progression of his own earlier training as a natural scientist.

My fourth theme is highlighted in Bateson's 1958 Epilogue, which reflects in important ways many of his concerns in the years following the original publication of Naven in 1936. This theme deals with the twin notions of schismogenic interaction and the use of cybernetic models in social analysis. These were of central importance in the work Bateson carried out when he left anthropology to work in other fields.

I begin my exposition of the book with an account of Bateson's introductory data. He carried out field-work amongst the Iatmul from 1929 until 1930, and again from 1932 until 1933. The Iatmul lived on the Sepik River in New Guinea in large villages, each of which numbered between two hundred and a thousand people. They had been head hunters until only a few years before Bateson's field-work. Social organisation, kinship and religious systems were complex. Each community was divided into groups according to two independent systems which showed little congruence. There was a division into two totemic moieties, which were further subdivided into clans. There was also a division into two cross-cutting pairs of initiatory moieties which were subdivided into age grades. None of these groups was strictly exogamous. Membership of all

groups was determined by patrilineal descent (1936: 4). (2)

Bateson does not provide any comprehensive account of Iatmul economy or religion. Economic considerations are discussed in his chapters on male and female ethos, which I deal with in some detail in Chapters Seven and Eight. It would appear from Bateson's scattered comments on economy that the Iatmul lived by a combination of pig rearing, fishing and gardening, with women playing a major role in food production. From the paucity of his attention to Iatmul economy it is apparent that Bateson was not much interested in the subject. It did not have a place in his analysis of the naven and this fact may have vitiated his findings, as I will suggest later in my critique.

Religious life among the Iatmul appears, from Bateson's references to the matter, and from his chapter 'Sorcery and Vengeance', to have centred around a belief in ancestral spirits, or wagans, which were implicated in revenge sorcery, and a complex totemic naming system governing the nomenclature of both individuals and groups.

The crucial kin categories for Bateson's purposes were those of wau (or mother's brother = MB) and laua (sister's child, either ZS = sister's son or ZD = sister's daughter). (See Diagram 1, p 48.) Despite the emphasis on patriliney

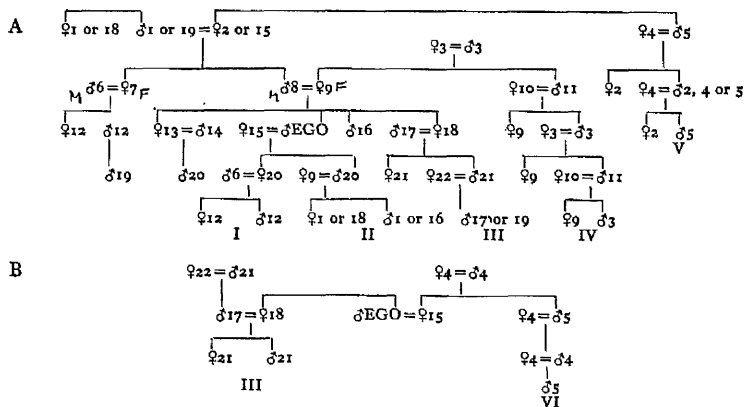
'the people pay a great deal of attention to kinship links through the mother or sister...both the patrilineal and matrilineal links are preserved in a classificatory system through many generations' (1936: 4).

The kin terms wau and laua are used not only to denote own mother's brother (MB) and sister's son (ZS), but are also used between classificatory MB and ZS,

'so that the term wau includes such relatives as mother's mother's sister's son, even though all three of the intervening women through whom the kinship is traced have married into different clans' (1936: 4-5)

Diagram 1. Iatmul Kinship Terminology, Reproduced from Bateson's Naven (1936).

DIAGRAM OF KINSHIP TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK



KEY

A, Consanguineous terms (m.s.). B, Affinal terms (m.s.). ♂, male. ♀, female. =, marriage. |, descent. [] siblingship. Arabic numbers refer to terms for individuals. Roman numbers refer to terms for patrilineal groups seen collectively.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. nggwail. | 4. naisagut. | 7. iau. | 10. mbora. | 13. tshaihi. | 16. tshuambo. | 19. ianan. | 21. laua. |
| 2. iai. | 5. tawonto. | 8. nyai'. | 11. wau. | 14. nyamun. | 17. lando. | 20. nian. | 22. kaishe-ragwoa. |
| 3. mbuambo. | 6. nondu. | 9. nyame. | 12. na. | 15. tagua. | 18. nyanggai. | | |
- I. kaishe-nampa.
 II. Own clan
 III. lanoa-nampa or laua nyangu.
 IV. wau-nyame. (Son's iai nampa.)
 V. iai-nampa. (Become totua-naisagut if EGO marries one of their women.)
 VI. totua-naisagut. (Son's wau-nyame.)

At the end of his first chapter Bateson writes that he will be concerned chiefly with the relations between classificatory waus and lauas.

Bateson's second chapter gives an introductory account of the activities which the Iatmul called naven.

'The ceremonies are called naven and are performed in celebration of the acts and achievements of the laua (sister's child). Whenever a laua - boy or girl, man or woman - performs some standard cultural act, and especially when the child performs this act for the first time in its life, the occasion may be celebrated by its wau. The possible occasions for the performance of naven are very numerous and very frequent' (Bateson 1936: 6).

It is necessary to note here that throughout the book Bateson concentrates on naven celebrated for boys; in this second chapter, for example, four pages are devoted to listing occasions on which naven may be celebrated for boys, whereas a little over half a page is given to those occasions when it may be celebrated for girls. The words 'may be' are important here, and they are used instead of a more definite statement. One might also note the wording of the last sentence in the above quotation: 'the possible occasions for the performance of naven' (my emphasis). It seems that from the outset Bateson is in some doubt as to the nature of the relationship between 'achievements' of the sister's child, and the 'celebrations' which may or may not accompany them. Is naven performed sometimes, on the occasion of an achievement, or often on such an occasion? What contingent factors determine whether or not a naven is performed? Bateson does not enlarge on these important points.

Bateson's list of achievements on the part of boys which may result in naven behaviour is divided into five sections. First we are told that major achievements may result in a naven whenever they are performed. At the top of the list is a homicide, or any activity which assists the killing of a human being (1936: 6). This had not been possible since the prohibition of head-hunting by the colonial authorities. Also included in this section is the killing of any large animal, such as a crocodile or wild pig. Next, we are told that 'minor cultural acts' may result in naven, but only on the first occasion on which they are carried out. Such achievements include the killing of smaller animals, fish or birds, felling a

sago palm, using an axe or knife, beating a drum, and so on. It appears from Bateson's list that practically any activity of any social or cultural importance carried out for the first time by the laua might be an occasion for naven.

In the next section of the list we are told that any act on the part of the male laua which is characteristic of his relationship with his mother's brother will result in naven. Such acts include ceremonial connected with the totemic ancestors of wau's clan, and musical activities, as well as more practical activities which assist the wau, such as house building and support in debates in the men's house.

The fourth section covers occasions when the laua indulges in boasting in the presence of his wau. This will provoke naven behaviour by the wau 'if it is carried to excess' although 'it is correct for a boy to boast in the presence of his wau' (1936: 8). (3) In this particular context, that is of excessive boasting on the part of the laua in the presence of his wau, wau will respond with a gesture, in Bateson's words, 'suggestive of turning his buttocks to his laua' (1936: 8). But he continues:

'I have never seen the complete gesture of rubbing the buttocks on the laua's shin, the climax of the naven, carried out in reply to laua's boasts; usually the threat is enough to curb the young man's tongue. But it is generally stated that, when exasperated, a wau may complete the gesture and, by so doing, involve the laua in a presentation of valuables to the wau' (1936: 8).

He then writes that although it is 'probable' that this boasting behaviour is part of the role which laua is expected to play vis-à-vis his wau, the reaction of the wau to such boasting is one of anger or annoyance. This, Bateson argues, marks it out from all other naven behaviour on the part of wau, which is complimentary and congratulatory towards laua in respect of the latter's achievements. It is a case which 'differs from the others' (1936: 8). But we have just been told (see the preceding paragraph) that this 'special case', involving what might be called a ritually obscene gesture, is 'the climax of the naven'. This gesture will play a central part in Bateson's analysis

of all naven behaviour. It should also be remembered that Bateson claims that he has never seen the 'complete gesture' (1936: 8).

The final category of events Bateson lists as evoking naven is made up of 'changes in social status' (1936: 8). He emphasises that naven is not a rite de passage, and that even the description 'changes in social status' is of doubtful accuracy. In the context of the graded initiatory system, crucial for the life cycle of the Iatmul male, the wau does not celebrate the promotion of the young man from grade to grade, but the ceremony of initiation itself which often takes place sometime before the shift in age-grade membership. The changes for the male laua which may be occasions for naven include ear boring, boring of the nasal septum, initiation, marriage and his becoming possessed by a shamanic spirit (1936: 8 - 9).

The birth and death of a laua are not occasions for naven, according to Bateson, although he seems in some doubt about this. For example, when the sister's son is born, the wau approaches the child and presents it with a coconut and a personal name which is connected to the totemic ancestors of wau's clan.

'Though I have never seen this done I believe that the wau might well exclaim: "Lan men to!" (Husband thou indeed!) when the baby gripped his fingers' (1936: 9).

Bateson goes on to say that this exclamation on the part of the wau is a characteristic detail of naven behaviour. He does not explore the seeming contradiction in his data that although laua's birth is not an occasion for naven, the wau may respond to the birth with a verbal communication closely associated with the naven.

This is one of several passages in the introductory section of Bateson's text in which the author seems to have some difficulty in extrapolating what he definitely takes to be naven behaviour or, to use his own oft-repeated word, 'ceremonial', from the general nexus of behaviour between wau and laua. At the point in his text I am examining here, for example, Bateson writes that as far as laua's birth is concerned

'we shall see...that the giving of the special name is an act which demonstrates the existence of the wau-laua relationship; and that the coconut is the first in a long series of gift exchanges which will accompany naven and other ceremonies' (1936: 9).

But where does behaviour generally typical of the relationship between wau and laua end, and naven behaviour proper begin? Does such a cut-off point exist? Is it implied that all behaviour between a wau and his laua is in some sense naven behaviour?

Again, when laua dies Bateson states that no naven occurs. However

'the classificatory wau plays an important part in the mortuary ceremonies, and finally claims the dead man as in some special sense a member of the maternal clan'. (1936: 9).

After death, the ghost will live in the land of the dead under the names which the wau has given him. No details are provided of these mortuary ceremonies, except that the dead man is claimed by the wau, who pulls the figure which represents the deceased towards himself with a hook.

Neither are we given any explicit details of wau's actual behaviour on the occasion of laua's marriage, except that the former celebrates at this time. Bateson is again vague.

'The event of marriage may be celebrated not only by wau, but also, I believe, by tawontu (wife's brother). In one of the myths which I collected, there occurs a casual mention of the fact that a bride's own brother rubs his buttocks on the bridegroom's shin. I do not know of any other occasion which is celebrated in this way by tawontu' (1936: 9-10).

Bateson then gives a brief list of achievements in the life of female laua which may result in naven. These are rarer than for males, and include catching fish, cooking, making a rain cape or a mosquito bag and bearing a child. Initiation and dancing are also included. Bateson says that he does not know anything about boasting behaviour on the part of girls vis-à-vis their waus. The wau's gesture of rubbing his buttocks against the laua is specifically a part of the boys' naven, but Bateson writes that there might be

'an analogue of this gesture in the ceremonies for a girl...
in the pantomime of her birth from the belly of wau'
(1936: 10, cf pp 58-59 below).

Chapter II continues with an account of the naven activities which Bateson witnessed and about which he was told by informants. This is followed by a passage called 'Description of the Ceremonies'. First, we are told that despite the long list of possible occasions for the carrying out of naven, large naven ceremonies are not often performed, perhaps because of the expense involved.

'In most instances, if the laua's achievement is brought to the notice of the wau, the latter only exclaims: "Lan men to!" (Husband thou indeed!), throws lime over his laua and hails him ceremonially with a string of names of ancestors of wau's clan' (1936: 10).

He then says that there are many naven which are only celebrated 'on a small scale'. He cannot say how frequently these are performed 'because I may often have heard nothing of such occurrences even though they took place while I was in the village.' He only witnessed five naven in fact 'in which any of the ritual was carried out' (1936: 11).

These took place in four separate villages. One of the occasions was for a group of children who had been working sago, both boys and girls. Two more were for a boy who had made a canoe and for a young man who had killed a pig and provided a feast. In both these instances, only the women participated while the was ignored the events. It seems remarkable that Bateson could call these events naven in the absence of any activity on the part of the was. His phrase 'the was apparently ignoring the occasions' (1936: 11), however, suggests that they were aware of the proceedings in some way.

On the fourth occasion of a naven including 'ritual' witnessed by Bateson, only was took part, without the participation of any women. The final occasion occurred when a wau rushed into a group of dancers and rubbed his buttocks on the shin of a male laua who was impersonating one of the wau's ancestors (1936: 11). Apart from these five instances which he witnessed, Bateson's account on his own admission is based on informants' statements. The reader

might be confused by his statement here that 'I have only witnessed five naven in which any of the ritual was carried out' (1936: 11). What precisely does he mean by this? What exactly is the difference between an activity which is naven and which involves 'ritual', and naven which is not - in Bateson's terms, at any rate - elaborated ritually? What would a naven which did not involve what Bateson calls 'ritual' look like? Would such an event be possible? Nowhere in his text does Bateson attempt a definition or discussion of the denotation or connotation of the terms 'ritual' and 'ceremonial'; these are taken for granted by him. I suggest that he was led astray by the power of these terms in the anthropology of his day, and that his search for a particular delimited field of behaviour which he could call 'naven' (read here 'ritual' or 'ceremonial') behaviour vitiated his analysis. I shall expand on this point later throughout the thesis.

The following section is titled 'Description of the Ceremonies'. It begins:

'The outstanding feature of the ceremonies is the dressing of men in women's clothes and of women in the clothes of men. The classificatory wau dresses himself in the most filthy of widow's weeds, and when so arrayed he is referred to as "nyame" ("mother")' (1936: 12).

From the text immediately after, it is apparent that Bateson is referring to one particular instance here, the naven in the village of Palimbai which he had witnessed, performed for a young man who had made a large canoe for the first time. A number of photographs illustrate the event. Two classificatory was are shown wearing dirty, ragged skirts, and they are smeared with ashes, like widows. Their outfits, which include tattered capes worn on their heads and pieces of old sago pancakes inserted in their noses, was 'directed towards creating an effect of utter decrepitude' (1936: 12). Also, Bateson reports that 'their bellies were bound with string like those of pregnant women' (1936: 12). I refer to this apparently ugly caricaturing of motherhood below, cf p 57. Bateson then describes the behaviour of the was in this event.

'In this disgusting costume and with absolutely grave faces (their gravity was noted with special approbation by the bystanders), the two "mothers" hobbled about the village each using as a walking stick a short shafted paddle such as women use. Indeed, even with this support, they could hardly walk, so decrepit were they. The children of the village greeted these figures with screams of laughter and thronged around the two "mothers", following wherever they went and bursting into new shrieks whenever the "mothers", in their feebleness, stumbled and fell and, falling, demonstrated their femaleness by assuming on the ground grotesque attitudes with their legs widespread' (1936: 12).

The two was-as-mothers wandered through the village in search of their 'child' (the laua), enquiring in high-pitched, cracked voices as to his whereabouts, saying ' "We have a fowl to give to the young man" ' (1936: 12). The laua had absented himself from the event.

'As soon as he found out that his was were going to shame themselves in this way, he went away to avoid the spectacle of their degraded behaviour' (1936: 13).

I should note here that in this instance, which would seem to be a fairly elaborated example of naven, the laua chose not to take part at all, which would seem to conflict with the impression we have been given that naven is essentially a kind of inter-action between wau and laua. Again Bateson states that wau should rub his buttocks against his laua's leg, which will result in 'the laua (making) haste to get valuables which he may present to his wau!'. (1936: 13). Bateson writes that the laua should present valuables each time the wau makes the gesture: 'one shell for each rubbing of the buttocks' (1936: 13). According to Bateson, the Iatmul say that the valuables thus presented to the wau will 'make him all right'. Bateson then declares that he saw this gesture made only once, during the dance in the village of Malinggai. But this would appear to contradict his statement - made in the paragraph dealing with naven occasioned by excessive boasting on the part of the laua (1936: 8) - that 'I have never seen the complete gesture of rubbing the buttocks on the laua's shin, the climax of the naven...'

But if the example quoted above from Malinggai village does not constitute the 'complete gesture', then what would? (Would Bateson

have recognised 'the complete gesture' if he had seen it?) It seems again as if Bateson is having difficulty in delimiting 'naven' behaviour proper, and that he is sifting through his ethnographic data seeking some kind of ideal type of naven behaviour which, whenever he describes what he takes to be an actual instance, does not actually appear.

In the particular case he is describing here, the two waus failed to find the laua and they went to the canoe which the young man had made. They collapsed in the craft in a state of disarray, their legs wide apart. A photograph illustrates this. They then sat down, took up the paddles and went for a short voyage on the lake. Iatmul men stand to paddle a canoe, while women sit. Ashore again, the waus hobbled away.

'The performance was over and they went away and washed themselves and put on their ordinary garments' (1936: 14).

The exchange of valuables between wau and laua might or might not be made face to face. In this case, it was made indirectly.

'The fowl was finally given to the laua and it became his duty to make a present of shell valuables to his wau at some later date' (1936: 14).

Is this exchange of gifts between wau and laua made only in the context of naven? Apparently it is not, for Bateson notes that

'return presents of this kind are ceremonially given, generally on occasions when some other dances are being performed. The shells are tied to a spear and so presented to the wau' (1936: 14).

Bateson then reports that in more elaborate naven, ritual behaviour spreads to involve not only the classificatory relatives of the laua, but also other persons who might perform naven directed at individuals who are identified with the laua. This is specially so when women take part. Elder brothers' wives will beat their husbands' younger brother when the latter's achievements are being celebrated. Further:

'owing to the classificatory spreading of the naven not only does the boy who has worked sago get beaten by his elder brother's wives, but also the boy's father's elder brothers' wives get up and beat the father' (1936: 14).

And as far as gift giving is concerned, in this instance we are told that men who are not the was actually performing, may give presentations of food to their own lauas.

In the naven in Mindimbit village mentioned above for a group of children who had worked sago for the first time - only female kin took part - the women's costumes and bearing were smart and proud, in contrast to the filthy, bedraggled attire and bumbling, comic gait of the was described in the Palimbai naven given for the construction of a large canoe. The female relatives involved, both real and classificatory, were sisters, fathers' sisters and elder brothers' wives, all dressed as men. They borrowed the best feather headdresses and ornaments symbolising homicide from their menfolk, they painted the men's lime boxes and the serrated lime sticks which bear a tally of the number of men killed by the owner. The women were proud of their male finery and sauntered about expressing anger, pride and assertiveness. The mothers and mothers' brothers' wives, however, did not dress as men. The mother merely took off her skirt, and the mothers' brothers' wives wore filthy widows' costumes, like the was described earlier (1936: 14-15).

As well as the change in costume and bearing, these female kin were also addressed by different kin terms to the norm, all of which contained a suffix meaning 'man'. Thus, father's sister was called 'father', elder brother's wife was called 'elder brother' and so on. The mother, however, did not acquire such a male kin designation (1936: 15). I would suggest that the data outlined in the above two paragraphs, together with the caricaturing of motherhood in the Palimbai naven (cf my pp 54-56), indicates a possible denigratory attitude towards motherhood - and, by implication, towards nurturing? - amongst the Iatmul or at least amongst Iatmul men. I will develop this theme in later chapters. (4)

When the canoe brought the children back from the sago swamps, the women assembled and splashed the children, as if they were men returning from a successful head-hunting raid. The children landed and

'the village appeared to go mad for a while; fathers' sisters and elder brothers' wives dashing about searching respectively for their various brothers' children and husbands' younger brothers in order to beat them' (1936: 16).

The men concerned hid in the ceremonial houses which are usually considered men's sanctuaries where women must not go, but on such occasions the women have the licence to enter the men's houses in search of the appropriate victims to beat them, and to chase them if they run away. Bateson did not on this occasion see any activities on the part of the mothers and sisters. The other women, dressed as men, continued their performance throughout the day. In the evening the women danced by themselves. In the manner of the men, who often take off their pubic aprons and dance after dark, the women danced with their bodies uncovered, although still wearing their head-dresses and ornaments. Some of the older men expressed shock at this (1936: 16-17).

Bateson was told of another naven held in Mindimbit village for a little girl who had caught a fish. This occasion was more elaborate. Bateson suggests that this might have been because the waus involved were intent on obtaining shells in return for the pigs which they gave to the lauas. Bateson was told that both males and females took part. Two more little girls were also honoured, but we are not given further details about this. Eight pigs were killed, and everybody in the village appeared to take part. In this instance then, the naven activities, far from being limited to inter-action between specific kin, clearly amounted to a celebration which involved an entire community. It even went beyond that particular village, since 'one pig was even presented to a classificatory laua in the next village' (1936: 17).

According to Bateson's informants, the four waus involved had dressed as 'mothers', with their clothes tucked up to expose their genitals. Three of these 'mothers' had carried the little girls 'on their heads', supposedly in the manner in which Iatmul mothers carry their children on their shoulders. The fourth wau, who did not wear a skirt at all, was tied down on a stretcher on which he was rocked violently by a group of men who sang songs from their clan. The little girl in whose honour the naven was being

principally celebrated was placed on the wau's belly, while her father stood by with an adze decorated with a mother-of-pearl. The father gave the adze to the girl, who then used it to cut the ropes which tied her wau down on the stretcher. She gave the adze to the wau, while he raised himself to a sitting position. The fathers of the other girls presented gifts to the girls' waus and also loosened the waus' skirts. The waus then changed into their normal male costumes. While this was going on, a mother's brother's wife - the wife of the wau who had been tied to the stretcher - danced with her skirts up, showing her genitals. Over her head and face she wore a string bag, and she carried a digging stick, which she held behind her shoulders with her hands raised. After her dance she was presented with a mother-of-pearl ornament and three shells by the little girl's father (1936: 17-18).

Bateson writes that the scene on the stretcher appeared to him to be a 'ritual pantomime...a representation of the birth of the little girl from the belly of her mother's brother' (1936: 18). But he admits that none of his informants had heard of the custom of tying a woman in labour to a stretcher. Similarly, he feels that the dance of the mother's brother's wife is also a representation of a woman giving birth.

Next, according to Bateson,

'a general presentation of food and valuables followed this ceremony' (1936: 18).

It is interesting that he uses the word 'ceremony' immediately after attempting an interpretation, pointedly symbolic, of the performance. There is, however, no mention of any further instances of this 'ceremony' in the rest of the book. Neither is any mention made of any further instances of the particular kind of naven recounted from Palimbai village, in which the two waus-as-mothers sought the laua without success, and then collapsed into the canoe. It seems that Bateson is seeking a symbolic explanation, or interpretation, for a performance which he has called a 'ceremony'. Yet he gives no evidence that it is a ceremony at all, in that it might well have

been a unique event taking place in particular circumstances with, as one might say, a particular "script" and a particular "cast". Admittedly, it might be a unique event which takes place within a more general context, that of naven behaviour, or of what I could call "naveness". I suggest that we are faced here with an attempt to provide a symbolic interpretation of what is assumed to be a regular stereotyped act (of the kind which might conventionally be described in words such as "at harvest time the So-and-So parade around the village..."), when the performance in question may have been a unique, improvised event.

Bateson's account continues with what his informants had told him of the naven in Mindimbit village: during the presentation of food and valuables, eight pigs were killed and presented. One was given by her wau to the little girl who had caught a fish. She stepped upon it - 'ceremonially', in Bateson's words (1936:18), though presumably not in those of his informants. Three pigs were given by waus to their classificatory lauas. One was given by a woman to her husband's sister's child. One was given to a classificatory sister's husband, and another to a widowed classificatory sister. Bateson then comments on the nexus of gift exchanges which seemed to him to be an important part of all naven activities:

'this pattern is further extended so that the exchanges actually take place between the relatives of wives on the one hand and the relatives of husbands on the other' (1936: 19).

What happens, on this account, is that the wife's clan, including her classificatory brothers, give pigs to the husband, husband's son or the husband's father. The Iatmul phrase the situation by saying that the wau-nyame nampa (mother's brother and mother people) give pigs to the lanoa nampa (husband people) or the laua nyanggu (sister's children people) (1936: 19). In terms of Iatmul kin terminology, these two last are almost synonymous (1936: 19). In the return presentation, of shells and other valuables, the classificatory brothers and other relatives of the recipients of pigs will contribute to the valuables which make up

the reciprocal gifts

'so that the list was exceedingly elaborate and involved a great number of people, related in the most various ways to the original donors of the pigs' (1936: 19).

It appears that what Bateson is describing here is a classic example of gift exchange which, from his ethnographic examples, might be on any scale ranging from a simple dyadic transaction up to a network of massive reciprocal exchange which can involve an entire village and, further, classificatory kin in other villages too.

The final example of a naven of which Bateson gives a detailed account is that for a successful homicide on the occasion of his first kill. Owing to the influence of the colonial authorities and the outlawing of head-hunting, such a celebration would have belonged to the past. We must remember here that Bateson's material concerning this example again came from informants' accounts.

Some of the details we have encountered already are repeated, but we are told of four more incidents which Bateson refers to as 'pantomime' and which

'all...involve the same types of transvestism which I have described above' (1936: 19).

The exception seems to be the costume of the mother's brother's wife (mbora), who wears ragged female clothes in the first incident but puts on (probably ragged) men's clothes in the second and third incidents.

In the first incident about which Bateson was told, the mother's brother's wife danced in a bedraggled skirt, wearing a fishing net on her head. The enemy head was suspended from her neck. With her hands half raised she held a digging stick behind her shoulders. She danced until sunset when the husband's sister's son (nasa) presented a shell tied to a spear, at the same time loosening the skirt from his mbora (mother's brother's wife = MBW). In the second incident, the father's sisters (iau-ndo = FZ) dressed as men and carried in their hands the kind of feather ornament which the

homicide will put in his head-dress. The mother's brother's wives in male costume (mbora-ndo) then lay down on the ground, and the iau-ndo then stepped across them carrying the special feathers. The mbora-ndo snatched the feathers and ran off with them (1936: 19-20).

In the third incident the wau donned a skirt, put an orange-coloured fruit in his anus and climbed a ladder against the wall of a house, displaying his anatomical ornament as he did so. At the top of the ladder he mimed an act of sexual intercourse with his wife, who was dressed as, and acted the part of, a man. The laua was much ashamed at this sight, and laua's sister wept. Bateson writes here that the orange fruit represented

'an anal clitoris, an anatomical feature frequently imagined by the Iatmul and appropriate to the wau's assumption of grotesque femininity. My informant told me that, after the mbora, acting as male, had copulated with the wau, the other women would all follow suit - and we may imagine a scene of considerable confusion around the unfortunate wau' (1936: 20).

In the fourth incident, a large pear-shaped prawn trap with a lobster pot entrance was raised on to the ladder of a house. All the women of the village lay naked on the ground, in front of the ladder. The homicide then stepped over the women, to enter the house, accompanied by his sister. There is a contradiction here in Bateson's account, because as Bateson also says that 'the only women over whom he (the laua) would not step are his sister and his wife' (1936: 20), we must assume that sister (Z) and wife (W) are not included in 'all' or that there is a lacuna somewhere in the data. The young man was ashamed to look at the genitals of the women as he stepped over them, and he walked with his head raised. The sister displayed no such modesty, and even attacked the prone women's genitals with her hands, particularly those of the tshaishi (elder brother's wife), calling out "A vulva!" Upon which the tshaishi replied "No! A penis!" The tshaishi then sang a comic song which, like all Iatmul songs it seems, was composed of a series of totemic names. This particular song was made up of names of the fish trap perched on the ladder. At the end

of the song the homicide speared the trap and entered the house. Bateson again offers a symbolic analysis:

'the fish trap is certainly a symbol of the vulva, and this symbol occurs also in esoteric mythology, together with the complementary symbol, the eel, which gets caught in the trap' (1936: 21).

I should note here that Bateson's account of these four incidents is given in the present tense, ie: 'the mbora dances in bedraggled skirt with her head inside a fishing net' (1936: 19). I point this out because the continuous use of the present tense suggests that the four incidents which had been described by Bateson's informants occurred regularly, or at least on repeated occasions; Bateson might well have converted narrative (the narrative tales told him by informants) into a generalized ethnographic present. Again, whether "past" or "present", we are confused as to whether these incidents were isolated or regular occurrences. Perhaps the use of the present tense was suggested to Bateson because of his search for some kind of "ritual" or "ceremonial" pattern into which he could fit the naven. That he was engaged in such a process can be seen from the closing section of his second chapter, which is a summary of what he calls 'the naven behaviour of the various relatives' (1936: 21). His use of the definite article here implies that there is a definite pattern of behaviour to be delimited, described and analysed (the naven behaviour); there are suggestions here of Benedict's Patterns of Culture.

This summary consists of a list of the different behaviours reported so far for the various relatives reported as involved in known or assumed instances of naven. Seven kinds of kin are listed: mother's brother, mother's brother's wife, father's sister, mother, sister, elder brother's wife and wife's brother. For example:

'Wau (mother's brother) wears grotesque female attire; offers his buttocks to male laua; in pantomime gives birth to female laua who looses his bonds; supports himself on the adze

presented by her; presents food to laua of either sex and receives in turn shell valuables; acts as female in grotesque copulation with mbora. These ceremonial acts may be performed either by own wau or classificatory wau - most usually the latter' (1936: 21).

We should note here that incidents which have been observed or reported more than once - eg, the reciprocal presentation of food and shell valuables - are listed alongside incidents which Bateson has observed or which have been reported to him only once - the offering of the buttocks to the laua, and (according to the Bateson's analysis, but not to the Iatmul) the pantomimic birth of the female laua.

The behaviour of the six remaining relatives, all female kin, is then similarly listed. Three of these, the iau (father's sister = FZ), the nyanggai (sister = Z) and the tshaishi (elder brother's wife = eBW), are reported as wearing 'splendid male attire'. But again, incidents previously reported as having occurred only once are also listed, eg 'Nyame (mother = M)...lies prostrate with other women when the homicide steps across them all' (1936: 22).

One kind of behaviour which will provide a crucial focus for Bateson's analysis of the naven later in the book is the transvestism of both male and female participants. However, if we examine Bateson's data closely, we find that of the seven instances of naven either observed by him or reported to him by informants, in only three did male transvestism occur; namely, the event at Palimbai in which the two waus-as-mothers sought but did not find the laua; the Mindimbit naven in which one wau was tied down on a stretcher; and the naven for the homicide in which the transvestite wau enacted a grotesque act of sex with his wife.

Incidents involving female transvestism reported number two: the naven in Mindimbit for the children who had worked sago and, again, that in which the mother's brother's wife dressed as a man in the comic act of intercourse. In the other instances in which only women are reported to have participated, there is no record

of their having been transvestite. Finally in this regard, and perhaps most interesting of all, Bateson reports no instance of naven in which both males and females were transvestite, except for the episode of mock intercourse between the wau and his wife.

At the outset of his analysis Bateson is faced with a problem which he never formulates explicitly, but which a close reading of this early part of his text elucidates. It would appear that he is seeking a normative definition of naven behaviour, which the wealth of variety of actual instances renders elusive. His approach is consonant with an attempt to discover an ideal naven of which individual performances are instances. Later he formulates eidos as constituting a formal model of Iatmul thought, an ideal cognitive system, which he assumes to be at the root of naven behaviour, and indeed at the root of all Iatmul behaviour. I shall argue that this attempt at the encapsulation of an ideal cognitive system fails, just as the attempt to encapsulate an ideal naven fails.

A similar attempt to ground complex ritual behaviours in an ideal cognitive matrix for a New Guinea society has been made more recently by Gell, writing about the Umeda, but Gell fails to show that there is any such thing as a "normal" Umeda dance of which actual instances are mere examples (1975). Similarly, Geertz has attempted an adumbration of an ideal Balinese identity, revealed in a plethora of names and symbols, which is expressed in the workings of the Balinese state (Geertz 1980). This sweepingly general perspective of the relation between culture and action views the Balinese as being programmed by a system of Platonic ideals which are manifested in the daily lives of Balinese individuals.

We will see that in his own ethnography of the Iatmul, Bateson was unable to contain the wealth of actual instances of naven behaviour and accompanying data within an ideal matrix of an eidos, and that this notion is dropped in favour of "ethos", which in turn gives way to an action-based model of Iatmul inter-action incorporating both eidos and ethos. This model is based on the notion of schismogenesis.

Goody's comments on the difficulties inherent in comparison and definition are relevant here. In his paper The Implications of Incest, he pointed to the difficulties of a decontextualised theory of incest. One needs to situate incest within the total field of prohibitions within any one particular culture. Incest cannot be simply compared cross-culturally, for there might be different kinds of prohibitions at work within one particular culture (Goody 1956).

By analogy Bateson does not examine forms of ceremonial behaviour amongst the Iatmul other than that which he defines as naven. Naven is centred from the start. A description of naven performances in the context of other kinds of ceremonial, for instance kin group ceremonies or particular instances of exchange, might have been fruitful. As it is, Bateson presents us with a naven which is pre-existent to other social facts in the society, in that it is inordinately privileged by him. For Bateson, the naven is delimited and wholly itself without reference to any other kind of ceremonial or performative context in Iatmul culture.

Another view of Bateson's difficulty is provided by the Chomskian approach, which sees performance (here referring to individual instance) as totally constrained by a deep structure of rules. According to this view, if we can understand the system of rules, we will then be able to understand the behaviour. But the Chomskian strategy privileges competence at the expense of performance; performance itself, as a field of enquiry in its own right, disappears. This is the crux of Bateson's problem; variations in naven performances must be explained in terms of a naven ideal, rather than in their own terms as performances in their own right. It would, of course, strengthen my case if it could be shown that the Iatmul word naven could actually be translated as "performance", or "show", or some such English term.

One might note here Goodman's criticism of the view that representation in art is fundamentally a matter of copying.

'The copy theory of representation...is stopped at the start by inability to specify what is to be copied. Not an object the way it is, nor all the ways it is, nor the way it looks to the mindless eye. Moreover, something is wrong with the very notion of copying any of the ways an object is, any aspect of it. For an aspect is not just the object-from-a-given-distance-and-angle-and-in-a-given-light; it is the object as we look upon or conceive it, a version or construal of the object. In representing an object, we do not copy such a construal or interpretation - we achieve it.

'In other words, nothing is ever represented either shorn of or in the fullness of its properties. A picture never merely represents x, but rather represents x as a man or represents x to be a mountain, or represents the fact that x is a melon' (Goodman 1981: 9, author's emphasis).

Bateson's positing of an ideal naven of which individual examples are merely instances reveals his concern with "premises", which will be covered more fully in the next chapter. From the details of the various naven activities he has collected, Bateson wishes to establish premises relevant to Iatmul culture and so to Iatmul individuals. These premises will be about naven and things connected with it; about waus and lauas, pride, achievement, and so on. This is inductive method, which seeks to establish propositions at a higher level of analysis which the anthropologist can then employ in his map of the culture under study. But these propositions necessarily presuppose the existence of an essential naven, without which the "premises" of the Iatmul could not have been formulated by the anthropologist. These premises are the subject matter of the objective framing of the anthropologist's propositions.

There are alternative views of the status of premises and presuppositions. Collingwood, for example, stresses that we should take a premise to be a fact only when it is actually asserted by a specific individual or by specific individuals (1972: 21-48). Bateson however is attempting to infer premises directly from behaviour, without reference to the assertions or otherwise of the Iatmul. Witness, for example, his interpretation of one naven event as a 'pantomimic birth', despite the denials of his Iatmul informants that the event could be so interpreted (see above, p. 59).

Through such attempts, as I hope to show, Bateson reaches high levels of abstraction very quickly. My point here is that Bateson's positing of an essential naven resists a performative analysis, and is actually opposed to it, since a theory of performance gives analytical priority to specific ways of doing things and saying things.

For Goodman, too, the work of art is an achievement rather than an imitation of an essence, for art refers to itself in its own making. This is not to say that art is not of the world, but that it is in the world on its own terms. The work of art can only be understood as a work of art by reference to itself and to other works of art; art is an activity. The same notion can, I suggest, be applied to those kinds of activities which anthropologists call "ritual". Particular instances of naven might not refer to an ideal naven, but they might well refer to other, previous, particular instances or performances. There is no ideal naven, only a naven tradition.

For Bateson, the naven was a phenomenon which could only be explained by elucidating the normative rules which produced, or which required, it; but this strategy cannot deal with actual instances, with particular performances. Normative rules must always be dependent upon an ideal instance to which they can be referred. In this way, in structuralist parlance, Bateson hopes to arrive at a paradigmatic scheme which governs syntagmatic instances of Iatmul inter-action. It might be, however, that this is the wrong way to approach the matter; that there might, in fact, be no "ideal" naven at all. This would be the foundation of a performance theory of "ritual" action.

NOTES to Chapter Three

- (1) I mention this in passing here. A detailed account of this second Epilogue follows in my chapter ten.
- (2) In chapter six I address myself in some detail to the genealogical stress in Bateson's account of Iatmul kinship and marriage arrangements. Here I will only comment that Bateson presents no evidence to show that the Iatmul operated a descent system of any kind, whether patrilineal or matrilineal or of any other type.
- (3) Bateson is not clear on the matter of whether or not it is correct for a girl to boast before her wau. His silence on this point indicates an important lacuna in his consideration of the relationship between Iatmul male, and Iatmul female, ethos. See chapters seven and eight.
- (4) It would appear that widowhood, as well as motherhood, is being caricatured in the Palimbai naven. Bateson will attempt to show later in his text that Iatmul men, in contradistinction to the women, are dismissive of emotions connected with mourning and grief (cf. for example 1936: 153).

CHAPTER FOUR: NAVEN: THEORY AND STRATEGY

THE NEXT CHAPTER in Naven, 'The Concepts of Structure and Function', is highly theoretical and can be used as the opening argument in Bateson's attempt to harness, redefine and enlarge these concepts for the purposes of his own methodological development. This attempt continues through almost half of his text until the end of Chapter VIII, 'Problems and Methods of Approach'. Here, Bateson returns to an examination of the tenets of structural-functionalism in the light of his data. However, as I shall argue, he did not succeed in extricating himself from the theoretical base of structural-functionalism even in the final pages of the book.

Chapter III opens with the statement that

'any attempt to explain (naven) must take the form of relating the ceremonies to their setting...Since I shall try to give analyses of the position of naven from both the structural and the functional points of view, it will be well to state definitely what I mean at this stage by the two concepts, Structure and Function' (Bateson 1936: 23, author's emphasis, my parentheses).

He then uses a phrase which will recur throughout the book, and it will be used in different ways and for different purposes: 'culturally standardised behaviour' (Bateson 1936: 23). Details of 'culturally standardised behaviour' are what the anthropologist collects in the field. The problem here would seem to be: how would one tell if a given piece of behaviour was 'standardised' or not? (Bateson did not have Nadel's celebrated definition of "social institution" to draw on: 'a standardised mode of co-activity' (1951: 108)). Bateson's argument is that much of these data is composed of native statements about behaviour. Any detail from a structural point of view is embedded in a number of cultural assumptions; the act of a mother who gives food to her child, for example, can be seen as implying a number of cultural assumptions about the mother-child relationship in that culture. These assumptions, or 'generalised concepts', form a kind of 'shorthand' which

'is not the creation solely of the anthropologist; every culture contains generalised concepts which are a shorthand means of referring collectively to structural aspects of large numbers

of details of standardised behaviour' (1936: 24).

Such words as 'mother', 'moiety' and 'patriline' are examples of generalised abstractions.

Bateson proceeds to note that this sense of the word 'structure' is closely bound up with what we mean when we talk about 'tradition'. But any reference to tradition is out of place in a synchronic study. If the notion of tradition is stripped of all references to the past, then we can only be referring to the given facts of a culture, facts which are 'given' as premises held by the members of the culture. In the terms of a slightly later theory, Bateson here converts Collingwood's presuppositions into Russell's language of premises. He is sifting detail in order to arrive at generalities. This is an essentializing strategy, to which standard inductive method lends itself. (1)

The term 'structure' denotes the nexus of the given premises of a culture, but it cannot easily refer to the many different kinds of elements which compose a culture. As Bateson puts it:

'I shall therefore use the word premise for these elements. Thus a premise is a generalised statement of a particular assumption or implication recognisable in a number of details of cultural behaviour' (1936: 24, author's emphasis).

Cultural premises may be expressed explicitly or implicitly. Often they will be implied: they may only be stated in symbolic terms, 'by the terminology of kinship, by metaphoric clichés' (1936: 25) and so on. It is convenient to use the term for any general statement which can be either obtained from informants, 'or which can be shown over and over again to be implicit in the behaviour of individuals' (1936: 25). He goes on to point out that it is not sufficiently realised how far the different premises of a culture comprise what he calls

'a coherent scheme...I would define cultural structure as a collective term for the coherent "logical" scheme which may be constructed by the scientist, fitting together the various premises of the culture' (1936: 25).

In a footnote which is important here, Bateson comments that his use

of the word 'logical' in this context does not refer to the conventional use of the term in our culture. His use instead refers to the steps by which the elements of any culture are linked in the minds of its members. In this footnote Bateson introduces the term 'eidós', and outlines a theme of much of our contemporary anthropology in the 1990s:

'it is probable that cultures may vary in the species of steps which link their premises together, and that the word "logic" must therefore be interpreted differently in every culture' (1936: 25).

Bateson's use of the term 'structure' is of course crucially different from the way in which it is employed by Radcliffe-Brown. The latter defined a social structure as 'a network of relations between individuals and groups of individuals' (1952: 43). Bateson uses the word structure to 'refer to an aspect of culture' (1936: 25). It is important, he says, to keep the two senses, referring respectively to society and to culture, distinct. There are, then, two different perspectives from which we can study the same phenomena.

'In the study of cultural structure we shall see clans and kinship terminology as shorthand references to details of behaviour, while in the study of social structure we shall see these groupings as segments in the anatomy of the community, as a part of the mechanism by which the community is integrated and organised' (1936: 26).

It is possible in this passage to discern the influence of the cultural anthropology of the American Boasian school, in contrast with the sociological structuralism of the British anthropology of the 1930s.

Bateson then turns to a consideration of the term "function". He appears to have great difficulty in defending this notion at all at this point, although the word appears throughout the rest of the book in various contexts. He writes

'we might say that the náven ceremonies are a function of all those elements of culture or properties of society upon whose presence the existence of the ceremonies depends' (1936: 26).

If, for example, he could show that the ceremonies contributed to

the integration of the community, then he would be able to say that 'the size of the Iatmul village is a function of - amongst other things - the naven ceremonies' (1936: 26-27). Here he evidently feels himself to be in deep water. Whereas in the main body of the text he continues by saying that this would be a consistent and logical use of the term which anthropologists might do well to adopt, a terse footnote puts the matter somewhat differently.

'The chief difficulty, which this use involves, is that on this principle the naven ceremonies could be shown to be a function of everything else in the universe and the anthropologist will be faced with the problem of defining his sphere of relevance' (1936: 27). (2)

Bateson has however already prejudged the issue in an important sense. By suggesting that naven is a function 'of all those elements of culture or properties of society upon whose presence the existence of the ceremonies depends' (1936: 26), he is assuming that the 'properties of society' are pre-existent to naven or to other kinds of behaviour. Here, such properties are viewed as the essential foundation upon which naven and other kinds of behaviour are predicated. These properties are, therefore, viewed as existing as intrinsic components of the world, and not as contingent or heuristic aspects of a social reality which might be formed by, or interpreted from, behaviour, whether naven or otherwise, rather than the other way round. Might not naven behaviour and other kinds of action create such 'properties'?

Bateson goes on to criticise Malinowski, whom he regards as using the term 'function' to refer to both the satisfaction of human needs, and to the interdependence of different elements of culture. The idea that culture can thus be subdivided into 'institutions' to meet these two types of adaptive ends, Bateson argues, further confuses the issue.

'To me it seems premature to attempt such an analysis into institutions until the concepts covered by the term, function, have been analysed' (1936: 27).

Instead of attempting to subdivide different bits of a culture, Bateson suggests we should attempt to see how the different types of functions can be classified. By so doing we might be able to clarify the notion of 'function' per se. This, however, only goes to demonstrate the 'present confusion' which surrounds the notion,

for the list of possible functions in a society embraces a huge spectrum of what can be termed human aspirations, from the 'direct satisfaction of human needs', through 'the moulding and training of human beings', to 'the integration of groups of human beings' and 'the maintenance of the status quo' (1936: 28). It is apparent, he says, that every one of these kinds of function is dependent upon every other kind and this is the reason why the functionalists themselves have avoided analysing the concept of function. But again, the notion of 'classification' which Bateson employs here is essentialist, referring as it does to an implied domain of given social facts which can be defined as necessarily existent, outside time and any particular instance of behaviour.

Bateson now attacks the pseudo-universalism of structural-functionalism, which he calls here 'scientific anthropology'. Older sciences such as physics and chemistry had long ago solved their 'domestic problems' and so were beginning to be able to encroach upon mutual frontiers of knowledge with beneficial effects.

'The result of this extension has been a new sense of the fundamental unity of science and of the world. But the effects upon anthropology have been disastrous. The emphasis upon unity has retarded analysis' (1936: 28).

Physics and chemistry had only been able to reach a stage where they could pool certain areas of research because of their separation in the past.

'The great advances in knowledge are made by analysis of the problems, by the separation of one class of problem from another. To state that all problems are inter-related is mystical and unprofitable' (1936: 28). (3)

But after a few conciliatory remarks in the direction of Radcliffe-Brown, Bateson announces his intention of working with the concept of 'function'.

'I shall endeavour to consider the functional position (using the term in its widest philosophical sense) of the naven ceremonies from five different points of view' (1936: 29).

It is among these five categories that we find the first use in the book of the concepts of ethos and eidos which are to become crucial.

His five categories are all kinds of relationship. They are, in the order given in the original work, (1) Structural, (2) Affective, (3) Ethological, (4) Eidological and (5) Sociological. The most familiar is the final category, which covers the relationship between the particular actions of the individual and the society as a whole, in Radcliffe-Brown's sense. Bateson comments that the first and fourth categories are very closely related, as are the second and third. In fact the members of each pair appear to be almost identical, the only difference seeming to be in the textual one of the wording chosen to define each category. 'Structural or "logical" relationships' are defined as being those

'between the cognitive aspects of the various details of cultural behaviour: the cognitive reasons for behaviour'

while the 'eidological' relationships are those

'between the cognitive aspects of details of cultural behaviour and the general patterning of the cultural structure' (1936: 29-30).

In the other pair of categories, 'affective' relationships are those

'between details of cultural behaviour and the basic or derived emotional needs and desires of the individual: the affective motivation of details of behaviour'

and 'ethological' relationships are defined as those

'between the emotional aspects of details of cultural behaviour and the emotional emphases of the culture as a whole' (1936: 29-30).

This apparent doubling of theoretical formulations is explained in a footnote as being warranted since the affective function is 'the expression of ethos in behaviour', and the structural function is 'the expression of eidos in behaviour' (1936: 30). Throughout the rest of the book, however, it is ethos and, to a much lesser extent, eidos which are the crucial notions; the 'affective' and the 'structural' are left behind. I would argue that ethos and eidos are actually developments of the former notions, and that their replacement of 'affective' and 'structural' are major steps in Bateson's attempted move away from structural-functionalism.

What kind of a picture of society is Bateson presenting in this model? The two pairs of functions, structural/eidological and affective/ethological, spring from an original dichotomy which is assumed to exist between the cognitive 'bits' of human beings on the one hand, and the emotional or affective 'bits' on the other. Social reality is seen as grounded in a biological substrate. The functions of organisms, including humans, are ultimately divided between the promptings of reason and desire. This division takes place in an ontological realm prior to society which, following Bateson's later work, we can call the 'biosphere'. (See Diagram 2, page 77) Bateson's thesis is, apparently, that while humans are capable of cognition, they also have emotional 'needs'. Nowhere in his work however does Bateson exhibit the same kind of intellectualist reductionism found in Lévi-Strauss's model of the mind.

It follows from this starting point that human beings must be socialized if society of any kind is to be possible. This takes Bateson to a second level, which develops and encompasses the binary opposition at the level of culture. Humans working in culture recognize and attempt to meet their emotional needs. At this second level, needs are "derived" as opposed to the "basic" needs which exist at the level of the biosphere. At the same time, culture works on the cognitive potentials set up at the level of the biosphere. This double process results in the composition of the "affective" and the "structural" domains, which reveal themselves at a third level, that of the grand cultural scheme of the society, as ethos and eidos. The structural and the affective, at Level Two, are interfaces between culture and the biological individual (See Diagram 2:A, page 77). Ethos and eidos, at Level Three, represent the grand cultural scheme internalised within the individual at Level Two.

This three-tier model further contains two whole-part systems, constituted by the relationship of "structure" (part) to "eidosis" (whole) and that of "affect" (part) to "ethos" (whole). The relationship between parts and wholes was an important theme for

Diagram 2. From Biosphere to Culture in Naven.

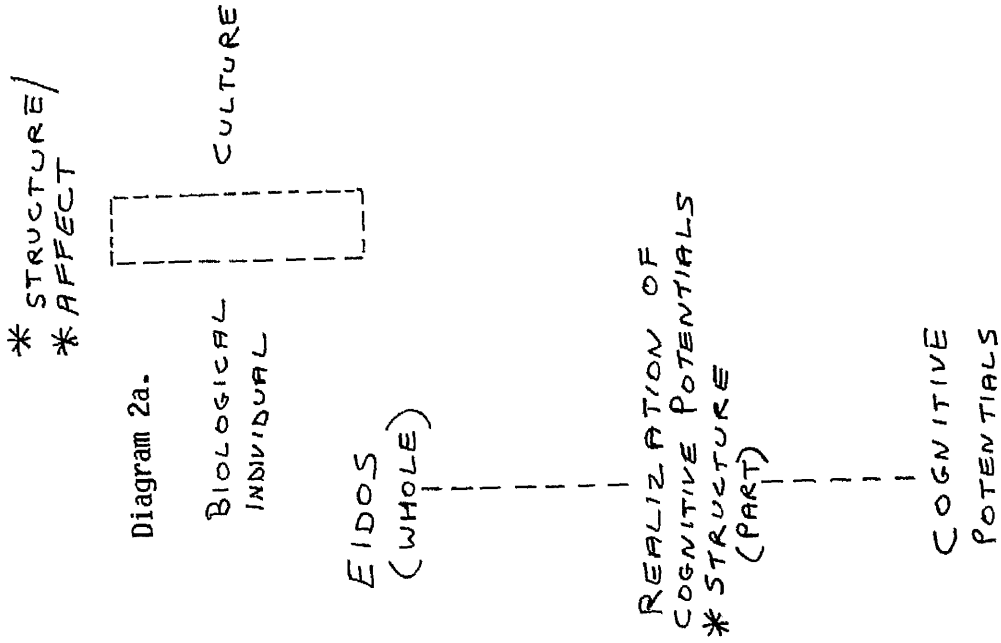
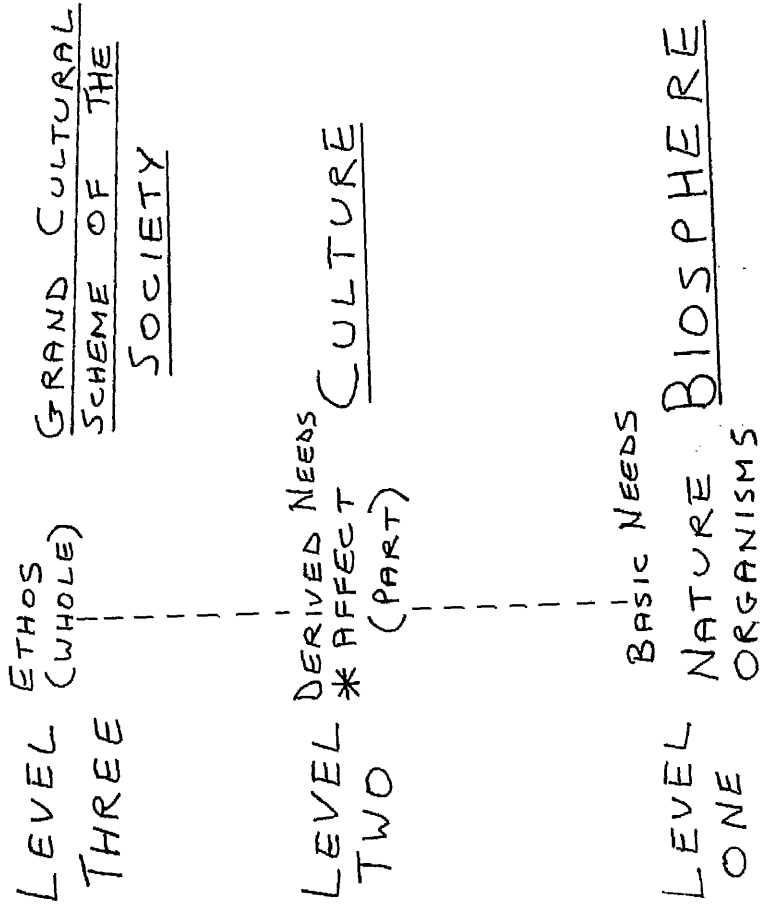
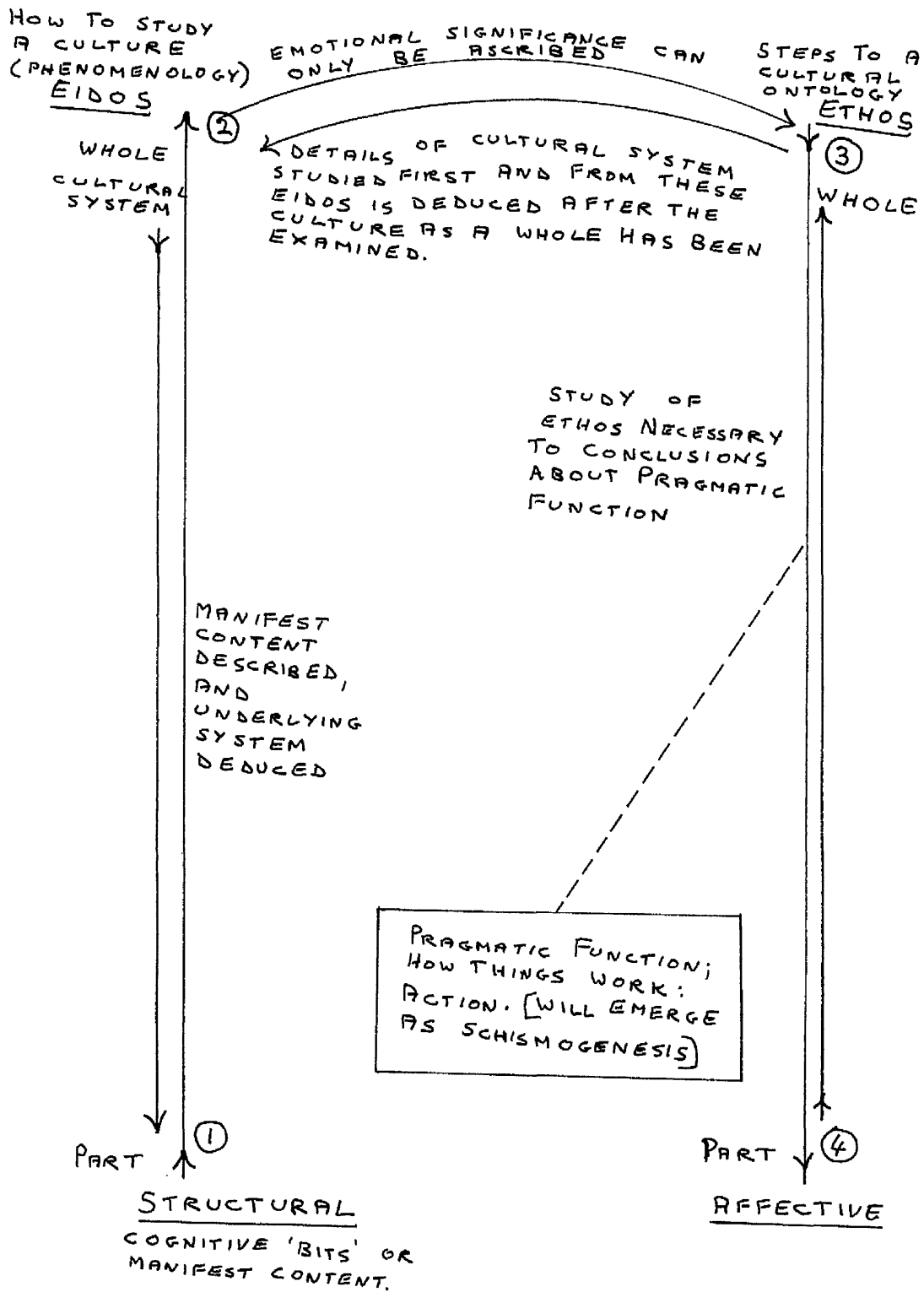


Diagram 3. How an Anthropologist Studies a Culture.



① - ④ = TWO ANALYTIC SEQUENCES. THE TWO HERMENEUTIC CIRCLES (i.e. ① - ②, ③ - ④) ARE RESOLVED BY DISSOLVING COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL IN THE NOTION OF SCHISMOGENESIS [= PRAGMATIC FUNCTION, ACTION].

Bateson. Here, structure represents the cognitive reasons for behaviour, which contribute towards the eidos, or the general patterning of the whole culture. On the other hand, affect represents the details of emotional motivation which contribute towards ethos, or the sum total of emotional needs either at the "basic" level of the biosphere, or at the "derived" level of culture.

It is also possible and, I suggest, instructive to view Bateson's scheme here as the operation of what has come to be called in recent literature a "hermeneutic circle", in which understanding and exegesis proceeds from the part to the whole, and then from whole to whole, and finally from whole to part. (4) I illustrate this in Diagram 3 (page 78). What follows as an elucidation of that Diagram is my interpretation of Bateson's methodological schema as he presents it in this early section of his text. Bateson starts with the question, "How can we study a culture?" (Diagram 3, (1), left hand column) His answer is that we must first describe the manifest content of the culture. This will present itself in the form of observable behaviour to which we can ascribe cognitive motivations. Once this manifest content of cognitive "bits" has been described, we can then deduce the underlying cultural system, or eidos (Diagram 3, (2)). So, in the left hand column we move from "part" - cognitive contents - to "whole", the cultural system, or eidos. The question thus answered, "How can we study a culture?" is a structural/eidological one, which is answered in structural/eidological terms. Bateson has to keep in mind the fact that the Iatmul do not themselves postulate a dichotomy between intellect and emotion.

But having asked how a society can be studied, it is next necessary for him to ask "What is a society?" For Bateson, the question of how something is analysed must not be mistaken for the question of what that thing is. This second question, "What is a society?", refers to action, a specific system of action associated with a particular society, and it is ethological, in contrast to the first question, which is eidological. Another way of putting this, in somewhat more abstract terms, is to say that

he moves from a phenomenology to an ontology. (5)

In the right hand column of the diagram, headed 'Steps to a Cultural Ontology', Bateson begins with the whole ethos (3). He has to do this, he argues in his text, because the emotional emphases, the ethos, of a culture can only be determined once the culture as a whole has been described.

'emotional significance can only be ascribed piece by piece after the culture as a whole has been examined...(whereas) ...the manifest (cognitive) content can be described piece by piece and the underlying system (eidos) deduced from the resulting description' (1936: 33, author's emphasis).

From the "whole" of ethos, Bateson then derives the affective "parts" of emotional content (4). The move from (1) to (2) in the left hand column, and from (3) to (4) in the right hand column, each constitutes a hermeneutic circle. These two hermeneutic circles will later be resolved when Bateson dissolves his dichotomy between the cognitive and the emotional in the notion of schismogenesis which will become his model of Iatmul social dynamics, which in turn will reveal itself as a model for action rather than of behaviour (see page 19 below). This will also constitute his own version of what he had earlier referred to as "pragmatic function" in his critique of Malinowski.

Bateson's critique of Malinowski's use of the notion of "function" centres on two observations, both of which have long since become standard arguments. In 1936, however, they might have appeared as startling and unsettling. The first observation is that the usefulness of the idea of function, as applied to such examples as the increase of sociability among individuals or the enforcing of rights and duties, appears doubtful if we realise that many such effects in a society may be mutually incompatible. If, say, family pride is increased, then this may threaten the solidarity of the community. Bateson's second observation is that the notion of function becomes even more problematical if we consider the complex variations in human societies. A people living on the margin of physical sustenance, for example, might not be interested in the integration of a larger population.

'The truth of the matter is that different peoples attach very different values to these various effects' (1936: 31).

Applied to his own field-work, the idea of the 'strength of traditional law' might well apply to some African communities,

'but the phrase is almost meaningless when applied to the Iatmul who have a highly individualistic culture and will readily respect the law-breaker if he have but sufficient force of personality' (1936: 31).

So it is important for anthropology to take account of the great variation in the values which different peoples place upon the various 'effects' postulated by functionalism. We cannot state that the significant 'pragmatic function', in Malinowski's words, of a particular detail of a culture is the increase of family pride unless we can show that family pride is valued in other contexts of the culture. Further, we must now realise that we cannot guess at the needs and desires of individuals but we must first extrapolate them from the emphases of the whole culture. Bateson isolates the concept of affective function from Malinowski's 'pragmatic function', the former being

'the relation between details of culture and the emotional needs of individuals' (1936: 32).

He then takes the argument one step further and states that we must construct another category

'for the relationship between the emotional content of the particular detail of behaviour whose functions we are studying and the emotional emphases of the culture as a whole' (1936: 32).

It is this category of function which Bateson calls 'ethological'; and he uses the word 'ethos' to refer to the collective emotional emphases of the culture. We should bear in mind that Bateson is still using such terms as 'function' and 'functional relationship' here, although his interpretations are going well beyond the formulations of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown.

The concept of eidos arises in a similar way to that of ethos.

'From the examination of the premises in the structure of a particular culture we can fit them together into a coherent system and finally arrive at some general picture of the cognitive processes involved. This general picture I shall

call the eidos of the culture' (1936: 32).

So, Bateson argues, the emphases of a culture can be divided into the affective - i.e. ethos - and the cognitive, i.e. eidos. He does not consider the possibility that this dichotomy, which sets "reason" against "desire", may be fundamentally problematic. Both ethos and eidos are based upon the same hypothesis:

'that the individuals in a community are standardised by their culture; while the pervading general characteristics of a culture, those characteristics which may be recognised over and over again in its most diverse contexts, are an expression of this standardisation' (1936: 33).

He writes that this hypothesis is circular, for the 'pervading characteristics' of a culture will not only express, but also promote the 'standardisation of the individuals' (1936: 33). I would question whether his hypothesis is circular in the same sense as the tautologies of functionalism, or whether it is more in the nature of a dynamic dialectic. Bateson takes up the subject of circularity in anthropological and scientific explanation later, in his Chapter VIII, where he attempts to suggest how such circularity might be transcended in anthropology.

Bateson explicitly acknowledges Ruth Benedict's concept of 'configuration' (1935) as a basis for his argument, which he summarises as follows:

'The eidos of a culture is an expression of the standardised cognitive aspects of the individuals, while the ethos is the corresponding expression of their standardised affective aspects. The sum of ethos and eidos, plus such general characteristics of a culture as may be due to other types of standardisation, together make up the configuration' (Bateson 1936: 33, author's emphasis).

In this summary Bateson reveals the tentative nature of his argument; he leaves open the possibility of other kinds of standardisation besides cognitive and affective but he does not specify what these might be. At the end of the chapter he attempts to place his own formulations in the contexts of 'Developmental Psychology, the study of the moulding of the individual by the circumstances of his environment', and that of 'Sociology' in which

'as Radcliffe-Brown has pointed out, individual psychology becomes irrelevant to the same extent that Atomic Physics is

methodologically irrelevant in the study of Bio-Chemistry.' He claims that he has been able to link these two kinds of study 'by the abstract concept of the "standardised individual"' (1936: 34). But far more important, as the book proceeds, is Bateson's dissolution of the ethos/eidos dichotomy into an action based model which will reveal itself in the guise of schismogenesis and, later still, of cybernetics.

In all Bateson's work there is an uneasy symbiosis between his naturalism and his attempts to understand social contexts in terms of communications theory. The first theme is more powerful in his earlier work, when he was still heavily influenced by the intellectual milieu of his upbringing and his education in natural science. The second theme is foreshadowed in the first edition of Naven (1936) and is made explicit in the Epilogue to the second edition (1958). But the two themes can always be discerned in his writing, although the relationship between them is difficult and often ambiguous. In the case of naven, the naturalistic emphasis on discrimination and description (framed in questions such as "What is the naven?", "What are its features?") is converted into a theory of action (framed in questions such as "What do people do?", "How do they do it?") called schismogenesis, which is grounded in a communications model. Later, the schismogenic communications model will develop into a cybernetic feedback system. In Naven we can see Bateson moving between three modes of explanation: from typology (naturalism) to a theory of action (schismogenesis) and finally to an explicit communications system (cybernetic feedback). This progression is not, however, simply linear; at various points in his argument he returns to a previous mode.

This circuitous strategy is linked to another device which Bateson often uses to develop an argument; this is his habit of setting up an opposition, resolving it in a synthesis with the use of a new concept and then employing this new concept while still making use of the old binary terms "in the shadows". Bateson's deployment of the

notion of schismogenesis, a theory of action which apparently subsumes ethos and eidos, is an example of this strategy. Another way of describing this is to refer to Diagram 2 above (page 77) and to see that almost immediately in Bateson's text Level Two disappears. We hear no more of the "affective" and the "structural" functions; these are replaced by ethos and eidos, respectively. The three levels of the original model are collapsed into two. First, cognitive potential and basic emotional needs are redescribed culturally as structural and affective functions. But then this intermediate level is redescribed in terms of ethos and eidos. Consequently there is no mediating level between the Biosphere and the level of ethos and eidos, the Grand Cultural Scheme. Further, the opposition between ethos and eidos is deployed for a time, but at the expense of eidos. By the end of the book eidos hardly figures in the analysis of the naven at all. Next, ethos develops from a model of affect into a model of action through the use of the notion of schismogenesis. But schismogenesis, as a model of action, attempts to explain how human beings are trained in social behaviour, and so can be seen as a new formulation of Level Two of Diagram 2; but this entails reintroducing the notion of eidos, since training in social behaviour necessitates a cognitive, as well as an affective or action based function.

Another way of viewing Bateson's strategic development is to look at Diagram 3 above (page 78) and to see that his first question, that which is asked by every anthropologist - "How can we study a culture?" - is constituted by, and also constitutes, an eidos; it is constituted by the eidos of the anthropologist, and it constitutes the eidos of the Iatmul as viewed by the anthropologist (left hand column, (1) - (2) Diagram 3). In terms of Diagram 2, Bateson begins at Level Two (Culture), with cognitive "bits" and then once these have been described, he can arrive at Level Three ((2) in Diagram 3) and a fully constituted eidos. As far as ethos is concerned, the opposite occurs; Bateson starts at Level Three - The Grand Cultural Scheme (Diagram 2) - with a fully constituted ethos ((3), right hand column, in Diagram 3), and he moves back to Level Two (Culture) to describe the

"derived emotional needs" of "humans in culture" (ie, those of Iatmul men and that of Iatmul women ((4) in Diagram 3)).

It is apparent throughout the book that Bateson is more interested in ethos than eidos. The reader will see that the analysis of the naven is presented in terms of affect and action, rather than of cognition. Bateson was not an intellectualist; if he had been, the emphasis might have been the other way round, and we would have been given an eidological analysis of the naven, rather than an analysis grounded in ethos and action. It might be rewarding to view the works of Lévi-Strauss, from The Elementary Structures of Kinship through to the Mythologiques, in this light, and to see French structuralism as a highly elaborated eidological model of social reality.

However, Bateson needs the notion of an eidological function as a "way in" to a description of Iatmul society and culture. But once he has a firm grip on ethos, affect and, ultimately, action, eidos is no longer needed and it can be dropped from the analysis of the naven. He can move, in other words, from a phenomenology - which he requires as a starting point - to an ontology, which is of far greater interest to him. It is important to note, however, that eidos makes a return in the Second Epilogue of 1958, in which the action/communication model of schismogenesis is refined into an elaborated feed-back cybernetic system. It is, after all, difficult to think of cybernetics as a product of ethos, rather than as a cognitive tool with which to study eidos.

In the main body of the text, however, we are left with the impression of the naven as an ecological construct. The shift from phenomenology to ontology also reveals a shift from a focus on behaviour, which is the classical domain of the naturalist, to a focus on action, viewed as a product of intention. With the introduction of the notion of schismogenesis, we are no longer in the world of naturally behaving organisms, and society as another version of that world, but in the domain of intentionally acting, or active, humans. This opens the way to seeing the analysis of the naven as a possible

exercise in an anthropology of performance.

Through the notion of schismogenesis, Bateson is able to collapse the dichotomy between intellect (eidos) and emotion (ethos). In this way, he will avoid the intellectualist dogma which necessitates a rift between thought and action. He will also avoid the symbolist tension between symbol and referent, and between action and interpretation, as well as that between showing and doing. In other words, Bateson's action-based model of schismogenesis collapses two of the most fundamental sets of binary oppositions in anthropological thought:

(1) Between intellect and affect;

(2) Between intellect/affect and action.

He does not, however, escape these oppositions, for they are still at work within schismogenesis and they will re-emerge in the Second Epilogue.

It is, I suggest, the development of Bateson's thought towards a model of social action which is successful in transcending traditional oppositions in the theory of social anthropology which makes Naven a crucial work for an anthropology of performance.

Perhaps I can summarise Bateson's theoretical strategy by presenting a schema which follows his development through the five kinds of function Bateson lists on pages 29-30 of his text (See Diagram 4 below, page 87). I have described these functions in terms of "stages" in Bateson's analysis of the naven. We start by asking what an anthropologist can expect initially to perceive in a society; this is the first stage. Bateson's answer, "bits of cognitive representation", provides him with his first function, the Structural. But we know that humans also engage in non-cognitive behaviour. We have to deal with emotion as well as intellect, and so Bateson is led to his second function, the Affective. Next, at the third stage, we have to recognise that behaviour occurs in the context of a system, or whole, and not merely in bits and

HOW CAN WE STUDY A CULTURE?
WHAT IS THE FIRST THING AN ANTHROPOLOGIST HAS TO LOOK AT?

①

STRUCTURAL
BITS OF COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION

BUT THIS IS INTELLECTUALIST. WE ALSO HAVE NON-COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR IF INTELLECT, EMOTION, AFFECTIVE

②

BUT, BEHAVIOUR DOES NOT OCCUR IN BITS: IT PRESUPPOSES SOME SYSTEM/WHOLE

Diagram 4. Bateson's Five Functions as Analytical Stages.

← ③ ETHOS

IF THERE IS SYSTEM IN AFFECT, THERE MUST BE SYSTEM IN COGNITION

④ ANYWAY, INTELLECT AND EMOTION ARE NOT DISTINCT AT THE LEVEL OF ACTION. THEY ARE ANALYTICALLY SEPARATE, BUT SUBSTANTIVELY PART OF A SINGLE ACTION.

④

EIDOS

A PRAGMATIC VIEW WHICH WILL LEAD TO AN ACTION MODEL - SCHISMOGENESIS.

← ⑤

SOCIOLOGICAL

DO WE NOW HAVE A COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF CULTURE? WHAT ABOUT SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS? ARE THEY REDUCIBLE TO OTHER CATEGORIES? WE SHOULD LEAVE THEM IN, AND SEE IF WE CAN SUBSUME THEM IN OUR EXPLANATION LATER.

pieces; thus, Bateson's third function, that of Ethos. Two considerations now follow. First, if there is a system of affects, then there must also be a system of cognitions. This leads to the fourth function, that of Eidos. The second consideration, which is important for Bateson's strategy later in the book, is that we cannot separate intellect and emotion at the level of action, although at the level of analysis they are necessarily discriminable. This will eventually lead to a re-worked "pragmatic function" in the new form of schismogenesis. Finally, we must ask if our account of culture is now complete. Bateson must ask himself if his functions 1 - 4 provide a comprehensive analytical view of culture, and whether he needs to incorporate traditional sociological analysis. Has this latter already been included in the first four functions? The fifth, sociological function and our fifth stage is part of a dialogue between Bateson and his intellectual past.

This lengthy detour through Bateson's theoretical strategies has been necessary because of the density and complexities of the text of Naven. It is not sufficient to attempt an explanation of Bateson's thought, for his text is not merely an exercise in explanation, but in explication. Any commentary on Naven must itself attempt explication and not mere explanation. The book is an active unfolding of anthropological method, and, as such, it warrants the critical attention of a deconstructive reading.

NOTES to Chapter Four

- (1) For the observations in the final two sentences of this paragraph I am grateful to M. Hobart (1986 (a)).
- (2) Gellner takes a similar view of the 'contextual charity' of Evans-Pritchard, Leach and others (1970: 42).
- (3) It can be argued that the general tone of Bateson's later work denies this proposition; cf. the papers on ecology in Bateson (1973).
- (4) A useful working definition of "hermeneutics" as it has been applied by certain scholars to contemporary issues in anthropology comes from Ricoeur: 'I assume that the primary sense of the word "hermeneutics" concerns the rules required for the interpretation of the written documents of our culture. In assuming this starting point I am remaining faithful to the concept of Auslegung as it was stated by Wilhelm Dilthey; whereas Verstehen (understanding, comprehension) relies on the recognition of what a foreign subject means or intends on the basis of all kinds of signs in which psychic life expresses itself (Lebensäußerungen), Auslegung (interpretation, exegesis) implies something more specific: it covers only a limited category of signs, those which are fixed by writing, including all the sorts of documents and monuments which entail a fixation similar to writing...if there are specific problems which are raised by the interpretation of texts because they are texts and not spoken language, and if these problems are the ones which constitute hermeneutics as such, then the human sciences may be said to be hermeneutical (1) inasmuch as their object displays some of the features constitutive of a text as text, and (2) inasmuch as their methodology develops the same kind of procedures as those of Auslegung or text-interpretation' (1979: 73, author's emphases).
- (5) Bateson's journey in fact starts with an epistemology (in the form of the structural-functionalist paradigm) before moving on to the phenomenology of eidos, and thence to the ontology of ethos.

CHAPTER FIVE: IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION

IN THE FOLLOWING chapters I will deal with Bateson's treatment of his Iatmul ethnography in the light of the foregoing theoretical discussion. Chapters IV, VI, VII and VIII of Naven are crucial in this respect. They are, respectively, 'Cultural Premises Relevant to the Wau-Laua Relationship', 'Structural Analysis of the Wau-Laua Relationship', 'The Sociology of Naven' and 'Problems and Methods of Approach'. Bateson's Chapter V, 'Sorcery and Vengeance', does not appear to be directly relevant to the naven analysis.

The first three chapters in this list largely consist of Bateson's attempt to provide an account of kinship and marriage amongst the Iatmul, with special reference to the naven. These chapters form an ethnographic bridge between the early introduction of the concepts of ethos and eidos dealt with in my previous chapter, and Bateson's Chapter VIII, in which ethos (but not, it is important to note, eidos) is further refined and discussed in the light of material from the anthropologist's own culture. This leads into his Chapters IX and X, which deal with the ethos of Iatmul men and Iatmul women respectively.

It seems no accident that the progression in Chapters IV, VI and VII can be seen as moving from a concern with the individual - the Cultural Premises of the title of Chapter IV are after all those of individual members of Iatmul society, and not those of "the Iatmul" - to a description of the wau-laua relationship as a social fact sui generis, a social fact which requires its own particular "Structural Analysis" (which it duly receives in Chapter VI) and, finally, to a summary which subsumes the material described previously under a description of 'The Sociology of Naven' in Chapter VII. It is in this chapter, and in the following three chapters which deal in great detail with ethos, that Bateson's reassessment of the nature of anthropological investigation achieves its most important transition. In Chapter IV his epistemology is still crucially functional; he is seeking the eidos, the revealed

cognitive truth, of Iatmul kinship. Gradually he realises that the tension between this search and his own developing epistemology is unbearable. In Chapter VIII the transition to the ethological perspective begins in earnest, and this will lead to the theory of schismogenesis presented in Chapter XIII and the height of Bateson's creativity in the book.

But even in Chapter VII Bateson is still attempting to describe the naven purely as an epiphenomenon of kinship and marriage relations. Even in this respect his handling of this material presents radical features which to a large extent pre-dated Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory by more than a decade.

By the 'Cultural Premises' of the title of Chapter IV, Bateson means discriminations and identifications made between different types of kin. He writes:

'I shall consider syntheses of the type: a mother gives food to her child. A mother's brother is identified with the mother. Therefore a mother's brother gives food to his sister's son' (1936: 35).

He defines identification as follows:

'When I say that siblings are identified I mean that in this culture there is a large number of details of culturally standardised behaviour in which the behaviour of one sibling resembles that of the other; and I also mean that many details of the behaviour of outside individuals towards one sibling are reproduced in their behaviour towards the other' (1936: 35).

He adds the rider that such identification is relative and not absolute; for example, amongst the Iatmul father and son are identified as far as external relationships are concerned, but between each other they are regarded as being drastically contrasted.

The 'syntheses' here are Bateson's own, and are between bits of "observed behaviour"; but they are synthetic in another sense, that of synthetic as opposed to analytic logic. Bateson is attempting to adduce new information about the Iatmul culture from premises which he

takes as being present in that culture; the logic he is following here is not analytic, i.e. grounded in syllogistic propositions stated by either the Iatmul or by the anthropologist. These syntheses are also based in a behavioural model, and as such are predicated on ethos rather than on eidos. "Identification", which is a logical relationship, has become "behavioural" or ethological very quickly. Even at this early stage, ethos is taking prominence over eidos in Bateson's analysis. (1) The eidological notion of "identification" is used by Bateson as a way of initiating his focus on social structure and kinship relations; but behaviour, or ethos, soon comes to the fore.

There are, Bateson claims, one discrimination and four main types of identification amongst the Iatmul:

1. Mother's brother (wau) is discriminated from father's brother or father (nyai).
2. There is an identification of father and son.
3. A child is linked with its mother's clan, despite the patrilineal system.
4. There is some identification of a brother with his sister.
Bateson's actual words are 'That there is an element of identity between a brother and his sister' (1936: 49).
5. Finally, a woman is 'to some extent identified with her husband' (1936: 52).

The discrimination between mother's brother and father is particularly important in the light of the existence of the 'different patrilineal clans' (1936: 37) claimed by Bateson to exist in Iatmul society. Each clan possesses a number of myths and spells which are regarded as treasures, and these are usually passed on from father to son. Sometimes, however, the secrets will be imparted by a man to his sister's son (i.e. from wau to laua). Bateson does not specify the extent of such occurrences, the marginality of which is implied by his use of the word 'sometimes' in his text (1936: 37). These instances of wau-laua inheritance of esoteric knowledge are marked by the payment of shell valuables by the laua to the wau; also the laua must not pass the secrets to his own son (1936: 37). (The implication here is that a son receives such

secret knowledge from his father without the requirement of payment, but this is not explicitly stated.) Bateson sees this exception to a putative rule of patrilineal inheritance as an affirmation of the close tie between wau and laua and as being motivated by the wau's hope that his laua will speak on his behalf in the men's house debates.

The contradiction here is not elaborated, and neither is another uncertainty in the data which is presented in the next passage of the text. Bateson records that in Mindimbit, when a small boy was to accomplish his first kill of a human being, a captive was obtained by the father. But the father was not allowed to assist the boy in the kill; it was the wau who had to help the boy hold the spear and direct its aim. However, in a footnote Bateson reveals that his informants in two other villages had told him that this was not important, and that the father would probably help the boy (1936: 37). It appears here that Bateson's data militates against any simple phrasing of the relationship between ego and father as being "discriminated" from that between ego and mother's brother in strictly codified terms throughout Iatmul society.

Bateson claims that father and mother's brother are also distinguished in economic contexts. He gives one example. The father helps his son to collect valuables for the latter's bride price, without expectation of any recompense. The wau may also contribute but, unlike the father, the mother's brother will expect some return, which will usually be in the form of a contribution from the laua towards the bride price of the wau's own son. From this evidence Bateson concludes that

'in contexts which concern valuables, the boy is grouped with his father and separated from the maternal clan; while in contexts of achievement the boy is united with the maternal clan and separated from his father. But in both types of context the wau is separated from the father' (1936: 38).

As we have seen, this conclusion is reached on rather flimsy evidence. The position is not clarified by Bateson's claim that

'there is also a trace of identification between father and wau and this appears even in some details of their behaviour

towards the lau' (1936: 38).

If wau and nyai (father) are considered as brothers-in-law, and not in terms of their relationship with laua, then

'we shall see that co-operation and competition, identification and discrimination, are very evenly mixed in the patterning of their mutual relationship' (1936: 38).

I contend that Bateson's data over-all would tend to suggest that this could be said of any relationship between any two Iatmul males.

Evidence for the first "identification", that between father and son, is adduced from kinship terminology. Iatmul kinship vocabulary, writes Bateson, contains a number of compound phrases which join two kinship terms to form one denotative term; he gives the example of nggwail-warangka in which nggwail refers to father's father and warangka to father's father's father. The compound phrase is a collective term for patrilineal ancestors, who are classified together (1936: 38). A number of other examples of compound kin terms which relate to a patrilineal bias are given. Bateson does not explicitly claim that the Iatmul operate a patrilineal descent system in the classical sense, but it is clear from this section of his book that the model is very much in his mind.

Despite the identification in kin terms between them, the father's relationship with the son is not one of intimacy. The father's role is one of disciplinarian and is generally authoritative. But, in turn, the father is not allowed to profit at the expense of his son and he cannot eat any of his son's garden produce. The son will resist attempts by the father to place the boy in his own (father's) initiatory grade, as an intrusion on the father's dignity.

'Thus the son is as much concerned as the father to avoid any overlapping of social status' (1936: 41).

Relations between father and son are generally marked by restraint, but

'a very real identification of interests and of needs exists between them in spite of their mutual avoidance of overlapping

status' (1936: 42).

Bateson's emphasis on status relations here appears to prevent him from considering this kind of data from another viewpoint, which might have offered richer insights; namely, that kinship behaviour expresses the workings of a moral universe. Bateson has also moved quickly from data relating to terminology to behaviour; again, a shift from eidos to ethos which privileges the latter at the expense of the former.

The linking of the child with its mother's clan, despite the patrilineal emphasis, is symbolically expressed in the Iatmul theory of gestation. The child's bones are thought to be a product of the father's semen, while its flesh and blood - which are considered less important than its bones - are thought to derive from the mother's menstrual blood. Therefore it would seem that a child is considered to be a member both of the father's and the mother's 'clan' (1936: 42). Accordingly, the child is given two sets of names, one referring to the totemic ancestors of the father's clan, while the other set refers to the totemic ancestors of the mother's clan. It is necessary to emphasise here, as I have already noted (**NOTE (2)**, Chapter Three) and in reading my following chapter (Chapter Six, below) that Bateson provides no data to support any claim that Iatmul social structure contains anything approximating to a patrilineal or a matrilineal descent system.

Two kinds of suffixes differentiate these two sets of names; those for the patrilineal names have meanings like 'man', 'woman', 'body', etc, while the mother's clan names

'end in the suffix -awan, which probably means "mask" and is perhaps connected with the custom...of dancing in masks which represent the totemic ancestors of the maternal clan' (1936: 42).

Bateson's uncertainties here are doubly unfortunate in that not only is he not sure as to the equivalence between -awan and 'mask', but he does not expand as to precisely what is meant by the notion of 'mask' here. It is, of course, an English word of great power which hints at a wide range of connotations. It is this double lack of clarity with regard to both denotation and connotation which the reader misses

here in Bateson's use of the term "mask".

Bateson seems to imply that the mother's clan names are given to the laua by the wau. He then suggests that the two sets of names can be seen as an expression of an actual identity which springs from the father, in contrast to a symbolic identity which is traced through the mother; this is why, according to the patrilineal name, the child is a 'man', 'woman' or 'body', while the matrilineal name denotes only a 'mask'. In the same way, according to the patrilineal theory of reincarnation the child is concretely stated to be the reincarnation of a father's father, whereas

'his identity with the ancestors of his mother's clan is only symbolically expressed in ritual and ceremonial behaviour' (1936: 43, author's emphasis).

Some of the more important items which make up this 'ritual and ceremonial behaviour' connected with matrilineal personhood are as follows:

1. The giving of special names to the child.
2. The use of particular kin terms (i. e., between wau and laua). A prominent example of this is the use of compound terms by wau when he addresses laua, terms which denote the names of totemic ancestors of wau's (i. e., laua's mother's) clan. But Bateson also remarks here that many of the names which are used in this way might also be given to sons of the wau's own clan. He feels justified, however, in concluding that 'the laua is ceremonially addressed as if he were a random collection of his mother's important ancestors' (1936: 45).
3. The laua performs dances in masks which represent the maternal clan ancestors, he plays flutes which are also considered to be maternal clan ancestors, and he carves representations of these ancestors on the house-posts of their ceremonial house. He also carves masks for the maternal clan, masks which he will later wear for dancing.
4. The lauas eat the sacrifices made by the members of their maternal clan.
5. The death ritual for the laua is divided into two parts; the first half is performed by members of the deceased's clan, the second by members of his mother's clan. It is during the second half of this

ritual that the members of the mother's clan pull the figurative representation of the laua towards themselves with a hooked stick. In another mortuary ritual, given on the occasion of the death of a great man, the number of his kills and the number of his wives had been symbolically represented by a display of spears and baskets. But the number of his children had not been similarly marked. In the equivalent ritual for a woman, however, a post is set up and is decorated with ornaments representative of her son's achievements. Thus it seems that a woman's 'greatness' lies not in her own achievements but in those of her sons. Bateson adds here that naven are celebrated for a boy on marriage, but not at the birth of his first son. For a girl, on the other hand, naven are celebrated when she gives birth, but not for her marriage (1936: 48).

We must remember that it is the anthropologist who is speaking here, and not the Iatmul. What is Bateson doing by describing behaviour apparently connected with the matrilineal name as pertaining to a "symbolic identity", while appropriating the "actual identity" for behaviour connected with the patrilineal name? I suggest that this is a classificatory strategy which allows Bateson to marginalise a certain field of behaviour which he calls symbolic; this he will later explain in terms of "actual" behaviour. At this stage in his analysis, Bateson is regarding all "actual" behaviour as ethological; it would appear, therefore, that any behaviour which he regards as "symbolic" must be marginalised as eidological. But this dichotomy between "actual" and "symbolic" identity and behaviour immediately causes problems. The relationship between the wau and the laua is Bateson's paradigm for "actual" behaviour throughout the book, and it is crucial, of course, for his analysis of the naven, but at this early stage of his argument Bateson is marginalising behaviour between the wau and the laua as "symbolic". Apparently, then, for Bateson "actual" behaviour is being "symbolised" by "symbolic" behaviour.

It could be argued here in criticism of Bateson that all identity is "symbolic" in some sense, certainly all human identity; so that any attempt to separate an "actual" from a "symbolic" identity is doomed from the outset.

This section of Bateson's text is particularly important in terms of his conclusions as to the significance of the kinds of activity expressive of the relationship of the laua to his mother's clan. He says of the relationship of the child to his father, mother and maternal clan:

'These may be summed up in a form especially relevant to naven by saying that the child is closely identified with its father but competes with him. The child's identity with its mother and its link with the maternal clan are more obscure. But here the child is not a competitor but, rather, an achievement of the mother; and the child's achievements are her achievements, the triumph of her clan' (1936: 48, author's emphasis).

Therefore, says Bateson, we are faced with a discrepancy in the material. The data indicates on the one hand that the child is the achievement of the mother and that its achievements are her achievements. On the other hand the data also indicates that the child is the ancestors of the mother's clan. Why Bateson should stress the discrepancy here is not entirely clear. But he suggests that the common factor which connects achievement and ancestors is that of pride. Achievement and ancestors, he says, are 'two apparently different ideas, alike only in their emotional content' (1936: 49). This suggestion looks forward to the later detailed discussion of the ethos of the Iatmul men.

The rd ~~thi~~ kin identification, that between a brother and sister, is also expressed through terminology; the term wau-nyame (mother's brother and mother) is used as a collective denotation for the maternal clan. Further, the terms for sister's husband and wife's brother, lan-ndo and tawontu respectively, can be translated as 'husband-man'. Here the male ego is seen as identifying with his own sister in the former case, and in the latter he is seen as identifying his wife's brother with his wife. Bateson also records some brief details of funerary rites which would seem to suggest some identification between brother and sister (1936: 49-51).

Finally, Bateson deals with husband-wife identification. But he admits that this is limited, and writes that 'the woman is to some extent identified with her husband' (1936: 52). The identification is not reciprocal, and this he observes is consistent with a patrilineal

bias and virilocal marriage. Neither partner changes name at marriage, and kin terms for married partners discriminate between them, apart from a few exceptions. The term mbuambo is used for mother's father and his wives, and for mother's brother's son and his wives. Bateson mentions the case of tshaishi (elder brother's wife) as being of particular interest. She calls her husband's younger brother tshuambo, a term usually used in addressing younger siblings of the same sex as ego; in this way she would appear to identify with her husband. Although the usual reciprocal term for tshuambo is nyamun - elder sibling of same sex - the husband's younger brother does not use this term for his elder brother's wife except in the naven (see Diagram 1, page 48 above).

Bateson sees his data as evidence that husband and wife are identified in their dealings with outsiders, but discriminated in their relationships with near kin. Husband and wife share a

'close economic dependence...it is almost possible to see the household as a single economic unit' (1936: 53).

The theme of identification between different categories of kin is taken further in Bateson's Chapter VI, 'Structural Analysis of the Wau-Laua Relationship'. Such identifications are seen by Bateson as the underlying rationale for the specific kind of relationship obtaining between a child and its mother's brother. In a footnote to the beginning of his chapter (1936: 74), Bateson acknowledges his debt to Radcliffe-Brown's paper 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa', and in his Chapters VI and VII Bateson uses the structural-functionalist strategy of grounding interpersonal attitudes and behaviours within a strictly delimited domain of kinship relations as his foundation for a possible analysis of the naven. But the notion of descent does not emerge as the important paradigm for Bateson's analysis of Iatmul kinship and marriage patterns. His account differs crucially from the ethnographies of his contemporaries in that he argues that the ideology of affinity and the repetition of affinal relations is the most powerful dynamic in the Iatmul kinship universe. His account of marriage patterns amongst the Iatmul develops into an exercise in alliance theory which pre-dates

Lévi-Strauss by over a decade.

Bateson stresses that the term for mother (nyame) is used by laua to refer to wau in the naven, as well as during initiation and to a certain extent in everyday conversation. From this Bateson concludes that the laua's relationship with the maternal clan as a whole might be coloured by the laua's relationship with the mother, and that this would show itself most strongly in the laua's dealings with the wau. The laua will identify his mother with her brother, namely the wau. However, the wau will be a 'male mother' for the laua also in the sense that, for the wau, the laua will to some extent be identified with his father. The wau could then be expected to behave towards the laua in some ways as if the latter were the wau's sister's husband. Behaviour shown to the laua by the wau will, therefore, fall into at least two separate categories; behaviour in which the laua is regarded as a child of wau, and behaviour in which the laua is regarded as wau's sister's husband (i.e., brother-in-law). From the point of view of the laua, wau in turn will be treated both as a mother and as a wife's brother (brother-in-law). Bateson adds that there may well be other elements in the wau-laua relationship; there may be other identifications not yet considered, or 'the relationship may have certain features sui generis' (1936: 75). Bateson now formulates an important operational procedure for his analysis:

'Thus we are led to an experimental analysis of the wau-laua relationship under the three following heads:

1. Behaviour which is typical of the relationship between a mother and her child.
2. Behaviour which is typical of the relationship between a wife's brother and a sister's husband.
3. Other details of behaviour which do not fit either of these patterns.

By working with these three categories we shall be able to set out all the available information about the wau-laua relationship in a scheme which will show clearly how much or how little of a wau's and laua's behaviour is to be regarded as sui generis and how much is based upon these identifications' (1936: 75).

This crucial formulation is the basis of Bateson's attempt to analyse the naven in terms of "social structure". We can see that he is indeed indebted to Radcliffe-Brown here, but that the one-dimensional model of the latter has been developed and left open to further development. The mother's brother is seen as being identified not only with the mother, but with a brother-in-law and, perhaps, with other kinds of kin. There is, further, the possibility that there are some details of behaviour between wau and laua which are not reducible to any kin identifications. If this were the case, where could a social structural analysis lead? If the content of the wau-laua relationship is not reducible to kin identifications, then Bateson will have to leave this kind of analysis behind. It is his own concepts of ethos, eidos and schismogenesis which will enable him to do this, once this section of his text comes to an end with the completion of his Chapter VII.

As regards the first set of possibilities in Bateson's procedure, which views the wau as a "mother", the most important element in the mother-child relationship is seen as the giving of food. (2) The mother is rewarded for this by the growth of the child and her pride in its achievements. In one example of naven, it will be recalled, according to one of Bateson's informants the boy had stepped over the prostrate bodies of the women, who had declared ' "That so small place out of which this big man come!" ' (1936: 76) Humility and self-abnegation in the contemplation of the child's deeds are seen as the correct attitude of the mother. The mother is also regarded as providing comfort for the child in terms of sickness. Thus, the mother's behaviour towards the child is summarised in terms of (1) feeding, (2) pride and self-abnegation and (3) comforting (Bateson 1936: 75-76).

Bateson now asks, what facets of behaviour between wau and laua can be adduced as being representative of these three characteristics? In what ways does the laua treat the wau like a mother, or as I would suggest the matter could be phrased, "as if" he were a mother? And in what ways does the wau treat the laua "as if" the former were his own child? We might ask if all social roles played within cultural

definitions take the form of "as if" behaviour. If so, it is possible to see a mother's behaviour towards her child as being like the behaviour of a mother, in the sense that she is behaving according to certain cultural values, be they Iatmul, or English, or whatever. Is the behaviour of the wau here, therefore, not merely "as if" but "as if as if"? Is there at the heart of the naven a double play on social role and culturally defined behaviour? For a recent analysis of the naven which emphasises its ludic aspect, cf. Handleman (1979), an account to which I will refer in Chapter 8.

Bateson's data on this aspect of the wau-laua relationship can be summarised as follows (1936: 76-78).

1. Feeding. A continual stream of gifts of food is given by wau to laua. Fowls and pigs are presented at the naven. The Iatmul say that the wau is concerned lest his laua goes hungry, but there is a hint of exaggeration in this concern, e.g. if the child asks his wau for a yam, the wau will make a show of running off to kill a pig.

2. Self-abnegation and pride. Vicarious pride is shown by wau in the hailing of laua with a series of prominent names from the repertoire of maternal totemic clan names. The wau will throw lime over the laua whenever the latter makes an important public appearance, in debate for example. The element of self-abnegation is apparent in the naven when the wau wears filthy garments - as Bateson writes, 'shaming himself to express his pride in his laua' (1936: 76). This is

'an exaggerated statement of this particular aspect of maternity, the mother's self-abnegation combined with pride in the boy' (1936: 76-77).

Bateson continues by admitting however that

'many details of the naven still remain to be accounted for - especially the element of burlesque in the wau's behaviour and the wau's offering of his buttocks to laua' (1936: 77).

In the light of later developments in Bateson's analysis of the naven, and in my exegesis of his analysis from the perspective of performance, his emphasis on 'exaggeration' and 'burlesque' should

be noted. In this section of his text, Bateson deals for the first time with the element of caricature which initially proves puzzling to him, but which ultimately will be crucial to his analysis.

3. Comforting. In the initiation ceremonies the wau is called "mother" and comforts the boy during the painful scarifications.

4. Laua treats wau as a mother. He is loyal to his wau, as a child is supposed to be loyal to its mother. A boy should always take his wau's side in a quarrel, even to the extent of siding against his own father. A more important aspect of laua's behaviour in this respect is the exaggerated boasting which complements the wau's pride in his achievements. The laua will swagger and parade in front of the wau, singing his own praises. Bateson notes that this element of exaggerated boasting does not appear in the laua's behaviour towards the actual mother, and that it is probably linked with the exaggerated character of the wau's behaviour. When the wau gives food to the laua, it is always in histrionic style in a ritual context, and/or accompanied by large gestures.

'In every instance the behaviour of the wau is an exaggerated and dramatic version of that of the mother' (1936: 78).

Bateson asks again; how are these elements of burlesque and exaggeration in this behaviour to be explained?

Next, Bateson considers those elements in the wau-laua relationship which can be seen as being based on the identification of the laua with his father, i.e. by the wau treating laua in some sense as a sister's husband. Bateson uses a term much used by functionalists to describe the relationship between brothers-in-law amongst the Iatmul. This relationship is marked, he says, by 'mutual ambivalence' (1936: 79). One might ask, of course, if there is any relationship between human beings which is not so marked.

According to Bateson, the brother-in-law relationship amongst the Iatmul is characterised on the one hand by indebtedness and distrust arising from the giving of the sister of one man to be wife for the other, but on the other hand it is also a relationship of co-operation. Antagonism over bride price and return prestations and the fear of sorcery on the part of in-laws cause tensions which are

offset by the fact that brothers-in-law are expected to co-operate in any large-scale communal task, like the building of a house. Further, the bride's brother often takes an active part in the arrangements for the marriage. Brothers-in-law make jokes about each other. As with the relationship between the wau and the mother's clan, there is an insistence that a man should be loyal to his wife's brother; in fact

'a man should support his wife's people in all their quarrels, even against his own clan' (1936: 80).

Here, then, Bateson is able to claim that the laua's loyalty to the wau is consistent both with the identification of the wau with the mother, and that of a boy with his father. This suggests, in fact, that the wau-laua relationship contains references to a kind of ambivalence which Bateson himself does not mention. I am referring to the ambivalence of gender identity which is apparently subsumed here in the identification of a man with another man, i.e. of a man with his father, and the identification of a man with a woman, i.e. of a wau with his sister, laua's mother.

Bateson also views 'the uneasy economic aspect of the brother-in-law relationship' (1936: 81) as being incorporated in the relationship between wau and laua. The gifts that the wau makes to his laua makes the child feel indebted to his wau, and he makes return prestations of shell valuables. This, Bateson seems to be suggesting, is similar to the transactions of bride price and gift giving which take place between brothers-in-law. Further, the laua often has to depend on his father for the provision of such valuables and this is another expression of the identification of sister's husband with sister's child (1936: 81).

The offering of the buttocks by wau to laua in the naven is now interpreted by Bateson as arising from the double identification of the mother's brother with his sister, and that of the sister's son with the sister's husband. If these two identifications are joined together, we can see that

'it is perfectly "logical" for the wau to offer himself sexually to the boy, because he is the boy's wife' (1936: 81).

A footnote in his text here makes it plain that the "logic" is Bateson's

and not that of the Iatmul (1936: 81). Further, in the light of this "logic" the exclamation by wau to laua during naven, "lan men to!" (translated by Bateson as "Husband thou indeed!") becomes comprehensible. Also, this line of argument suggests that as the wau's gesture is supposed to make the laua procure gifts for presentation to the wau, this presentation stands in some way for bride price. The laua, according to Bateson's reading but in my formulation, is treated "as if" he were a husband by the wau. But this conclusion on Bateson's part is surely vitiated by the fact that such an identification, of laua as wife by wau, would involve the collapse of three identifications into one, and at the same time all three identifications being systematically maintained largely regardless of context. These would be; first, a sibling tie, between mother's brother and his sister; second, an affinal or descent tie, that between sister's son and sister's husband; and third, the maternal tie between mother and child - an identification which involves two generations. Later in my exposition, in Chapter Eight below, I will suggest a different reading of the phrase "lan men to!".

Nevertheless, with this piece of interpretation I suggest that Bateson steps at once out of a structural-functionalist framework and into a new area of research. His use of a structural-functionalist model of kinship relations has led him to a view of social interaction among the Iatmul which is not amenable to further structural analysis. Why, asks Bateson, have the Iatmul produced this extraordinary kind of behaviour? Even if we can say that the ultimate expression of the kin identifications described earlier does lead to the wau offering himself sexually to the laua, this does not explain why this development should have been followed in this way and to this extent (1936: 82). Identifications between kin types are made in many societies, but the grotesque absurdities associated with the naven - transvestism, the sexual gesturing and so on - are comparatively rare. Why has this particular culture selected these particular behaviours for expression in this way? What is the "motive force" behind it all (1936: 82)?

At the close of the chapter, Bateson describes the various kinds of behaviour of wau which cannot be seen as being predicated on the identification either of the wau with the mother, or of the laua with wau's sister's husband. There are three items which, says Bateson, show the wau to be behaving in some ways like a father towards his son: the wau will not take fire from the laua's house, he avoids crudely commercial transactions with the laua and, last, the laua is sometimes referred to as his wau's 'dog', the owner of a dog usually being spoken of as its 'father'. In another category are the behaviours which suggest that laua is associated with the ancestors of the maternal clan; the notions of pride, ancestors, lauas and achievement being linked here (1936: 83).

Finally, Bateson considers the only elements in the behaviour of the wau which appears to him to be sui generis, in that it cannot be linked with any pattern of identifications. This is the exaggerated quality of the wau's behaviour towards the laua. In summary, Bateson writes:

'We still do not know why the wau's behaviour tends to be exaggerated and comical, why the laua is regarded as the ancestors of the maternal clan, and why this culture has followed the logic of its identifications to such extreme conclusions. These problems must be left for solution in terms of aspects of Iatmul culture other than the purely structural' (1936: 85).

I suggest that it is possible to paraphrase the above quote by saying that a social structural analysis of the relationships implicated in the naven led Bateson to a position in which he realised that the most recondite aspect of naven behaviour, which I would define as "as if" behaviour, might prove to be the most crucial factor in his attempt to understand the naven phenomena. The burlesque "as if" of the wau - and of the laua and other kin involved - performances without any sense in the structural context, must be taken out of the framework of structural explanation. Bateson here begins his move away from eidos and towards ethos, from an analysis of social structure towards the formulation of the notion of schismogenesis.

Might not the element of burlesque, which appears marginal to the logic of a structural analysis, prove central to an understanding of the naven?

NOTES to Chapter Five

- (1) A more recent account of this view, which attempts to criticise the intellectualist structuralism of Lévi-Strauss by emphasising the analytical priority of praxis, has been given by Pierre Bourdieu (1977).
- (2) It can be argued that Bateson comes near to an analysis of the relationship between an Iatmul mother and her child which suggests a primary division between nature and culture (Footnote, 1936: 75).

CHAPTER SIX: KINSHIP, SOCIOLOGY AND STRUCTURE IN NAVEN

BATESON'S NEXT CHAPTER, 'The Sociology of Naven', sets the naven at the centre of a model of Iatmul society specifically in terms of patterns of marriage. He writes that, until this point in his text, he has considered the naven from the viewpoint of a 'hypothetical intellect inside the culture' to whom the behaviour is 'logically consistent with the other given facts of Iatmul culture' (1936: 86). Now, however, he will look at the material from a different point of view,

'that of an observer outside the culture and interested in the integration and disintegration of Iatmul communities' (1936: 86).

How, he asks, does naven contribute to the integration of the society? He feels justified in asking this question because he has already shown that the naven expresses and stresses the wau-laua relationship.

The notion of the integration of society has a long history in social anthropology, from Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown to Lévi-Strauss and beyond, but the term is often employed loosely and imprecisely. For his part, Bateson assumes that the strengthening of the wau-laua relationship is closely connected with a wider form of "integration" amongst the Iatmul. His Chapter VII is an attempt to justify this in sociological terms. He will then be free to pursue a new kind of analysis in terms of the theoretical strategy outlined earlier.

This is precisely what happens. His next chapter, 'Problems and Methods of Approach', continues the theoretical polemic and introduces the detailed discussions of *ethos*, *eidos* and *schismogenesis* which express Bateson's developing argument during the second half of the book.

A footnote to his "sociological" chapter shows that the author was extremely uncertain as to the value of its content. In the text, he states that sociological as opposed to structural enquiry should be based on statistics, in the form of answers to questions

such as ' "What percentage of such and such individuals do so-and-so?" (1936: 87). But his footnote to this page of his text reads:

'Unfortunately I have no statistics and took no random samples. The conclusions of this chapter are therefore unproven. The chapter itself is only included for the sake of giving an illustration of the problems and methods of approach of sociology in the strict sense of the word' (1936: 87).

Sociological analysis, writes Bateson, is statistical- or should be - because it deals not with details of cultural behaviour, but with the behaviour of individuals. It would appear that he means here that statistics should tell us about the actual incidence of details of behaviour. (1) He selects one item of his data as being particularly important from a sociological perspective: 'it is the classificatory was who perform naven' (1936: 88).

This observation leads Bateson into a discussion of Iatmul marriage patterns and the behaviour between groups said by the Iatmul to have been linked in past generations. This section is interesting because in his treatment of Iatmul marriage Bateson approaches an appreciation of the difference between ideal marriage preferences and actual marriage patterns in a way which pre-dates the discussions surrounding alliance theory of the 1950s and 1960s. He is, however, unable to take full advantage of the intuition he displays in his text, owing to the intellectual climate of British social anthropology in the 1930s.

Many primitive societies, Bateson writes, regulate marriage in such a way that affinal links of allegiance and indebtedness are renewed from generation to generation. But, when applied to the Iatmul, such a picture is problematic because, although preferences are stated clearly, they do not in fact agree with actual patterns of marriage:

'The culture does, it is true, contain a great many formulations which would regulate marriage in a positive manner if they were consistently obeyed' (1936: 88).

These formulations of marriage preferences are summarised as follows by Bateson:

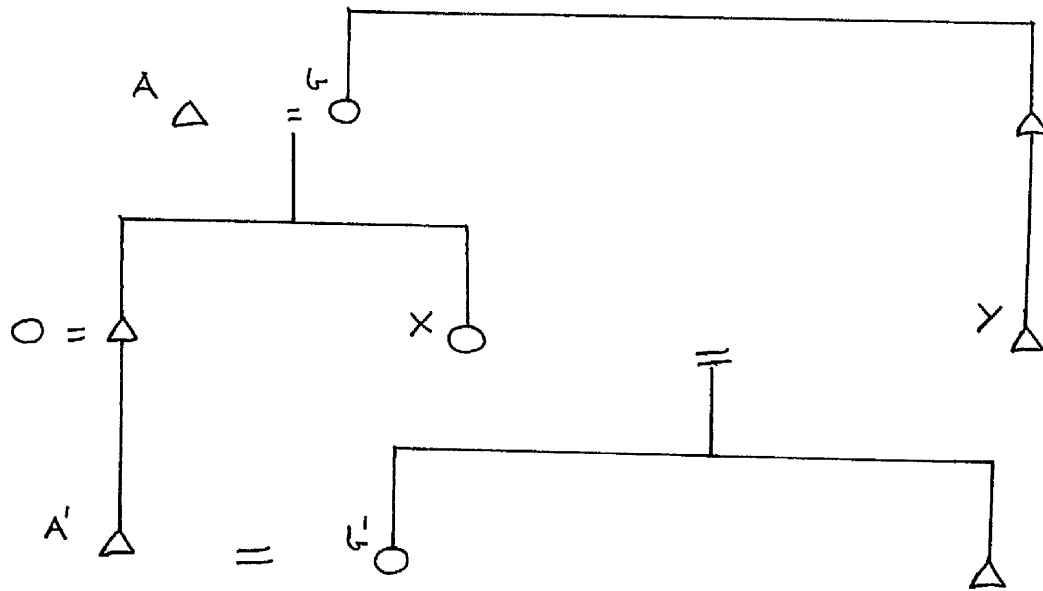
1. A woman should marry in the same house as her father's father's sister, or in other words she should marry her father's father's sister's son's son, or, a man should marry his father's mother's brother's son's daughter, or his iai. In a footnote, this is expressed more simply as 'Laua's son will marry wau's daughter' (1936: 89). (See Diagram 1, page 48 above). If the preference for iai marriage was followed consistently, the affinal links would be repeated in every other generation. But this does not occur.

2. The Iatmul say that "The daughter goes as payment for the mother." In other words, a man should marry his father's sister's daughter. (Bateson does not give an equivalent kin term for FZD; the nearest he provides is na, which Bateson glosses as "father's sister's child" (1936: 90). Again, if this marriage pattern was consistently followed, affinal links would be renewed and would alternate in direction in every generation. This is the system of alliance which later anthropologists have referred to as patrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

According to Bateson, these two marriage preferences are incompatible but can be combined into a coherent system through specific marriages which convert an iai marriage in one generation into a FZD (father's sister's daughter) marriage in the next. He provides a diagram which illustrates the position (See Diagram 5, page 112 below). The marriage of the b1 woman and the A1 man is an iai (see paragraph 1. above) marriage, between the woman b and the man A, two generations previously. According to Bateson, the difference between the iai system and the FZD system depends on whether the marriage between the man x and the woman y takes place in the middle generation. If this marriage does occur

'the whole system is converted into one based upon marriage with the father's sister's daughter, and the final marriage... (between b1 and A1)...becomes a marriage of a man with his father's sister's daughter' (1936: 90).

Diagram 5. From Bateson (1936: 89).



This marriage in the middle generation is linked to a third formulation:

3. "Women should be exchanged." Sister exchange marriage would conflict with either iai or FZD marriage, since the operation of both of these latter marriage patterns would be confused by sisters being exchanged reciprocally within one generation. However, Bateson writes, 'the fundamental concept of the exchange of women is common to both sister exchange and marriage with the father's sister's daughter' (1936: 90).

The point here is that Bateson sets out to examine the marriage "rules" which his training has taught him must exist as a crucial and operational bundle of constraints working within any "primitive" society. In one paragraph he can write:

'Thus Iatmul society is built upon three formulations in regard to marriage which though they conflict are still inter-related in a curious logical manner. The father's sister's daughter marriage is comparable with the iai marriage since both fit into the same pattern of repetitions in alternate generations, and the sister exchange is comparable with father's sister's daughter marriage since both depend upon the exchange of women' (1936: 90).

But his next sentence reads:

'This discussion of the marriage rules was introduced to show the society is without any regular repetitive system whereby the affinal links might be regularly renewed' (1936: 90, my emphases).

Then follows a theoretical suggestion which enables him to link Iatmul marriage, or rather the preferences which the Iatmul articulate, with the naven which refers not to "sociological facts" but rather to the arena of cultural logics:

'We shall see that this society constantly dovetails ideas which are incompatible and that there is perhaps something in common between the muddled logic which underlies the naven ritual and that on which the rules of marriage are based' (1936: 91).

Bateson has just shown, to his own satisfaction at any rate, that there are no rules of marriage in Iatmul society, but only stated "formulations", to use his own term. In the terms of alliance theory, is he not writing about "preferences" rather than the "prescriptions" implied by the phrase, "the rules of marriage"

(Needham 1962, Maybury-Lewis 1965, Overing: 1975)? As I shall attempt to show later in this chapter, Bateson is also confusing categories of kin with actual individuals.

Another page or so of the text is given to a list of "negative marriage rules" which appear to be more spurious than the "positive" rules. This section is concluded with the information that marriages often take place with members of outside groups (extra-Iatmul):

'so that we may sum up the marriage system by saying that in practice marriage occurs very nearly at random' (1936: 92).

As Iatmul village tend to be large, with populations ranging from two hundred to a thousand, the renewal of past affinal links by the means of marriage procedures seems unlikely. But the very opposite possibility could equally well be argued against Bateson. He concludes:

'If therefore these old affinal links are necessary for the integration of the community, some means must be found of diagrammatically stressing them, a function performed by naven' (1936: 92).

Bateson's chief difficulty in handling his data on Iatmul marriage patterns is that he is constrained by his training and the anthropological theory of his times. He notes the inconsistency between the three 'formulations' which 'would regulate marriage in a positive manner if they were consistently obeyed' (1936: 88), but he is unable to develop his insight owing to the fact that he is writing some twenty years before the debates surrounding alliance theory. The kinship theorists of the 1930s were unable to discuss apparent contradictions in the "system", or indeed to discuss the possibilities of systematic pluralism, because the disjunction between thought, terminology and behaviour endemic to "elementary structures of kinship" had not yet become a crucial subject of debate. His data does show that the Iatmul are concerned with the ideology of the repetition of marriages, but Bateson does not have access to the underlying logic of this ideology. While he is careful not to stress the "descent metaphor" which was so powerful in the British social anthropology of his contemporaries, his continual use of the

terms "patrilineal" and "matrilineal" shows this metaphor to have been a strong influence on the way he conceptualised the Iatmul social universe. (2) He cannot, for example, make sense of the fact which was apparent to him, namely that despite the "three formulations", 'in practice marriage occurs very nearly at random' (1936: 92).

Bateson's discussion of what he calls Iatmul 'marriage rules' (1936: 90) are illuminated by the important distinctions which alliance theory was later to make between "genealogy" and "category", and between "prescription" and "preference" (Needham 1962; Schneider 1965; Maybury-Lewis 1965). An important early contribution to alliance theory was that of Dumont in a famous paper on Dravidian kinship terminology (1953). For Dumont, this terminology was an expression of marriage and was grounded in affinity and not in consanguinity. Linearity is not distinguished; what is important for Dravidian terminology is the distinction made by any one ego between different categories of kin, some of which contain potential marriage partners, and some of which do not. In a Dravidian system of terminology a female matrilateral cross-cousin is not so much considered as a "mother's brother's daughter", as a woman who belongs in a marriageable category.

One of Bateson's problems with Iatmul marriage patterns is that he is tracing the consequences of his 'formulations' in terms of genealogy, and not of category. Another way of stating the problem is to say that Bateson does not realise that he may be dealing with a set of strategies for claiming partners, rather than a set of "marriage rules". The Iatmul might actually sometimes phrase some of these strategies in terms which might sound like "rules" to the anthropologist, or they might not; Bateson is not entirely clear as to how he arrived at his formulations, but presumably they were obtained from information supplied by informants. He does not provide any detailed case histories of actual Iatmul marriages. It is clear, however, that his three formulations can be stated as three versions of a basic model; that of sister exchange in alternate

generations, the stated preference of both FZD and of FMBSD determining an ideal system of delayed reciprocity. (See Diagram 6, page 117 below.)

Bateson's third formulation can be viewed as the general statement of the ideology of marriage, i.e. that sisters should be exchanged. His second formulation is a strict articulation of this ideology, i.e. that a male ego should marry a woman in the category which includes his FZD, a marriage which sets up a system of delayed reciprocity. Finally, Bateson's first formulation can be considered as a more general application of the preference stated in formulation (2); i.e. that a male ego can marry any woman in the category which includes his FMBSD, or iai. This formulation pushes the marriage alliance back by one generation.

Thus, the three formulations can be seen as three different ways of describing kin with a view to the manipulation of the membership of marriage categories. Bateson makes a case throughout his book that the Iatmul are "maximisers". This would certainly appear to apply to the wau's interest in pursuing naven activity with his laua in the expectation of solidifying a future alliance with the boy. Is there a connection between the strategies the Iatmul employ in claiming marriage partners, and the alliance strategy displayed in naven behaviour? Can these both be viewed as strategies for the maximising of alliances? **(3)** I shall comment later on the relationship between such maximising and the "dramatising" which also appears as a fundamental trait of Iatmul culture and which I will turn to when I deal with Bateson's description of male ethos and his detailed discussion of his notion of schismogenesis. For the moment, I can only suggest that it would have been advantageous to his analysis if Bateson had considered more closely the relationship between more formalised statements of marriage "rules" made by the Iatmul, actual marriage choices made by individual Iatmuls and the "ritual behaviour" between the members of the kin categories wau and laua.

Any marriage according to Bateson's three formulations will repeat previous marriages, although not necessarily the marriages in the parental generation. The "formulations" express different

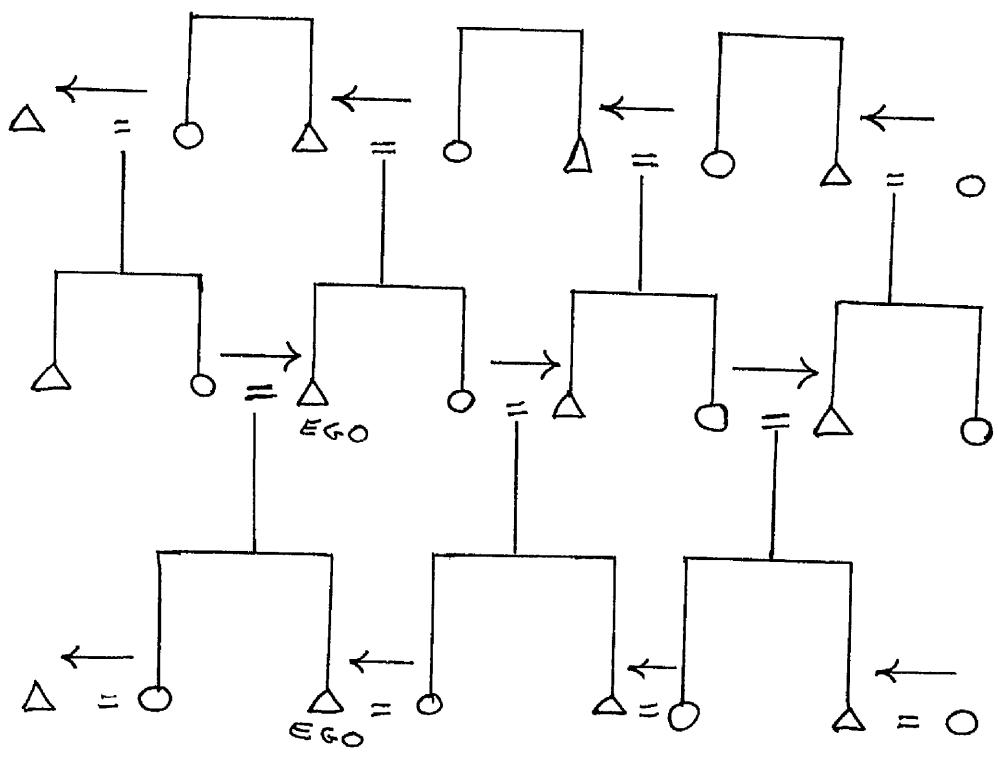


Diagram 6. FZD Marriage: Asymmetrical Patrilineal Cross-Cousin Marriage (Ego marries FZD/FMBSD).

preferences which articulate and put into operation different possibilities for claiming partners. Two distinctions are important. The first is between prescription, which entails the composition of categories of potential partners, and preference, which indicates which particular potential partners within the category will be preferred and actually chosen. The second important distinction is between tracing kin of ego through genealogy, the method employed by Bateson which emphasises the existence of a "marriage rule", and viewing all of ego's kin as belonging to different categories, some of which contain potential spouses and some of which do not. This latter method emphasises marriage "preferences"; the former is more interested in marking out "prescriptions" within a strictly encoded "system". Thus, in terms of category, we can view the Iatmul term iai as possibly constituting a marriageable kin category from the perspective of any Iatmul male ego. The preferred partner within this category we might define genealogically as a FMBS. But according to the chart of Iatmul kin terminology provided by Bateson, iai refers also to the Father's Mother. (See Diagram 1, page 48 above.) It would be informative to know if there are any other kin covered by the term iai. But we can perhaps summarise Bateson's data here by saying that Iatmul marriage ideology creates a category of marriageable kin traceable through the father (from the male viewpoint).

An important feature of Dravidian terminology is that it discriminates crucially between sisters and parallel cousins on the one hand, and cross cousins on the other (Dumont, 1953). Cross cousins can be married; sisters and parallel cousins cannot be married. Dumont's chart reveals major differences from Iatmul terminology as listed by Bateson (see Diagram 1, page 48 above).

The important differences between Dumont's account of Dravidian terminology and Bateson's data can be summarised as follows:

1. Dumont: Father's Sister and Mother in Law are classified together.

Bateson shows Father's Sister and Mother in Law as classified separately, as iau and naisagut respectively.

2. Dumont: Mother's Brother and Father in Law are classified together.

Bateson shows Mother's Brother and Father in Law as classified separately, as wau and naisagut respectively. An important point here is that Bateson does not say whether a Mother's Brother can be the same individual as a Father in Law, or if, on marriage, ego's term for wau changes to or comes to include that for naisagut.

3. Dumont: Mother in Law and Father in Law are classified separately. Bateson shows Mother in Law and Father in Law as classified together, as naisagut.

4. Dumont: male cross cousins are classified together and female cross cousins are classified together. Bateson shows Father's Sister's Daughter and Father's Sister's Son as classified together as na, whereas Mother's Brother's Daughter (nyame) and Mother's Brother's Son (mbuambo) are classified separately.

Bateson does not provide sufficient data to substantiate his claim that Iatmul marriage 'occurs very nearly at random', but on the other hand we can see that the data he does provide with respect to terminology militates against the possibility that Iatmul kin terminology follows the classic Dravidian system. It is possible, however, to suggest that the Iatmul might have operated on the principle of a Dravidian type bilateral cross-cousin marriage ideology which stressed a preference for females classified with the father's mother's kin. Whether or not, and how far, this ideology was manipulated such that marriage would also be possible with a woman belonging to the category including MBD is difficult to say. Bateson's data is not sufficient here. (See below, page 120 for the possibility of marriage between children of wau and of laua.) I would suggest, however, that 'marriage at random' indicates such a manipulation of categories, as of course does Bateson's third formulation, i. e., that sisters should be exchanged.

It might be fruitful here to compare Bateson's Iatmul data with a Dravidian terminology from South America as studied by Overing (1975). (4) Overing shows that the crucial marriage category for the Piaroa, chirekwa, includes both MBD and FZD, but that the preference is for the MBD. For a Piaroa male, both affinal and political relationships are traced through the wife's brother or sister's husband. The situation is summarised in Diagram 7, page 121 below. Overing stresses that the relationship with the wife's brother is an essential basis for Piaroa society; affinal and political alliance are inseparable. We can compare this with the Iatmul situation as reported by Bateson (see Diagram 8, page 121 below). Here the crucial relationship for an Iatmul male ego is with the sister's husband. Thus, whereas for the Piaroa marriage is traced through the WB or ZH and the marriage preference is for the MB child, for the Iatmul marriage is traced through the sister, and the marriage preference is for the FZ child. Marriage alliance is stressed through a different kind of brother-in-law in each case.

Later in this chapter I will consider Bateson's observation that the Iatmul differentiate between two kinds of affines, those traced through a contemporary marriage, and those traced through a past marriage. (5)

A further piece of Bateson's data is illustrated with reference to a South American society, namely his statement that 'marriages with classificatory "mothers" are...not uncommon' (1936: 92). If this is so, then it might make structural sense of Bateson's report that during naven ceremonies the laua stepped over the prostrate body of his mother. This would make naven more of a dramatic celebration of laua's structural position. Rivière reports a skewing rule amongst the Trio such that marriage with a "mother" is possible (1969: 87). If amongst the Iatmul wau's daughter (MBD) and Mother are classified together, as they appear to be from Bateson's chart (both are termed nyame), then marriage between laua's son and wau's daughter can be considered as marriage with a classificatory mother. The situation, from Rivière's report, appears similar for the Trio (see Diagram 9, page 122 below).

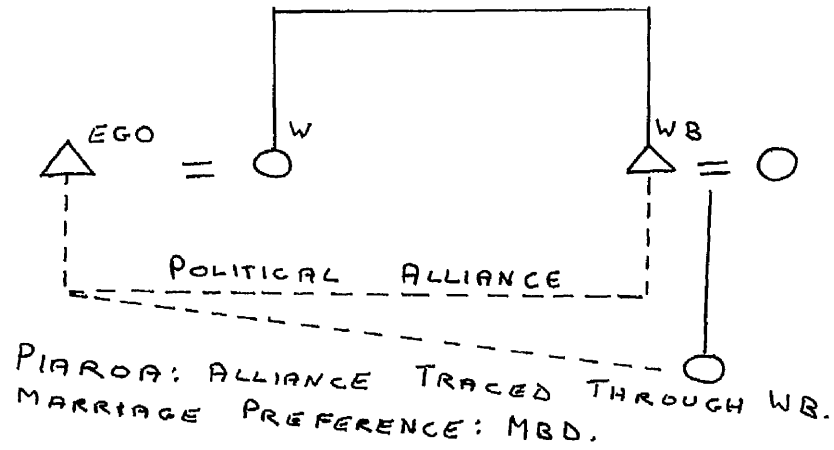


Diagram 7. WB as Focus for Alliance.

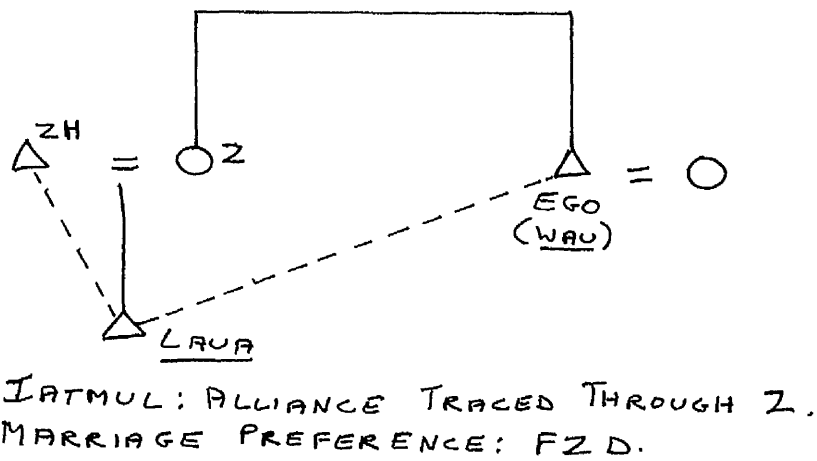
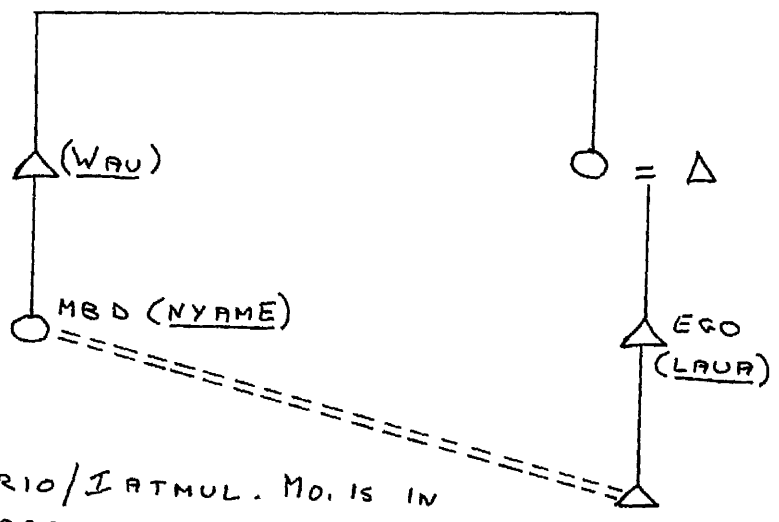


Diagram 8. Z as Focus for Alliance.



TRIO/IATMUL. MO. IS IN
MARRIAGEABLE CATEGORY.
EGO'S MBD MARRIES EGO'S SON.

Diagram 9. Skewing Rule, Trio/Iatmul.
cf. Rivière (1969: 87).

Thus, for the Iatmul as for many South Amerindian societies, political organization is based on affinity. In the Iatmul case, however, reciprocity is delayed by one generation; this is the structural consequence of the stress on marriage by males into the father's line. But whereas for the Piaroa and other Amerindian societies, affinity is also the basis of fission (Overing 1975), Bateson's argument is that for the Iatmul fission occurs along "patrilineal" lines:

'These (affinal) links form a network which runs across the patrilineal system of clans, moieties and initiatory groups and thereby ties the conflicting groups together' (1936: 107).

We might ask here if the "cut-off point" for the return of women in the pattern of delayed reciprocity is the same as that at which hostility is possible. Again, Bateson's data is insufficient here.

The importance of the fact that FZD marriage necessitates a situation of delayed reciprocity, and how this might relate crucially to the naven, will be examined below in Chapter Eight.

We can summarise Bateson's difficulty with regard to Iatmul marriage patterns, therefore, by saying that his confusion between genealogy and category leads him to regard his three "formulations" as being implicitly contradictory. This is because he cannot see that the point of the arrangements is to maximise the number of possible marriage alliances, rather than to operate a strictly delimited number of marriage "rules", of either a positive or a negative variety. An Iatmul male does not have to know exactly how women are related to him genealogically, or even if they are related to him at all; the important point for him is whether or not they are in a marriageable category. And, no doubt, categories can be manipulated; perhaps that is their real justification.

I have attempted to argue that Bateson's data shows that we can view the Iatmul ideology of marriage as a kinship network which traces affinity and political alliance through the sister. A general point worth noting is that Bateson's discussion of Iatmul marriage arrangements is pursued, for the most part, from a male

viewpoint and not from a female one.

For the Iatmul, affinity and political alliance are coterminous. Sisters must be discriminated from wives, brothers from husbands. The power of the figure of the sister in this society must thus be considerable, since virtually all relationships in Iatmul life are defined through her and by means of her. Indeed, we might go so far as to say that Iatmul society is based around the sister. Her child is made the focus of the naven, which can now indeed be seen as an expression of the continuity of relationships forged through her and her husband. This is one way of viewing the situation, but I would also suggest that we might see the naven as constituting such a continuity rather than expressing it.

Does this image of the power of the sister throw any light on the kinds of behaviour exhibited by the participants in the naven? Perhaps these can now be seen as a way of defusing the sister's power by means of the caricatured pantomime of the role of women.

The next section of Bateson's text is a discussion of the importance of affinal relationships for the "integration" of Iatmul society. He writes:

'It remains for us to consider whether these linkings are really important and how they are used in the integration of society' (1936: 92).

The classificatory nature of Iatmul kin terminology is important here, although Bateson does not see that this factor might put his own genealogical bias in his analysis of marriage patterns in doubt.

'In this connection the most significant fact is that the formulations of proper behaviour towards affinal relatives can be applied in this culture not only to own wife's own relatives and to own sister's husband's relatives, but can be extended to a whole series of relatives who are grouped around this central nucleus in a classificatory manner' (1936: 92).

There is much extension of kin identifications within the network of affinal relationships and, logically, this would seem to imply

that the notions of proper behaviour towards a man's wife's relatives would spread far and wide within Iatmul society. But this does not happen:

'If all affinal linkages were observed no one would be able to quarrel with anyone else inside the community, and everybody would have to go everywhere and do everything with everybody else, since the genealogical links are actually ubiquitous' (1936: 93).

Quarrelling is rife, and mobilising work groups for house-building and similar tasks is difficult. But co-operative groups are formed eventually, and this is made possible

'by the insistence upon affinal ties which extend in a perfectly definite manner along certain chosen lines of the classificatory system' (1936: 93).

Two of these extensions are particularly important. The commonest collective terms for people grouped by them are lanoa nampa ('husband people') and laua nyanggu ('sister's-child children'). The former term is applied to people whose affinal relationship arises from a contemporary marriage. Lanoa nampa therefore includes such kin as sister's husband (lan-ndo), sister's husband's brother (also lan-ndo), sister's husband's father (laua) and sister's husband's son (again, laua). Here, the term lan is extended to include various lauas (1936: 93).

The laua nyanggu trace their affinal relationships through a past marriage. Such relationships are expressed in the naven. Here the term laua is extended to include classificatory sister's husbands. According to Bateson, an Iatmul proverb - 'Legs of a Caryota; legs of a Pandanua; women hither, women thither' - expresses the way in which this formation of lauas is based on the perpetuation of past marriages:

'the meaning of the proverb is that diverse groups are tied together by affinal bonds due to past marriages of pairs of sisters' (1936: 94).

Here Bateson provides a diagram which illustrates how this can occur, in such a way that the wau-laua link can be repeated over three generations (see Diagram 10, page 126 below).

First, two sisters in clan A get married. (6) One sister

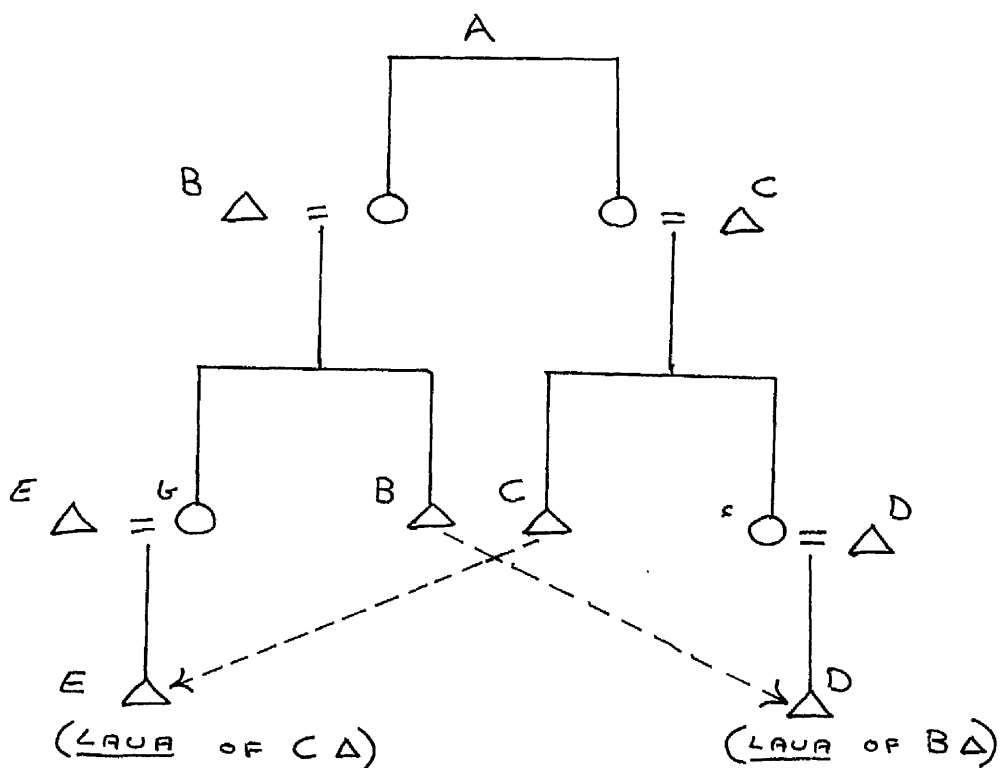


Diagram 10. Repetition of Wau-Lau Link over Three Generations. From Bateson (1936: 94).

marries into clan B, the other into clan C. Their children are regarded as classificatory siblings. In this next generation, the girl of clan B marries a man of clan E, and the girl of clan C marries a man of clan D. The grandchildren resulting from the original marriages again regard themselves as classificatory siblings. Bateson continues:

'The members of what is now the middle generation will become classificatory "fathers", "mothers", "mother's brothers" and "father's sisters" of these children: so that owing to the original marriage of two sisters of clan A it has come about that a man in clan B has a laua in clan D and a man in clan C has a laua in clan E' (1936: 95).

Although the term laua nyanggu, i. e. the classificatory lauas, can include a large number of children, a wau will stress his relationship to certain laua groups in preference to others, that is to those groups whose allegiance he specifically desires. The wau will give to the baby laua of his choice the name which, according to Bateson, might terminate with the word for "mask", and the giving of this name is accompanied by the gift of a coconut. In later years the various forms of naven behaviour between the wau and laua follow. The wau will constantly remind the laua of their relationship, calling the child by his "mask" name, he will express pride at the laua's achievements and he will give presents of meat to the laua. The laua will give return gifts of valuables to the wau, and will help whenever the wau needs assistance in building a house, clearing a garden and similar tasks (1936: 95).

One of Bateson's informants expressed this differently by saying that he had two sorts of tawontu (i. e., wife's brother): one sort of tawontu were 'the men who had received a part of the bride price he gave for his wife' (1936: 95). Bride price was seen as the defining factor in the relationship with one group of affines, and the system of name-giving by the maternal clan and the naven behaviour were seen as defining the relationship with the other affinal group. It is the combination of these two networks of alliance, Bateson argues, which enables the Iatmul to engage in co-operative tasks.

Proof of this is to be found in the constraints on the size of Iatmul villages, which are due, according to Bateson, to the weakness of the internal cohesion of Iatmul communities. In the larger villages, fission is a common occurrence; groups are constantly leaving and founding new villages. These splits are always said by the Iatmul to be caused by quarrelling. Moreover, these fissions invariably follow what Bateson calls the 'lines of the patrilineal groups' (1936: 97) - that is, 'a clan, a phratry or a moiety splitting off from the parent community and thereby rending the system of affinal linkages' (1936: 97). This suggests that affinal links are far weaker than the patrilineal connections, and here Bateson has arrived at a key point in his sociological argument.

'Under these circumstances the importance of any factor which strengthens the affinal links becomes apparent and we are justified in saying that the villages could not be as big as they are if it were not for naven ceremonies or some analogous phenomenon' (1936: 97).

What might such an analogous phenomenon be? Bateson says that it could only take the shape of either a universal allegiance amongst the Iatmul to some chiefly system, or a system of codified law. Neither of these integrative mechanisms exist amongst the Iatmul. There is no central authority. The maintenance of social order is a matter for the individuals concerned in any particular cases of offences or affronts. Opponents in disputes call upon their relatives, fellow clan members or members of their initiatory groups, a feature of Iatmul society described in an earlier chapter of Bateson's text, 'Sorcery and Vengeance'. These matters are always, in Bateson's words, 'between two peripheral groups, never taking the centripetal form which we might phrase as "Rex or State versus So-and-so" ' (1936: 99, author's emphases). Bateson then gives details of four disputes which illustrate this pattern. This material also shows, Bateson claims, how disputes between members of different 'patrilateral clans' often seem to be mediated by mutual affinal kin (1936: 99-106).

Summing up at the end of his chapter, Bateson argues that the importance of affinal links for the Iatmul is evident from the fact that disputes between competing patrilineal groups tend to be

mediated by men who stand in a mutual affinal relationship with both parties.

'These (affinal) links form a network which runs across the patrilineal systems of clans, moieties and initiatory groups and thereby ties the conflicting groups together...the patterning and ubiquity of the affinal relationships are such as to ensure that whenever a quarrel reaches serious dimensions there shall be some individuals marked out to act as peace-makers'. (1936: 107, my parentheses).

Rules among the Iatmul, such as they are, are meant to be broken by those who are strong enough.

'Their fissions spring not from conflicting doctrines but from rivalry between individuals or groups' (1936: 107).

From this perspective, claims Bateson, the naven is an expression of the crucial integrative function of affinal relationships in Iatmul society.

NOTES to Chapter Six

- (1) Bateson here prefigures Lévi-Strauss's distinction between mechanical and statistical models, although for Lévi-Strauss it is the mechanical and not the statistical model which is built on the same scale as the phenomena under study (Lévi-Strauss, 1968).
- (2) For articles dealing with the controversies surrounding the notion of descent in New Guinea societies, see particularly Langness, 1964; de Lepervanche, 1967; La Fontaine, 1973; Barnes, 1962.
- (3) Viewed in this light, the Iatmul would seem to constitute an opposite case from that of the Balinese who, with their stated preference for marriage with the FBD, appear to engage in the minimising of marriage alliances (M.Hobart, personal communication).
- (4) I am indebted to Dr Joanna Overing for her advice and helpful suggestions as to this comparison, and in the preparation of this chapter of my thesis in general.
- (5) An alternative marriage possibility, between children of wau and of laua, is mentioned by Bateson in a footnote (1936: 89).
- (6) I am using the term "clan" here for the sake of simplicity, in following Bateson's account of his own diagram, but, as throughout his text, I am unable to say exactly what he means by the term.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ETHOS

BATESON OPENS HIS next chapter, 'Problems and Methods of Approach', with the claim that by means of (1) a structural analysis he has shown that

'the cultural structure provides a setting with which the ceremonies are consistent'

and that by means of (2) a sociological analysis he has shown that

'the ceremonies perform an important function in stressing certain classificatory relationships and thereby contribute to the integration of Iatmul society' (1936: 108).

So, if not for the naven, Iatmul villages would not be so large. He continues:

'all cultural and social anthropology is a study of equilibria.'

In such studies we can never be sure that all relevant factors have been accounted for.

'It is exceedingly dangerous to point to certain factors and to say that they constitute the whole cause of the effect which we want to explain.'

Both his sociological and his structural approach have been important but we must

'go on with the search for other types of factors which may also contribute their quota to the equilibrium. For it is apparent that many problems remain unexplained by either structural or sociological analysis' (1936: 108).

In respect of the naven these problems are:

Why is the wau's naven behaviour so exaggerated?

Why is it comic?

Why in stressing his identification with the laua's mother does he dress as a filthy old hag, in contradistinction to the father's sister who wears the best male finery? (1936: 109).

But we also need to know why Iatmul villages are so large. It is not enough to take this fact as a given because

'a stable culture is itself a complete functional system and therefore we cannot assume certain facts as fixed in this way, but must still try to relate them back to the other features of the culture until we have a completely circular or reticulate

exposition of causes and effects' (1936: 109).

This reads like a clear expression of functionalist intent. However, Bateson then leads into a discussion of the problems of individual motivation, a discussion which drastically changes the perspective of the argument. Anthropologists cannot accept sociological functions of behaviour as underlying motives for individual behaviour. Again, we cannot take the logical reasons given by informants as evidence of motivation. But, despite the doubtful nature of either structural or sociological phrasings as statements of motive, the data so far has seemed to indicate that the naven activities are somehow connected with the gaining of the laua's allegiance by the wau.

This explanation, however, assumes that the wau seeks the allegiance of his laua, and this seems to Bateson an unsatisfactory assumption to make. Can we phrase such a desire in terms of the further assumption that all male human beings naturally seek such allegiance? Or is it a matter of the particular more of Iatmul culture? The desire for allegiance may take various forms in different cultures. Such allegiance may be an expression of various needs and anxieties, ranging from the recognition of the importance of the kind of emotional well-being which comes from having the loyalty of one's fellows, to the fear of isolation as a result of being without loyal supporters, or again the matter might be one of pride.

'The crude assumption that all men desire the allegiance of their fellows ignores all these various possibilities and so tells us virtually nothing about the wau's motives' (1936: 110-111).

Bateson again lists the main problems raised by his data so far, and suggests that they are closely related: (1) Why is the wau a buffoon? (2) Why are the villages large? (3) What are the wau's motives? Bateson suggests that

'All these questions might be answered in terms of emotional satisfaction given to the individuals by the various phenomena, buffoonery, large villages and naven' (1936: 111).

Bateson had earlier discussed the difficulties involved in the analysis of what he described as the "ethos" of a culture, in that it entails the preliminary discussion of the affective functions prevalent in that culture. He now turns to a development of his formulation of the concept of ethos, and he relates it to the philosophical traditions from which it had been derived (1936: 111-112).

Bateson derives ethos from the German notion of Zeitgeist, promulgated by such scholars as Dilthey and Spengler, via Ruth Benedict's use of the term "configuration" to describe the emphases of particular cultures (1935). Bateson discusses the relationship between the synchronic and the diachronic study of culture and society. Functional anthropologists, says Bateson, have rejected the use of diachronic study because of its insistence on the search for origins which, if applied to primitive societies, can only lead to speculative narratives. But this is, in fact, a mis-reading of the true nature of history. He writes:

'History, in so far as it is a science, is concerned not with narratives and origins but with generalisations from narrative, generalisations based upon the comparative study of the processes of cultural and social change! (1936: 111, author's emphasis).

Many of the functional concepts employed by anthropologists in synchronic studies have been used by historians in their diachronic analyses. Historians have, however, formulated one concept which has only recently (Bateson is writing in the mid-1930s) been adopted by anthropologists.

'This is the concept of Zeitgeist, the spirit of the times, a concept which owes its origins to the Dilthey-Spengler school of philosophical history. The suggestion of this school is that the occurrence of cultural changes is in part controlled by some abstract property of the culture, which may vary from period to period so that at one time a given change is appropriate and occurs easily though a hundred years earlier the same innovation may have been rejected by the culture because it was in some way inappropriate' (1936: 112).

Benedict's use of this concept, in terms of her use of "configuration", is illustrated by her claim that the refusal of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico to use hallucinogenic drugs or alcohol was an expression of the sedate "Apollonian" configuration of their culture, while their neighbours, conditioned by an ecstatic

"Dionysian" configuration, used both these kinds of stimulants with enthusiasm (1935).

Such notions as Zeitgeist and configuration have, Bateson continues, been attacked on the grounds that they have mystical connotations, despite their defence through the use of concrete examples by their adherents. For Bateson the essential characteristic of such concepts is that they are based upon

'an holistic rather than upon a crudely analytic study of the culture. The thesis is that when a culture is considered as a whole certain emphases emerge built up from the juxtaposition of the diverse traits of which the culture is composed' (1936: 113). (1)

These emphases are composed of either systems of thought or scales of values. But the words "thought" and "value" come from the realm of individual psychology; can we say that a culture possesses a system of thought or a scale of values? The notion of a 'group mind' is dismissed; we must regard all the thinking and feeling in a culture as being connected with the individual members of that culture. What we mean here is that the culture affects the psychology of its individual members, so that a range of thinking and feeling is created within which these individual members are constrained. (I suggest that here we can see Bateson shifting the baseline of his argument from the "Biosphere" to "Culture" - from Level One to Level Two, Diagram 2 page 77 above.) A culture could do this through either education, or selection. Education works by inducing and promoting certain psychological processes in all individuals, while selection would promote those individuals with innate psychological processes favoured by the culture. We must suppose that both education and selection are important in this way in every culture to some extent, but we cannot estimate at present the relative importance of each within any one culture. Bateson follows Benedict by subsuming both educational and selective processes under the heading of the "standardisation" of individual psychology by culture. Bateson writes:

'This indeed is probably one of the fundamental axioms of the holistic approach in all sciences: that the object studied - be it an animal, a plant or a community - is composed of units whose properties are in some way standardised by their position

in the whole organisation' (1936: 113-114, author's emphasis).

Standardisation will affect the scale of values of the members of the culture, such that their instincts and emotions will be programmed to respond in certain ways to the various important stimuli of life. For example, in one culture pride may be associated with the possession of property, while in another it may be associated with poverty, while in a third it may even be gratified by public ridicule. But the question of how a culture affects the systems of thought of individuals is not so clear.

'That the circumstances of a man's life will affect the content of his thought is plain enough, but the whole question of what we mean by a system of thought remains to be elucidated' (1936: 114, author's emphasis).

Bateson says that he will leave this difficult question to a later chapter, i.e. to the chapter on eidos which occurs at the end of the book and the content of which shows that he considered his treatment of Iatmul eidos to be considerably less satisfactory than his treatment of ethos. He now asks if any light can be shed on the discussion by a consideration of psychological theories of social phenomena, of the kind which claim that all human beings, of all races and cultures, have certain fixed patterns of emotional reactions. With regard to the naven, such crude psychological determinism might claim that all men naturally have certain attitudes towards women, and that this would lead any transvestite behaviour by men to take the form of buffoonery and caricature whereas women's behaviour in such circumstances might "naturally" lead to an opposite exaggerated pride. The argument that Bateson advances against such crude psychological determinism is interesting:

'When stated in this way the theories have a slightly ridiculous appearance, but it is worth while to consider the position in which we should find ourselves if we indulged the facile building of these theories to an unlimited extent. We should find that we had attributed to the human race a large number of conflicting tendencies and that we had invoked certain tendencies in the interpretation of one culture and other, perhaps opposite, tendencies in the interpretation of another' (1936: 115).

I would suggest that this criticism of crude psychological determinism is equally applicable to the kind of functionalist determinism with which Bateson was struggling and from which he was attempting to

escape, and that the above quote is a parallel criticism to his critique of functionalism in anthropology. What is needed, he states, is some criterion whereby the choice of a particular psychological emphasis or potentiality for the use of the interpretation of a particular culture may be justified. Such a criterion, he argues, is provided by the notion of the standardising processes of culture. The psychological theories, from this perspective, must be re-phrased thus:

'A human being is born into the world with potentialities and tendencies which may be developed in very various directions, and it may well be that different individuals have different potentialities. The culture into which an individual is born stresses certain of his potentialities and suppresses others, and it acts selectively, favouring the individuals who are best endowed with the potentialities preferred in the culture and discriminating against those with alien tendencies. In this way the culture standardises the organisation of the emotions of individuals' (1936: 115).

I suggest that here Bateson has moved away radically from the functionalist model of the relationship between the individual and society. The influence of the concepts of cultural emphasis and standardisation has led to a new formulation which, it could be argued, pre-date later relevant models such as Wallace's "mazeway" (1961) and Bourdieu's "habitus" (1977). The elaboration of ethos, and its use in the analysis of the naven, is Bateson's major transition in the book.

Equipped with the notion of a standardised ethos, says Bateson, we are now able to invoke the sentiments of individuals in order to analyse the culture, as long as we ensure that these sentiments are actually fostered by the culture. For example, we would only be justified in regarding a stress on gregariousness as being important in Iatmul culture if we could show that the quality of gregariousness is in fact a standardised component of the Iatmul ethos. This is not the case, but Iatmul culture does contain a comparable component, namely a stress on pride. Bateson says he will show later - particularly in the following chapter which describes the ethos of Iatmul men - that pride is a crucial factor in the organisation of the large Iatmul ceremonial houses, in the ceremonials and dances, in the performative nature of social life generally and, in the past at least, in the activities associated with head-hunting.

'Thus the large size of the villages serves an important function in gratifying pride - an attribute of human nature which is much stressed in Iatmul culture and to which therefore we are justified in referring' (1936: 116).

Bateson notes that the methodology outlined above is circular; a sentiment which is emphasised by the culture is at first identified and then referred back to as a factor which has shaped the culture. This circularity, he argues, is inevitable because it is characteristic of all scientific methods. Any scientific analysis involves the observation of a number of comparable phenomena before any theoretical statement can be made about any one of the phenomena. But, further, the circularity here is also due to the nature of the phenomena under consideration.

But here Bateson shows himself to be still very much under the sway of functionalism. If we study jealousy and the institutions which regulate sexual life in a society, we can conclude both that the institutions stress jealousy and that jealousy has contributed to the institutions. He then says that circularity is a universal property of functional systems. Running through this argument is the unstated assumption, of course, that social phenomena are functional in nature and can be adequately analysed in functionalist terms. The magneto of a motor car produces electricity because the engine is running, but the engine runs because of the electricity produced by the magneto. (The mechanical metaphor Bateson uses here is typical of those used in functionalist arguments.) Thus:

'Each element in the functional system contributes to the activity of the others and each is dependent upon the activity of the others' (1936: 117).

He then says that, if a description of a functional system remains outside the system, the circular nature of such systems can be ignored, for

'as long as we take an external - behaviouristic - view of a functional system we can avoid statements of circularity' (1936: 117).

From the external viewpoint a motor car can be seen as a thing into which petrol is poured and which runs along the road producing smoke and killing people. But once we get inside the system and begin

to acknowledge its internal coherence 'we are forced to accept the fundamental circularity of the phenomena' (1936: 117).

Bateson even produces a quote from Malinowski here in order to illustrate his position.

But then comes another argument in favour of the circularity of social phenomena or, in Bateson's words, of 'functional systems', namely that,

'any other view would drive us to belief either in a "first cause" or in some sort of teleology - in fact we should have to accept some fundamental dualism in nature which is philosophically inadmissible' (1936: 117)

This argument is interesting not only in terms of Bateson's analysis of Iatmul society, but also from the perspective of his later work. He continues:

'Thus, since the phenomena which we are studying are themselves interdependent it is certain that our descriptions must contain interdependent statements; and since this is so the description must for ever be regarded as "not proven" unless we can devise some method of transcending the limits of the circles' (1936: 117).

I would add a comment here, to the effect that an important implication of this statement is that any object of study will tend to reproduce the model of that object which exists in the observer's mind. It also stresses a logical redefinition of reality, and a strong tendency towards logical positivism. A footnote to the page of Bateson's text under consideration refers to Whitehead's The Concept of Nature (Bateson 1936: 117), and Whitehead was the co-author with Bertrand Russell of Principia Mathematica. The above quote is an important comment on the exploration of epistemology which marks Bateson's life's work. We see here an early reference to the notion of "typologies of logic", or "levels of mind", which was to become so important for Bateson, in his use of Russell's theory of logical types which was developed in the Principia Mathematica. This theory was to feature in the Second Epilogue to the 1958 edition of Naven. But for the moment Bateson only mentions the possibility of a hierarchy of logical types in order to complete his platform for the transition from a functionalist model to ethos in his handling of the Iatmul material.

Statements about the functions of institutions, he claims, will only be verifiable when anthropologists are able to extract comparable aspects of different social systems and to show that a given element has the same function in different systems. As long as they confine themselves to the description of a single society, statements about function are bound to be circular and will, therefore, remain unproven. But, he continues, since the same institution, e.g. marriage, can be shown to fulfil different functions in different societies, the final verification of functionalist theories is impossible! Here Bateson attacks a central claim of functionalist and comparative anthropology.

'we find that the relative importance of these functions in different cultures varies so widely that it is almost impossible to verify by comparative methods the truth of any statement which we may make about marriage in any one culture' (1936: 118).

The approach which stresses ethos, however, subdivides culture in a different way from functionalism.

'Its thesis is that we may abstract from culture a certain systematic aspect called ethos which we may define as the expression of a culturally standardised system of organisation of the instincts and emotions of the individuals' (1936: 118, author's emphasis).

As the ethos of any one culture is an 'abstraction from the whole mass of its institutions and formulations' (1936: 118), then we might expect that ethoses will vary widely from culture to culture, in the way that institutions vary in different cultures. But it is possible that it is the content of affective life which varies, while the ethoses from which they are derived are perhaps classifiable into types. 'It seems likely...that we may ultimately be able to classify the types of ethos' (1936: 118). It seems as if Bateson is unwilling to leave functionalist ideals of typology behind, even at this stage of the formulation of his own methodology, which departs so radically from the structural-functionalist model of society. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the theory of logical types will constitute Bateson's own form of functionalist explanation, both in the development of his

analysis in Naven and in his later work.

The final section of Bateson's Chapter VIII attempts to elucidate and illustrate the concept of ethos by drawing on examples from our own society or, more precisely, from that sector of English middle class intellectual society with which Bateson himself was familiar. First, Bateson asks us to consider a group of young intellectual English men and women talking and joking together 'wittily and with a touch of light cynicism' (1936: 119). For a time, a 'definite tone of appropriate behaviour' will be established among them, and this is indicative of the establishment of an ethos, or a standardised system of attitudes. In this example, the group will tend to joke about any subject of conversation which might arise, and this will apply to subjects which, at other times and in other contexts, they might treat more seriously. If a member of the group should say something in a more serious vein, the result will be a temporary embarrassment or hiatus in the proceedings. On another occasion, if the same group of individuals adopts a more serious ethos then the intrusion of a flippant or jocular remark may be considered similarly embarrassing and inappropriate. This is an example of 'labile and temporary ethos' on a small scale, but the principle is nevertheless at work. If, on either occasion in the above examples, the blunderer had been sufficiently influential in the group he might have been able to change the ethos from the jocular to the serious, or vice versa.

When we turn to some more permanent, complex group of individuals, we find that the ethos is much more stable in that 'in any formed group we find certain types of remark, certain tones of conversation permanently taboo' (1936: 120). Here, Bateson is focusing on silences, on what cannot be said between people, in a way which Radcliffe-Brown and his contemporaries could not do. This marks an important move away from positivism.

Change, however, still occurs in these more permanent ^{GROUPS} ~~groups~~, but such change will necessarily be more gradual and will take place over considerable periods of time.

Bateson examines the ethos of his own Cambridge college, and in so doing he looks at the relationship between ethos and tradition.

'The dons of St John's College drink water, beer, claret, sherry and port - but not cocktails; and in their choice they are guided both by tradition and by the ethos of the group. These two factors work together and we may say that the dons drink as they do both because generations of dons have drunk on the same sound system in the past and because actually in the present that system seems to them appropriate to the ethos of their society' (1936: 121).

All the other cultural details of the system, such as the Latin Grace, the architecture of the College and so on, combine to form a complex series of channels which 'express and guide the ethos'. These details were selected by the ethos in the past, and they are still preserved by it. Again, Bateson points out the circularity of the system:

'the very attitude which the dons adopt towards the past has been historically formed and is an expression of their present ethos' (1936: 121).

A footnote here shows that Bateson is aware of the danger of hypostatizing such concepts as that of ethos; he refers to the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' which he borrows from Whitehead and which he was to develop further and use in his later work. (2)

'Such metaphors are of course dangerous. Their use encourages us to think of ethos and structure as different "things" instead of realising as we should that they are only different aspects of the same behaviour' (1936: 121, author's emphasis).

I turn now to Bateson's description of male and female ethos in Iatmul society. Chapters IX and X of Naven can be considered together; they contain Bateson's account of the ethoses of, respectively, Iatmul men and Iatmul women. Chapter IX begins with an important claim, to the effect that the only social differentiation in Iatmul society is that which obtains between the sexes, since Iatmul culture 'recognises no differentiation of rank or class' (1936: 123). The differentiation between the sexes must be considered 'since the problems which we are studying are connected with transvestism' (1936: 123). Bateson would seem

to be implying here that although differentiation between the sexes is the only differentiation obtaining in Iatmul society, this is not one of rank or class. I would suggest that Bateson is making two unwarranted assumptions here. Both of these assumptions rest on his use of a rigid, "scientific", view of the notion of "class".

The first is that he views gender differentiation among the Iatmul as an unproblematic given; this is not borne out by his data, as we shall see. The apparent inconsistencies within and between male and female ethos are noted by Bateson, but he does not follow through the possible implications of these inconsistencies. In the same way, he had noted the inconsistencies between stated marriage preferences, but had not investigated the implications of these (see Chapter Six above). The latter misrecognition stems from the fact that Bateson's own ethos as an anthropologist, trained in the functionalist school of his day, militated against a full recognition of the implications of such structural inconsistencies. I would argue that his failure to deal adequately with Iatmul gender differentiation can be viewed as stemming from the same source. Bateson's enthusiasm for reduction leads him to posit a simplistic pattern of dual gender stereotypy. His second assumption is that any social differentiation among the Iatmul would necessarily be implicated in notions of 'rank or class', rather than in some other realm, e.g. within that of gender differentiation itself. Thus, by excluding class-based power altogether from Iatmul society, Bateson precludes the possibility of any consideration of Iatmul notions of gender as constituting a source of power relations. There would be great scope for a description of what Bourdieu refers to as 'symbolic capital' (1977: 171-183) in the relationship between Iatmul men and Iatmul women. Again, we must conclude that the intellectual climate in which Bateson was writing prevented such a consideration.

Bateson summarises the difference in ethos between Iatmul men and women thus:

'Broadly, we may say that the men are occupied with the spectacular, dramatic, and violent activities which have their centre

in the ceremonial house, while the women are occupied with the useful and necessary routines of food-getting, cooking, and rearing children - activities which centre around the dwelling house and the gardens' (1936: 123).

By means of a number of strongly evaluative adjectives - 'spectacular', 'dramatic' and 'violent' for the men, and 'useful' and 'necessary' for the women - Bateson paints a picture of the contrast between the world of the men, symbolised by the ceremonial house, and the world of the women, symbolised by the dwelling house and garden. This contrast is seen as fundamental.

For the men, the ceremonial house is the domain of masculine pride and display. Within its walls a variety of activities take place, from ritual and debate to gossiping and brawling. Bateson writes that the ceremonial house can be compared to some extent with a church, but this comparison is not entirely sound.

'Where we think of a church as sacred and cool, they think of a ceremonial house as "hot", imbued with heat by the violence and killing which were necessary for its building and consecration' (1936: 124).

(Head hunting had only recently been suppressed at the time of Bateson's fieldwork.) The behaviour of men in the ceremonial house is marked by pride, boasting and self-consciousness. This emphasis on what I would gloss as "showmanship" on the part of the men veers between harsh swaggering at one end of the spectrum, and clowning and buffoonery on the other. Reactions as well as behaviour are

'theatrical and superficial. Either pride or clowning is accepted as respectable and normal behaviour' (1936: 124).

Again, the reader should note Bateson's use of adjectives here.

Iatmul men gain status in a variety of ways, by fighting, and by gaining a reputation for sorcery and esoteric knowledge, but a general playing up to the public eye is also important. Bateson uses the word 'conspicuous' to sum up this crucial element in the behaviour of Iatmul males (1936: 124). In the smaller, junior ceremonial house the boys can practise their boasting and other conspicuous behaviour in preparation for manhood. Bateson describes the ethos of the ceremonial house as that of a club, but

'not a club in which the members are at their ease, but a club in which, though separated from their womenfolk, they are acutely conscious of being in public' (1936: 125).

Even when there is no specific formality taking place, the self-consciousness of the men is apparent, but debates and ritual performances provide the contexts for the full display of the male ethos.

Iatmul men engage in constant debating. These debates are organised formally around the special stool which has pride of place in every ceremonial house. The atmosphere of the debates is loud and angry; each speaker works himself up to a high pitch of excitement, and the speeches are laced with harsh gestures and mocking buffoonery. Erudition in Iatmul esoterica combines with violence and clowning. Men who are well versed in the highly valued specialist knowledge of the complex system of polysyllabic totemic names employ their erudition to great advantage. Other speakers will attempt to make their case using tone and gesture rather than esoteric content. They may taunt the opposition with scorn and mockery, threatening acts of rape and accompanying such threats with an obscene dance. At this, members of the opposition party will react with ironic encouragement. Other speakers may attempt the erudite style without success, to the mocking delight of their audience. During the debate both sides become gradually more excited, more enraged and aggressive. Sporadic bouts of hostile gesturing and dance eventually result in brawling and violence. This will occur particularly if one speaker gives away some esoteric secret belonging to the other side (1936: 125-126). Bateson does not provide any detailed account of actual instances here which, again, makes his use of the terms "violence" and "clowning" problematic. We do not know precisely what he means by "violence" here.

The pride displayed in the debates is connected with the esoterica pertaining to the totemic ancestors of each clan; indeed, most of the debates are couched in terms of arguments about the details of the totemic system. Bateson goes into this in some detail. Each Iatmul individual bears a number of personal names

of totemic ancestors. They are names of spirits, birds, stars, animals, domestic implements or anything else. One individual may have over thirty such names. These polysyllabic ancestral names refer to the secret myths of each clan. The effect of group rivalry on the origin myths has been to elaborate and corrupt them. Each moiety has its own version of the origin of the world, which is expressed to the detriment of the version claimed by the other moiety. This rivalry is also pursued at clan level. Secret mythologies are believed to support the claims of each group. The debates in the ceremonial house are, usually, contexts in which one group attempts to steal the totemic ancestors of another group by stealing the names belonging to the latter. (1936: 127).

Bateson comments that despite the fact that 'as a result of the overlapping mythology and the stealing of names, the system is in a terribly muddled state ', the Iatmul themselves 'feel that the whole gigantic system is perfectly schematic and coherent' (1936: 128). One could perhaps ask if the confusion here arises from Bateson's failure to consider how this naming system relates to Iatmul notions of personhood and identity. Bateson would appear to assume an individualism among the Iatmul similar to that of our own culture.

Bateson compares and contrasts the fierce competitiveness of the debates with the rituals connected with the ceremonial house. In ritual

'we see the men, as a group, still vying with each other, but in spite of their rivalry managing to work together to produce a spectacle which the women shall admire and marvel at' (1936: 128).

He describes the ceremonial house as a 'Green Room' in which the 'show' is prepared. In this dressing room, the men put on their make up, costumes and masks before going out to dance before their audience, namely the women of the village. The women are assembled at the sides of the dancing ground. There is an element of this situation even in the exclusively male ritual of initiation. Parts of the initiation ritual will be visible to the women, who will also be able to listen to the music coming from behind the walls of

the ceremonial house, music played by the men on their secret musical instruments such as flutes, gongs and bull roarers. The players are extremely conscious of their unseen audience, and the women's laughter is a dreaded consequence of technical blunders (1936: 128). Bateson throws this latter point away, without following it up, but it would appear to be important as an indication that the role of audience which he assigns to the women is not merely a passive one. This does not appear likely if the men do indeed fear the ridicule of their audience in this way. Further, we should perhaps ask if the men's performances are really as formal as Bateson suggests, and if their audiences really are limited to women. Wouldn't these "shows" be seen not only by the women, but also by children, visitors to the village, other men who happen to be hanging around and by anyone who is prepared to watch (including, it might be said, the anthropologist)?

The ceremonial house is not only a debating society-cum-theatre club. It is also the place in which the men meet to discuss and plan their everyday tasks, such as hunting, fishing, building and canoe making. Music and dance accompany these tasks, and the completion of every important task is celebrated by the performance of a dance or ceremony. Symbolism is not considered important by the men on these occasions. Bateson writes that

'the ritual significance of the ceremonies is almost completely ignored and the whole emphasis is laid on the function of the ceremony as a means of celebrating some labour accomplished and stressing the greatness of the clan ancestors' (1936: 129).

In one ceremony celebrated on the occasion of the laying of a new floor in the ceremonial house, Bateson's informants showed a lack of interest in the fact that, as far as the anthropologist had understood, the ceremony was connected with fertility and prosperity.

'Only a very few men were conscious of, or interested in, the ritual significance of the ceremony; and even these few were interested not in the magical effects of the ceremony but rather in its esoteric origins - matters of great importance to clans whose pride is based largely upon details of their totemic ancestry. So the whole culture is moulded by the continual emphasis upon the spectacular, and by the pride of the male ethos. Each man of spirit struts and shouts, play-acting to convince himself and others of the reality of a prestige which in this culture receives but little formal recognition' (1936: 129).

Before continuing my exposition of the chapter on male ethos, I would like to consider the data Bateson presents in his companion chapter which deals with the ethos of the women. Here, he says, 'there is no such emphasis on pride and spectacular appearance' (1936: 142). Iatmul women spend most of their time attending to 'the necessary economic labours connected with the dwelling house - food-getting, cooking and attention to babies'(1936: 142). In carrying out such tasks the behaviour of the women provides a direct contrast to that of the men. The men work publicly, noisily and collectively, while the women go about their tasks privately and quietly (1936: 143). Again, we should note the value-loaded adjectives Bateson uses here. He describes how the women tend their fish traps in the early morning, an activity which involves wading in the cold water up to the breast. After this, there is firewood to be collected and then the return to the house, where food must be cooked and household chores attended to.

An Iatmul household is shared by two or three men who are related by patrilineal ties. Male co-residents are still and formal in their attitudes towards each other. But co-resident women are far more relaxed with each other and engage in friendly conversation throughout the working day. This friendliness between women is also evident on market days, when the women travel up river to the bush villages to trade their surplus fish for sago. The behaviour of the women here contrasts sharply with that of the men when they negotiate deals involving canoes or sleeping bags. The women talk pleasantly with each other, and there is very little haggling between them; the men, on the other hand, try to outwit and hustle each other, with the result that often no business will be completed. The women, writes Bateson,

'are jolly and readily co-operative while the men are so obsessed with points of pride that co-operation is rendered difficult' (1936: 144).

Bateson now reports that there is a twist to the women's ethos; they are not 'mere submissive mice' (1936: 144). Women are often prepared to assert themselves, and to take the initiative in love affairs. Women often make the first advances in relationships which end in marriage. In Tambunum village Bateson was told that in cases of iai marriage, if a woman should go to the house of her ianan

(i.e., her FFZSS), then the man so chosen cannot refuse the proposal. Here Bateson reports the case of a less formalised marriage, in which one of his cook-boys was approached by a girl from a foreign village which Bateson's party had recently visited. The girl travelled alone to Kankanamun and, through an intermediary, approached the boy. This girl showed great courage in travelling unaccompanied to a foreign village, but such conduct, Bateson suggests, was regarded as normal by the Iatmul. Again he recounts a myth which shows that women had often been represented as playing an important part in head-hunting feuds (1936: 145-147).

Bateson states that the Iatmul household revolves around the activities of the women. They feed the pigs and catch the fish and they command considerable authority in the house. It is upon the women's economic activities that the men depend for the wealth which they need to make a show in the ceremonial house (1936: 147). This, I suggest, is a facet of Iatmul ethos which is of considerable importance. Bateson might be right when he says that the only social differentiation in Iatmul society is that which obtains between the sexes, but surely he misses the point when he also maintains that the culture recognised no differentiation in rank or class. I would suggest that his data on the ethos of the women indicates the workings of a system in which the women work in order that the men can perform. In the performances of the men - particularly in the naven - the women are often derided and scorned, but perhaps this attitude of contempt conceals the fact that without the work of the women the men would not be able to eat. There is an irony here which Bateson does not develop. It seems from his account that the great bulk of food production is carried out by the women. But it is apparent that a central part of the male ethos consists of the expression of contempt for the female ethos. This is particularly true in terms of sexual matters.

'Though the women may take the initiative in sexual advances, it is the activity of the male which is stressed in the native remarks about copulation, while the part played by the female is despised. In the Iatmul language the ordinary verb for copulation and the jocular synonyms which are used for it are, so far as I know, all of them transitive and in their active forms refer to the behaviour of the male. The same verbs may be used of the female role, but always the passive' (1936: 148).

We can perhaps read into this quote a play on the notion of performance as both spectacular display and as erotic activity.

For the most part then, Bateson reports that the ethos of the women is in direct contrast with that of the men. The men strut through their lives in a never-ending procession of melodrama, dancing and brawling, all the time occupying the centre of the Iatmul stage. But the women engage cheerfully in the co-operative routines of food preparation and domestic chores. The women's lives are enlivened by the entertainments and excitements afforded by the men's dramatic displays. I have suggested above that this picture perhaps becomes a little clearer with a greater emphasis on the economic reality of the situation. But the situation is more complicated than this.

The women's ethos has what Bateson calls

'a double emphasis...women occasionally adopt something approaching the male ethos...they are admired for so doing' (1936: 148).

We have seen that this is so in making sexual advances. Bateson claims that the double emphasis can also be seen in the women's ceremonial activities, although his data here is thin in comparison with that concerning the men's ceremonial. Generally, he says that the more usual women's ethos is most evident when the women gather to celebrate without men being present, but that when they celebrate in public on the village dancing ground, with men in the audience, their behaviour is more like that of the men (1936: 149).

In the former case, the men resent the fact that they are excluded from the more private women's ceremonials and do all they can to discourage such events. Husbands and wives often quarrel over this, and wives will refuse to cook for their husbands. Bateson describes how on one occasion he found a husband in the ceremonial house, attempting without success to roast sago. Iatmul men believe they are unable to cook sago pancakes. This man was deriding the passive sex role of the women, shouting across the village at the women dancing in his house. Despite this contemptuous attitude, the men withdrew from their houses when the women's dances were about to begin. The women are left in complete command of the house in which their dance is to be performed. On another occasion when the women were dancing

privately, Bateson asked the men in the ceremonial house if he could go and watch the dancing. The men tried to denigrate the women's dancing, but when Bateson threatened to go to another village in order to watch some dancing, the men relented and one young man reluctantly escorted him to the house where the women were dancing. Bateson's report of this dance summarises it as being, in effect, composed of rather 'naïve' caricatures of copulatory positions.

'The mere description of what these...women did gives very little idea of the extraordinary naïveté of this "obscenity" and the contrast between it and the harsher obscenity of the men' (1936: 150).

Bateson contrasts these private dances with those in which the women celebrate publicly on the dancing ground. Their audiences on these occasions is a mixture of the men and other women of the village. Their bearing is proud, and they are decorated with ornaments usually worn by men. This is similar to the behaviour of certain women during the naven and, as in the naven, it constitutes a mild form of transvestism on the part of women.

'Their marching gait in these processions is indeed more closely comparable with their swaggering demeanour when dressed in full homicidal war paint for the naven ceremonies than their patterns of behaviour on other occasions' (1936: 151).

It seems from Bateson's data here that the difference between the women's private dances, and their public dances and their participation in Naven, is one of translatability. The former, private, dances are untranslatable because the men are kept out. The latter forms of women's celebration, however, are translatable because they are public and use the male idiom.

In two smaller chapters, 'Attitudes Towards Death' and 'The Preferred Types', Bateson adds some interesting data to this material. In the former chapter, he reports that the mourning of Iatmul women is 'easy' and 'natural' (1936: 153), while the grief of the men tends to be artificial and theatrical. We should ask here if any form of the expression of grief can in fact be pre-social as Bateson is suggesting here. Is not all expression of grief learned in some way?

Here, Bateson writes about the difficulties encountered by the anthropologist in reporting the different ethoses of various social groups:

'I have described the ethos of the men as histrionic, dramatising, over-compensating, etc, but these words are only a description of the men's behaviour as seen by me, with my personality moulded to a European pattern. My comments are in no sense absolute statements. The men themselves would no doubt describe their own behaviour as "natural", while they would probably describe that of the women as "sentimental" ' (1936: 157).

No one ethos is more "natural" than another for the anthropologist, but Bateson would seem to be suggesting above that on occasions of mourning, the ethos of the Iatmul women is more "natural" than that of the men.

In the chapter 'The Preferred Types', Bateson adds that the ethos of the men, too, has a double emphasis to a certain degree. The Iatmul approve of two main types of men. Bateson describes these as 'the man of violence and the man of discretion' (1936: 161). The first type is, of course, in the mould of the male ethos described by Bateson in his Chapter IX. However, Iatmul men are distrustful of an individual who seems to be too much of an extreme case of this violent type. One of Bateson's informants was just this sort of man, who Bateson reports was too unstable even for the Iatmul.

'They regarded him as somewhat "cranky" and warned me against him when I took him as an informant. In this capacity he proved more curious than useful - very enthusiastic, but too hasty and astonishingly inaccurate. He seemed indeed to lack all power of critical thought and to have no sense of logical consistency. When his contradictory statements were presented to him he had no realisation of their incompatibility' (1936: 161).

Bateson seems rather ambivalent about Iatmul attitudes towards this extreme case.

'Such men though admired would, I was told, not be trusted with erudite information'

This is because it was felt that he would be liable to reveal esoteric secrets unnecessarily in debates, and

'provoke a brawl by too rashly exposing his opponents' secrets' (1936: 162).

This is informative about Iatmul categories; whereas a certain kind of violent behaviour in men is approved, an excess of violence is not.

The more discreet type of man is quieter and more relaxed in public. He will tend to be an expert in esoteric knowledge, and his balance and caution will be valuable in debates, since his intellectual abilities will allow for systematic and knowledgeable discussion. Again, in the debates the discreet man will be able to watch speakers on the opposing side, and determine whether or not their claims to esoteric knowledge are valid' (1936: 162). Iatmul mythology contrasts the two types of men. In only a very few cases did Bateson find the two types combined in the same individual.

It might be useful here to compare Bateson's description with Rosaldo's account of the life-cycle among Ilongot males, in which she claims a similar difference in the categorisation of males, although in this case the difference is one of age (1980).

There are obvious inconsistencies in Bateson's account of gender ethos among the Iatmul. Bateson recognises the irony inherent in these inconsistencies, but he does not incorporate it fully into his analysis of Iatmul culture. As I will show, he does use it to a certain extent in his account of the naven, but in doing so he marginalises it without drawing out the implications of such irony for Iatmul notions of gender, identity and personhood, and for the importance of performance in that culture. From Bateson's account, I would suggest that such notions for the Iatmul are riddled with inconsistencies. We can in fact see the culture's preoccupation with dramatic performance as a way in which such inconsistencies are initially created, and then compressed and concealed.

We can take a hint from the literary critic Kenneth Burke who has claimed that the trope irony can be crucially paired with the notion of dialectic (1969: 511). Dialectic can be equated with

dramatic action. Any dramatic role contains a number of situations or strategies which can be summarised in the form of "ideas". These "ideas" are both intrinsic to the role, and developed in relation to the dramatic action and to the other characters in the action. Drama is a form in which ideas can be seen in action, and dialectic arises where agents are the media for ideas. As Burke writes:

'Where the ideas are in action, we have drama; where the agents are in ideation, we have dialectic' (1969: 512).

But Bateson privileges the realm of ideas, or dialectic, over that of drama, or action. For Bateson, ideas exist initially and are then - in the case, for example, of the naven - literally "acted upon". But ideas and action themselves have a more subtle, dialectical, relationship, and it is possible to view action as the primary referent for ideas, rather than the other way round. It is possible that the naven does not so much express Iatmul gender roles - and the inconsistencies inherent in these - but creates them in the first place.

Bateson sees many inconsistencies in Iatmul culture, but he is unable to give them the analytical importance which they warrant. This is, simply, because his intellectualist prejudice is seeking a pure ideal Iatmul eidos which seems to him to be merely obfuscated by the ironic inconsistencies which the ethos is constantly producing. But the truth of the matter is pluralistic rather than unitary; and it is this pluralism which Bateson's epistemology refuses to acknowledge. The point about drama, and about performance, is that these perspectives can and do cope with pluralism.

I can perhaps illustrate this by referring to the naven as a performative context which reveals an essential difference between the roles of the younger and older Iatmul male, i.e. those of the laua and wau respectively. From one point of view, we can see the wau as assuming the disposition of a negatively stereotyped woman, clumsy, ineffectual and ridiculous. In contrast, the laua plays the part of the ideal effective, boasting, achieving male. But we can also interpret this scene as a situation in which the wau, because of his maturity, is able to incorporate something of the feminine into his role. Can we read here a progression from the

status of the younger male, who can only "play" at being himself (him-self), to that of the older man who can play at being "other", i.e. feminine, or "as-if-feminine"? Although, it must be added, this feminine other is negatively stereotyped. Perhaps the maturity and superiority of the wau consists in his ability to play at other roles?

This question leads to another. For the Iatmul, does an important difference between men and women inhere in the fact that whereas women can only be women, men at certain times in their life cycle are allowed to incorporate something of the female ethos? This might be the locus of male superiority for the Iatmul, and be allied to the fact that maleness is culturally achieved through a succession of stages. Is this the form of hierarchy for the Iatmul? If so, it would be an example of what Dumont, in his analysis of Indian caste, has called the "encompassing" nature of hierarchy; Dumont describes the higher castes as encompassing the lower (1972). But the wau's playing of a woman's role in the naven represents a caricatured female. Perhaps this fact, along with the rest of the aggressive male ethos, is a way of keeping the feminine - or feminized - aspects of the men at bay. Is the naven from this perspective not a kind of anti-initiation rite?

An important tension in Bateson's account of Iatmul gender ethos is that between the "violence" of the men and the "passivity" of the women. He assumes a mutual commensurability and intelligibility between male and female ethos which is not, however, illustrated by his data. This tension and the inconsistencies which exist within it are not examined critically in the book. We have no account of any dialogue between Iatmul men and Iatmul women which allows Iatmul individuals to talk about their ideas on these topics with each other. How much do Bateson's own preconceptions about violence and passivity colour his account?

NOTES to Chapter Seven

- (1) Bateson's espousal of a "holistic" study of culture gives a retrospective justification for my introduction of hermeneutics in my analysis of his five categories (see Chapter Four, pp 79-80 above), since holism is concerned with whole-part relationships.
- (2) See particularly his reference to Korzybski's dictum "The map is not the territory", in his paper 'Form, Substance and Difference', (1973 (e); 423).

CHAPTER EIGHT: ETHOS AND NAVEN

I WOULD NOW like to return to Bateson's description of male ethos. The second half of his Chapter IX deals with male initiation, and it will perhaps be useful to consider this topic in the light of Bateson's data on ethos dealt with in my previous chapter.

According to Bateson's account, Iatmul male initiation is a painful process, during which the boys are subjected to privation, discomfort and the agonies of scarification. Bateson describes the atmosphere surrounding the rites as neither that of asceticism nor of carefulness, but 'it is the spirit of irresponsible bullying and swagger' (1936: 130). Little attention is paid during scarification to how the boys bear their pains; gongs will be beaten to drown out the screams, and the scarifiers are more interested in technique than in the reactions of their victims. Spectators tend to be silent, perhaps because they are uneasy at pain being inflicted outside the normal histrionic settings. A few, Bateson reports, seem amused by the process. There would appear to be a contradiction in Bateson's account here with regard to the attitude of the initiators.

'When pain is inflicted in other parts of initiation, it is done by men who enjoy doing it and who carry out their business in a cynical, practical-joking spirit. The drinking of filthy water is a great joke and the wretched novices are tricked into drinking plenty of it' (1936: 130).

Surely the attitude of "enjoyment" reported here contradicts the 'cynical, practical-joking spirit' which Bateson describes as the mood of the initiators. He continues by reporting that in the ritual washing

'the partly healed backs of the novices are scrubbed, and they are splashed and splashed with icy water till they are whimpering with cold and misery. The emphasis is upon making them miserable rather than clean' (1936: 131).

Bateson does not explore the contradiction between the ironic distancing implied by a 'cynical, practical-joking spirit' and the immediate involvement implied by a mood of positive "enjoyment".

One problem might be that he does not provide a detailed account of any one Iatmul initiation rite.

Bateson stresses that initiation is used as yet another context in which different groups of men - in this case, initiators - can score points of pride against each other. On one occasion, one moiety of initiators claimed that the novices had been bullied enough and that one of the rituals could be omitted. The other moiety involved then boasted that the former group were afraid of the efficiency with which they would perform the ritual. The first moiety then proceeded to carry out the ritual with extra savagery (1936: 131).

Thus, says Bateson, initiation - which introduces the boys to the life of the men's ceremonial house - prepares the subject for the career of histrionic pride expected of men.

'As in other cultures a boy is disciplined so that he may be able to wield authority, so on the Sepik he is subjected to irresponsible bullying and ignominy so that he becomes what we should describe as an over-compensating, harsh man - whom the natives describe as a "hot" man' (1936: 131).

During the early stages of initiation the novices are bullied, taunted and tormented. The initiators refer to them as their 'wives'. The novices are forced to handle the initiators' genitals (1936: 131). Bateson relates this to the naven.

'I think we may see a consistent cultural pattern running through the contrasting sex ethos, the shaming of the novices, the wau shaming himself by acting as the wife of the laua, and the use of the exclamation "Lan men to!" (husband thou indeed!) to express contemptible submission. Each of these elements of culture is based upon the basic assumption that the passive role in sex is shameful' (1936: 132).

But is this "contempt" an assertion of superiority, or contempt at the other's submission? (1)

Bateson compares and contrasts the ethos of the initiators and that of the novices. That of the former is clearly linked with the ethos of the men's ceremonial house. But the ethos of the novices is more

complicated. In the early phases of the initiation they certainly play the part of women, perhaps to a large extent. Bateson supposes that this might be because the little boys who are ready to commence initiation have been incorporated into the ethos of the women in their early years. Whether or not this is the case (and Bateson is not sure, since he admits that he did not study Iatmul children), there is certainly something of this notion in the attitude of the initiators.

'The response of the initiators to this real or nominal contrast between the novices and themselves is to force the boys further into the complementary position, dubbing them "wives" and bullying them into expressions of the wifely role' (1936: 132).

It might well be the case that the novices are made into "women" through the processes of the early stages of initiation, just as the roles of wau and laua are re-created in the naven.

After initiation is completed, the boys are accepted and incorporated into the male ethos. The first step in this process is the bullying of the novices into acceptance of the women's ethos. Why should this seemingly contradictory situation obtain? Bateson lists four processes which he regards as explanatory. Firstly, the novice is made 'contra-suggestible' to the female ethos (1936: 133). Bateson does not explain what he means by this term, which had different meanings as applied by different schools of psychology. The bullying of the novices here is an extreme case of the treatment which Iatmul men (according to themselves, at any rate) mete out to the women. Whereas the wives accept their submissive role without difficulty, the novices are made contra-suggestible to it and rebel. Counter-repressive measures on the part of the initiators will not cool the resentment of the novices. Second, the novices are made to feel proud of the male ethos. The boys are very soon proud of their scars, and show them off (1936: 133). But is this not because in an important sense they have already been made "women" during the early initiatory stages? The novices may very well feel that their separation from the women makes them superior in some way, particularly since women and smaller children are excluded from initiation. At the same time, after the first week of bullying and violence and after the completion of scarification, the attitude of the initiators towards the novices changes drastically. The novices are now waited

on by the initiators, who hunt for them, teach them how to play the flutes and manufacture ornaments for them. The novices are no longer regarded as victims. The initiators are now described not as "elder brothers" or as "husbands", but as "mothers" of the novices, who in turn are regarded as "children" (1936: 134). Again, there is a switching of gender role here, in that it is now the initiating older men who take an important feminine role. But Bateson does not expand on this.

After the completion of initiation, the novices are exhibited to the women as heroes, and naven are celebrated for the young men (1936: 134).

The third process which Bateson lists as furthering the boys' transition from the female to the male ethos takes place when groups of younger boys are initiated a little later. These latter groups will be in the same initiatory grade as the former novices, who will take part again to some extent in the initiatory process. But they will not again endure the scarification and the more drastic forms of bullying. The older boys are "frankly bored" (1936: 134). Bateson's statement indicates the possibility of the cultural importance of boredom, of boredom as being culturally created. We can view the women's boredom, for example, as being essential if they are to be entertained by the men's shows. For diversion to be effective, there has to be a need for it in the first place.

Still later, when they themselves will be expected to act as initiators, the older boys will themselves become the bullies, 'completely assimilated into the system' (1936: 134). Finally, Bateson notes that rivalry between groups of initiators promotes an atmosphere of scrupulousness and thoroughness in the harsh behaviour adopted towards the novices, as he had commented earlier. This appears to be a clear expression of what later in his text Bateson calls a 'symmetrical schismogenesis' between groups of Iatmul males (see Chapter Nine p. 179 below). Bateson's account implies that the Iatmul have constructed a fully elaborated set of initiatory procedures which have been created because of their need to compete. We could reverse this, however, and ask if the need to compete, and

the resulting scrupulousness in the procedures, is not created by the enactment and re-enactment (or re-creation) of the procedures themselves?

Bateson then describes how the atmosphere surrounding initiation illustrates an extreme tendency of the male ethos, namely the tendency to 'cut off their own noses to spite the other fellow's face' (1936: 135). What he means by this is that on occasions when initiatory taboos are broken, for example if a woman should see one of the sacred objects or if somebody should act disrespectfully towards the objects, then the men threaten to reveal the entire initiatory system to the whole village. This does not actually often happen, but on occasions the men feel so exasperated and shamed that they will carry out a wilful destructive act aimed at revealing all their secrets. This may bring the ceremonial life of the village to a halt for many years. Bateson records two indigenous accounts of instances of this (1936: 135-138). (2)

These threats to "give the game away" would appear to be idealized threats, in that they threaten the male-female dichotomy by the removal of one half of it. Thus, for the Iatmul, a threat to put an end to performance is a threat to end social differentiation and cultural meaning. It is possible to view this as an illustration of the socially constitutive (rather than the "expressive") nature of performance.

I suggest we should consider Iatmul initiation as a theatrical performance, rather than following Bateson's analysis which regards it as a methodically planned, pseudo-scientific process. This reading suggests that the performance - whether it be initiation, naven or other "ritual" activity - is constitutive of male and female ethos, rather than the mere expression of them. The imagery thus created through performance is then re-created in subsequent performances; creations and re-creations of images provide the stock of roles, stereotypes and strategies which constitute Iatmul ethos.

From this perspective, we can view the life cycle of the Iatmul male as progressing through three stages. Stage (1) is represented by the role of "female" initiate; the boy then moves to stage (2)

in which the "male" who kills thereby becomes laua performing one role in naven, until finally he becomes (3) wau, who performs the other role in naven, a role which demands a partial reversal to the "female" role. The three ceremonies in this cycle present us with three perspectives on Iatmul manhood. The first is initiation, the second is the naven from the laua's perspective and the third is the naven from the wau's perspective. There is an ironic reversal in the second and third stages, namely from female to male, and then from male to female. Thus, the three stages are reflected in each other. I will elaborate this interpretation at the end of the chapter.

Bateson ends his chapter on the male ethos with a brief consideration of head-hunting, in which he says the masculine ethos had reached its peak of expression. Bateson does not say exactly how recently head-hunting had been stopped by the colonial authorities, but he claims that there were enough traces of this activity left in the culture for him to be able to write about its implications (1936: 138).

Perhaps the most notable of these implications is that the head-hunting ethos did not emphasise courage or honour. Killing a woman was admired as much as killing a man, killing by trickery and stealth as much as killing in open combat. Bateson reports one case in which, he was told, a man had been ornamented for killing his own wife in revenge for a homicide committed by members of her village. I would suggest that this appears to indicate that Iatmul ethical values are more concerned with the efficacy of actions than with an abstract theory of morals. Iatmul warfare comes across here as having been a matter of extreme individualism, rather than one of group solidarity and powerful leaders. This also highlights Iatmul individualism, as does Bateson's statement that the motives for the head-hunter were individual personal pride and his satisfaction in the prosperity and strength of his village (1936: 139). Successful head-hunters were decorated with ornaments, and the most elaborate naven was given for a boy's first homicide. The killer was also admired by the women (1936: 139). The kin of a relative who had been killed were considered duty bound to take revenge. This theme of vengeance is

important in Iatmul social life, as illustrated in Bateson's earlier chapter on sorcery (1936: 54-73). Bateson notes that

'a pointed reference to an unavenged relative is one of the most dangerous insults that one Iatmul can use in ranting against another - an insult which is felt to be specially aggravating now that head-hunting is forbidden' (1936: 140).

So head-hunting involved the pride and shame of the individual. The spectacular ceremonial displays and dances celebrated for each victory emphasised the communal importance of head-hunting for the whole village. The killer was at once the hero of these celebrations and the host of the feasts which accompanied them (1936: 140).

Chapter XIV, 'The Expression of Ethos in Naven', contains the core of Bateson's analysis. It is grounded in the difference in ethos between Iatmul men and women. Bateson claims that, following his detailed description of Iatmul ethos, it is apparent that the exaggerated behaviour of the wau in the naven is quite in keeping with the male ethos. For the women, with their dual ethos, naven behaviour can again be seen as consistent with both elements of the female ethos. The mother, in lying naked with the other women while her son steps over them, is behaving in accordance with the women's everyday ethos of acceptance and self-abnegation. The transvestite women, the father's sister and the elder brother's wife, demonstrate on the other hand the occasional pride and delight in display which marks the other side of the female ethos (1936: 198-199).

But why is so much of the naven behaviour transvestite? Why do the men dress as women and the women dress as men? This "why?" question is the crucial problem for Bateson, and his attempt at answering it leads him to the centre of his analysis.

He claims that the transvestism arises because, in the naven activities, individuals of each sex are required to express emotions which are contra-indicated by the normal demands of each gender role in the society. The formal context of the naven revolves around the accomplishment by a child of some notable achievement.

The child's relatives then publicly express their joy in this event.

'This situation is one which is foreign to the normal settings of the life of either sex. The men by their unreal spectacular life are perfectly habituated to the "ordeal" of public performance. But they are not accustomed to the free expression of vicarious personal emotion. Anger and scorn they can express with a good deal of over-compensation, and joy and sorrow they can express when it is their own pride which is enhanced or abased; but to express joy in the achievements of another is outside the norms of their behaviour. In the case of the women the position is reversed. Their co-operative life has made them capable of the easy expression of unselfish joy and sorrow, but it has not taught them to assume a public spectacular role' (1936: 201).

But, as I have suggested earlier, why should Bateson assume that the situation is best phrased this way round? We can equally well view the naven as a context in which the possibilities of gender role are created and re-created. As for the role of the wau in the naven, could this not represent the giving way by an older male to a younger, weaker example of his own kind (i.e. the laua), with whom his links are normally schismogenic (see my Chapter Nine below).

The naven contains two elements each of which is problematic for individuals of each sex. These elements are 'public display', which is problematic for the women, and 'vicarious personal emotion', which is problematic for the men. The problematic component is in each case 'embarrassing and smacks rather of situations normal to the life of the opposite sex'. Bateson regards this embarrassment as a 'dynamic force' which

'pushes the individual towards transvestism - and to a transvestism which the community has been able to accept and which in course of time has become a cultural norm' (1936: 201-202).

So for Bateson it is the contrasting sex ethos which has shaped the naven in this particular way; it has provided the 'little push' which had led the Iatmul to follow their structural premises to these 'extremes'. Bateson further justifies this conclusion by stating that when the women take part in ceremonies other than naven, they wear only a few masculine ornaments. In such circumstances then, the premises which might warrant complete transvestism on their part are lacking (1936: 202).

But there is a further point to be elucidated. Why, in the naven, do the waus wear widow's clothing, and the women the finest masculine costumes they can find? There is not only a push towards transvestism but, apparently, a motivation to denigrate the women in the transvestite behaviour of the men, and towards approbation of the men in the transvestite behaviour of the women. Bateson claims that the behaviour of the men here arises out of the fact that the context of mourning is one in which the contrast between the ethos of each sex can be seen most strongly. The portrayal of a widow by the wau is like the men caricaturing the singing of the widows (1936:202). He adds:

'in shaming himself he (the wau) is, incidentally, expressing his contempt for the whole ethos of those who express grief so easily (1936: 202, my parenthesis).

The women, however, far from being contemptuous of the male ethos, actually appear to enjoy expressing it whenever they have the opportunity to do so. In the naven they exaggerate it, scraping their husbands' lime sticks until the serrations are worn away. It would seem that the men also exaggerate their performance of the female ethos by their caricature of the widow, but Bateson does not stress this.

Bateson then comments that the exaggeration of the women's portrayal of the male ethos has distracted them from the business of celebrating the achievement of a child.

'Thus the presence of contrasting ethos in the two sexes has almost completely diverted the naven ceremonial from simple reference to its ostensible object (1936: 203).

Despite this, however, the laua will understand that the naven is the group's way of congratulating him on his achievement.

The rest of his chapter is subtitled 'Kinship Motivation and Naven'. Having demonstrated his main thesis as to the crucial part played by the contrasting ethos of the Iatmul sexes in the naven behaviour, Bateson now attempts to delineate the motivation of the various kin involved. Most of this section deals with the role of

the classificatory wau.

Bateson sees this role as expressing two degrees of falsity. The classificatory wau; Bateson had claimed earlier, seeks the furtherance of allegiance towards himself on the part of his laua. He seeks to make the laua relate to him in some sense as if he were the own wau, or even the boy's mother. He does this by acting the part of the boy's wife and mother. It is, however, doubtful how much real wifely or maternal feelings can be attributed to the laua's own wau. This, Bateson argues, must lead to the conclusion that the performance of the classificatory wau in the naven

'contains, in a sense, two degrees of falsity. He is acting the part of an own wau who is acting the parts of mother and wife' (1936: 204).

But we must still seek 'the motivation of the performances' (1936: 204). Because the wau's behaviour is acted rather than spontaneous does not mean that the motivations which produce it will be any the less unconscious.

'An actor playing Hamlet may behave as if he himself were driven by Hamlet's emotions, but the actor may remain to a great extent inarticulate as to the nature of the drives which he is expressing' (1936: 204).

This quote implies a theory of the mind, consciousness and unconsciousness which Bateson does not enlarge upon, but it leads Bateson into a complex argument about the relationship between what he calls the 'real motivation of the classificatory wau' and 'the inarticulately presumed motivations of the own wau' (1936: 205). The language of 'motivations' here again implies a definite model of an essentialized consciousness containing "real motivations", split off from an essentialized unconscious, from which we can only infer 'inarticulately presumed motivations'. This model of the mind looks particularly Freudian; it is also worthy of note that the notion of "motivation" (whether overt or covert) is crucial to the Stanislavskian method of rehearsal and role creation in the classic European naturalistic theatre tradition. I will return to this theme in my Chapter Twelve.

The "real motivations" of the wau have already been discussed. They include the classificatory wau's pleasure in his own buffoonery, his scorn of the female ethos, his awkwardness in expressing pride in the achievements of another and his desire for the laua's allegiance. The matter of the presumed motivations of the classificatory wau is more complicated, as Bateson admits, for

'it is singularly easy to construct hypotheses about inarticulate motivation, but exceedingly difficult to test them, since no two such hypotheses are ever mutually exclusive' (1936: 205).

Bateson adds that there is the further difficulty that explanations from a psycho-analytic viewpoint will tend to regard every indigenous statement as either meaning what it says, or the opposite. Nevertheless, he continues with his own psycho-analytically shaded analysis.

Bateson analyses the presumed motivations of the own wau in order to provide various hypotheses none of which he admits is more probable than any other. He refers to three myths in which a wau kills his laua. In each of these myths, the killing is followed by the disintegration of the community. Bateson suggests that these myths indicate that the wau-laua relationship is composed of two complementary but antagonistic elements, namely a recognition of the importance of matrilineal ties and feelings of underlying hostility between wau and laua. The motives for the own wau's symbolic behaviour in the naven can be traced to this ambivalence, which must itself be traceable to one or more of the components which make up the wau-laua relationship (1936: 206). Once again, I would suggest that rather than viewing these relationships as being originary and then subsequently expressed in ritual, we can equally well view them as being created and re-created in successive naven performances.

It will be recalled that Bateson had concluded that there is nothing sui generis in the wau-laua relationship, and that it is made up of components of identification. These identifications of the wau were with the laua's mother, wife, wife's brother and father. The first, second and third identifications are dismissed by Bateson as bases for wau's ambivalence. The mother's relationship with her child is not ambivalent, so there is no hostility to

express. In addition, the relationship with mother and with the wife are not actually stressed in the naven. The relationship with the father only appears as a minor motif. We are left then with the identification of the wau with the brother-in-law. Bateson had already pointed to the ambivalence of the brother-in-law relationship in an earlier chapter. But in the naven the wau seems to exaggerate his friendship to the laua, rather than his hostility (1936: 206-207). Why should this be so? A further difficulty is that hostility between Iatmul brothers-in-law is openly expressed and acknowledged. Bateson says that, despite this, it is possible to conclude that the wau, in his naven behaviour, is dealing with real or imputed guilt of hostility to his sister's marriage. But it is equally possible to see the wau as a guilty man making amends, and as an innocent man stating his innocence.

'Whether we see these agnatic relatives as innocent persons protesting their innocence or as guilty persons making amends, will depend - in the absence of additional facts - upon the view which we take of psycho-analytic theory' (1936: 208-209).

Opposition between brothers-in-law is culturally assumed. Perhaps the wau's hostility to his brother-in-law is extended to the offspring of the marriage?

'This imputation the wau is perhaps denying when he stresses the fact that he is a mother and a wife' (1936: 208).

Bateson remarks that similar occurrences can be seen in our culture. Uncles and aunts who have opposed the parents' marriage later fall over themselves in their efforts to befriend their nephews and nieces. The Iatmul wau might be in the same position - but in the naven he falls over not metaphorically, but literally (1936: 208).

Bateson does not question whether the language of guilt and shame evoked here is suitable for so outgoing a people as the Iatmul appear to be from the rest of his account. Perhaps the notion of "loss of face", and of obligation or debt would be more suitable. It should also be noted that the episode in the naven in which the wau "falls over" is too variable to be a constant factor in the kind of kinship structural model Bateson adduces here.

Bateson continues by saying that an additional factor in the role played by the wau in the naven might be connected with the fact that for the Iatmul a child's achievements are regarded as being those of the mother's clan. We can see in this respect the wau's naven behaviour as a symbolic way of claiming the laua's achievement. But this claim can only be a vicarious one, and so the male ethos demands that the wau can only make it while he is playing a woman's role. Here Bateson sees the ethos of the Iatmul men and the wau's kinship position as working together, and expressed in the wau's behaviour (1936: 209-210).

Bateson then deals briefly with the other male participants in the naven, namely the wife's brother (tawontu), and the father, elder brother and younger brother (nyai, nyamun and tshuambo). The tawontu's behaviour, that of rubbing his buttocks on the shin of his lando (sister's husband) on the occasion of the latter's marriage, is a behaviour which stresses the wife's brother's role as "wife" in the absence of the tawontu's additional identification with the mother (unlike the naven behaviour of the wau, which stresses the wau's identification with both the wife and mother of the laua) (1936: 210).

As for the father and brothers, their naven behaviour is marked by passivity. They may be beaten by their tshaishi (elder brother's wives), and the father will help his son to find valuables to give to the wau. But how should we account for their inactivity, given that they are the laua's nearest male relatives? Bateson considers this problem in sociological, economic, structural and emotional terms.

Sociologically, the inactivity of the father and the brothers is to be explained by the fact that Iatmul society does not require any further stressing of patrilineal links. Since, for Bateson, the integration of the society depends on the strength of matrilineal and affinal ties, then any further stressing of patrilineality might tend to undermine the society rather than to lead to increased integration. Economically, Bateson says that since property rights both between father and son and between brothers are very much less differentiated

than between wau and laua, it would not be appropriate for either the father or the brothers to offer ceremonial prestations to the laua during the naven. From the structural perspective, neither the father nor the brothers could act the fool in diverting a celebration of the boy's achievements into buffoonery, by taking on the role of some other relative. Thus, in any active participation in the naven on their part they would be forced, like the mother, to emphasise their own relationship with the boy. Emotionally, the father-son relationship does not contain the kinds of identification which make the wau's subdivisible into separate component identifications; the father has a 'unitary relationship with his son'. Bateson sees this as also being true for the relationship between brothers (1936: 212). (3)

The naven behaviour of the women, Bateson claims, must be seen in a different light from that of the men. Male roles are determined by five factors. These are the structural position of the man in the kinship system, together with the identifications which define it; the male Iatmul ethos; the need of the wau for his laua's allegiance; the ambivalence of the wau-laua relationship and finally a number of economic considerations.

The naven behaviour of the women, however, is not influenced by considerations connected with the last three of these sets of motives.

'Rather, I believe that we should see the women's naven as almost solely the expression of their ethos and of the structural identifications implied in their kinship status. I am inclined to see the naven of the wau as in some sense primary and as seriously motivated by desire for allegiance, economic gain, etc., while I would see the naven of the women as an amusement, a gay occasion when they embroider upon structural premises analogous to those followed by the wau and when they enjoy the special privilege of wearing men's attire' (1936: 213-214).

Bateson attempts to demonstrate further the primacy of the wau's naven over and above that of the women by stressing that only a few waus take part. But at the naven Bateson observed in Mindimbit, he writes,

'it appeared as if all the women had gone mad. Every woman who could regard herself as appropriately related to the children made a show of naven behaviour' (1936: 214).

Again, Bateson had been told that, in the naven for a boy's homicide, all the women except the boy's wife and own sister had lain down for the boy to walk across them. The women here had been exhibiting behaviour not governed by any specific kin role, but only by their sex. The women's naven, then, unlike that of the men, can be seen as unmotivated by specific kin status.

Bateson claims that this structural truth is backed up by a sociological truth. The women's naven is 'much more diffuse than that of the wau's naven' (1936: 214). The behaviour of the latter strengthens the community's solidarity by stressing affinal linkages, while the behaviour of the women 'seems rather to spread a more diffuse euphoria throughout the community' (1936: 214).

Bateson now deals rather summarily with the naven behaviour of the women, in the light of this conclusion. The mother's role has no structural basis for transvestism, and her nakedness in the naven is an example of

'abnegation or negative self-feeling, an expression which may be accompanied by either joy or sorrow' (1936: 215),

quintessential as Bateson would assume to the female ethos. The iau (FZ) displays 'the assertive side of fatherhood' in her identification with the father, rather than that element in the father's role which gives way before the son's advancement. Thus, she wears fine ornaments and beats her "son" (1936: 216). The naven behaviour of the elder brother's wife, or tshaishi, is based upon her identification with her husband. Since the relationship of elder brother to an ego is similar to that of a father, the tshaishi's position is similar to that of the iau, who identifies herself with her husband, the boy's father. Thus, the naven behaviour of the tshaishi is similarly assertive to that of the iau.

The sister plays little part in the naven, but she does, Bateson recalls, step over the prostrate women with her brother, the hero. She then attacks the women's genitals with her hands, particularly those of the tshaishi. To the sister's cry "A vulva!", the tshaishi

(who is dressed in male finery) replies "No! A penis!" Bateson interprets this exchange as being based on the fact that owing to the kin identifications at work here the sister is a potential 'husband' of the tshaishi, while the latter sees herself as potentially an 'elder brother' of the hero (1936: 216-217). It might, however, be more than this, if considered as a dialogue affirming the difference between culturally preferred Iatmul gender roles. Finally, Bateson considers the naven behaviour of the mbora, mother's brother's wife. She identifies with the wau, and receives valuables from the laua. As she is identified with a man who is himself playing a transvestite role, she is ambivalent in her gender role and appears in naven sometimes as a man and at other times as a woman. But the confusion here seems to be resolved when she acts the part of the man in the ritual copulation with her husband, the transvestite wau (1936: 217).

I would like to return to Bateson's claim that the use by the wau of the exclamation "Lan men to!" in the naven is an expression of 'contemptible submission' to the laua, parallel with the wau shaming himself by 'acting as the wife of the laua' and also consistent with the humiliation of the novices during initiation (1936: 132). Handelman, in an interesting re-evaluation of Bateson's analysis, has focused on the "ludic" aspects of the wau-laua relationship, and has analysed the naven as a play on the anomalies inherent in the role of the wau in his transvestite guise (1979). But Handelman's analysis lacks a wider consideration of the ideology of Iatmul culture, particularly with regard to marriage patterns. Handelman follows Bateson in seeing the behaviour of the wau as a ' "caricature" of Iatmul male sentiments of shame, submission and subordination' (1979: 180), which arises from his identification as a wife-figure to the laua; "Lan men to!" ("Husband thou indeed!") is a part of the script enacted between wau and laua as a part of this ludic exercise.

While I would agree with both Bateson and Handelman that the submission of the wau is a caricature, I would suggest that neither

author have^s adequately accounted for this important element, embodied in the exclamation "Lan men to!", in which the wau ironically names his laua as "husband". Is it correct to locate the 'contemptible submission' of the wau in his own self-abnegation? Is it possible to see the irony here in the exact wording of the wau's exclamation, namely that he is ironically claiming the laua as a husband? But why should he do this? To answer this question, we need to recall that Bateson had earlier described the ideology of Iatmul marriage as being predicated on the exchange of sisters (see Chapter Six above). From this perspective, we can see the wau and laua as belonging to different groups, the former as a wife-giver and the latter as a wife-taker. Previously, the wau had given a woman to laua's group; her son, the laua, is the central focus of the naven. At this point in the marriage cycle, the laua should give his sister in marriage to the other group. This might in fact mark the transition from laua to wau. If this is so, the naven can be read as a dramatization of the young man's transition from "husband" (synonym for wife-taker) to "brother" (synonym for wife-giver). If the laua is to grow up and achieve full maturity, he must fulfil his obligation to provide a wife to the other group. The transvestite role of the wau in the naven can thus be seen as an ironic meta-commentary on the ambivalent status, not of the wau, but of the laua. "Husband thou indeed!" is then a dismissal of the laua as a mature male. The wau is in effect saying, "You owe us a woman! You have already had a woman from us. Until you give us a woman, you're a woman yourself. Husband, indeed? Wife-taker, indeed? No!" The wau is being more contemptuous than contemptible. The shame is the laua's, ironically expressed by the wau in the naven.

This reading is demonstrated perhaps in the naven incident reported by Bateson in which the wau and his wife climb a ladder to the roof of a house and engage in a transvestite mock copulation, reversing the male and female roles (Chapter Three, page 62 above). As wau's wife is a classificatory mother to the laua, this "sketch" again can be seen as an ironic comment on the fact that the wau's group are owed a wife by the laua's group. The wau's group, or "matriclan", perhaps, in Bateson's terms, are forced to copulate

amongst themselves in a highly public place - on a roof - because of the failure of the laua's group to provide the woman owed. In fact, it is possible to view this particular event, and naven activity as a whole, as a reversal not only of individual roles, but also of moieties as marriage exchange groups. Thus, there is a reversal of sexual identities, of individual and moiety roles and, in the mock-copulation of the wau and his wife, a reversal of physiological orifices - since the wau puts a fruit into his anus. The fact that the wau and his wife perform this extraordinary act on the top of a ladder indicates an expression of superiority on the part of the wau's group; no wonder, then, that the laua is ashamed at this act, and that laua's sister bursts into tears, as Bateson reports (1936: 20), since the laua is being reminded that it is she who is owed in marriage.

Thus the dramatic irony on the part of the wau shows the other group that a woman is owed, and his caricatured transvestite behaviour is a caricature of this debt. The role reversal in the naven activities, exemplified in the exclamation "Husband, thou indeed!", reveals a reversal in the giving and receiving of women, the oscillation of wife-givers and wife-takers. The naven does not so much express a social fact, as initiate one. It is performative in Austin's terms; it does something. The wau's exclamation can be translated as, "You won't give us a woman, so I must become one to make up for your failure to fulfil your part in the transaction."

I do not offer this interpretation as a final reading of the naven, but only in the spirit of suggesting that the imagery involved offers the Iatmul a number of ambiguous cultural possibilities which are not limited to any one essential meaning, as Bateson seemed to assume. I am not saying that Bateson's analysis of the naven is wrong, only that it is only one in a total field of possible interpretations.

One should also note that his informants might well have taken for granted a wealth of implications which they did not bother to

make explicit to him, just because they were taken for granted.
This is, of course, always a problem for any anthropologist.

NOTES to Chapter Eight

- (1) It is possible to view Bateson's analysis of Iatmul initiation, if not of Iatmul ethos generally, in the light of the author's own education in the British public school system (see Lipset 1982: 61-62).
- (2) This can be contrasted with the Balinese, who would respond to a similar "crisis" by performing another ritual to ameliorate the situation (M.Hobart, personal communication).
- (3) It is notable that while Bateson's concerns here, which illuminate much of his thinking in Naven, are close to those of Lévi-Strauss - at least in the earlier phase of the latter's career - Lévi-Strauss devotes very little space to Bateson's Iatmul ethnography in his own works. There are two mentions in The Elementary Structures of Kinship, one quoting Bateson's report on the intellectual debates amongst Iatmul men as to the nature of Night and Day, and the other briefly referring to Bateson's analysis of Iatmul kinship structure in the context of a review of data on Australian aboriginal marriage systems (1969: 127, 202). The only other mention of Bateson I have been able to find in Lévi-Strauss's works appears in an essay reprinted in his first volume of collected papers, in which he, again briefly, praises Bateson's analysis in Naven as marking an improvement on 'Radcliffe-Brown's classification of dyadic relations according to order. He (Bateson) has attempted to place them in specific categories, an undertaking which implies that there is something more to social structure than the dyadic relations, that is, the structure itself' (1968: 304, my parenthesis).

CHAPTER NINE: SCHISMOGENESIS

BATESON'S CHAPTER XII represents the climax of his transition in the book from a concern with social structure to a theory of action. This transition is made by means of his own formulations, notably that of ethos. He himself might not have phrased the situation in these terms, but I shall argue that the process of schismogenesis, which is the subject matter of his Chapter XIII, is more a theory of action than a theory of ethos. It is the climactic step in his analysis of the naven, and it can be allied to a performative model, rather than to an essentialist notion of an immanent ethos. At this point in his argument Bateson produces a text which is unlike any other anthropology written in the 1930s; it is the height of his originality in Naven.

His chapter, called 'Ethological Contrast, Competition and Schismogenesis', begins with a brief consideration of the difficulties surrounding debates on the cause of ethological difference. Are differences in temperament between the sexes in any one society due to heredity, or to cultural and environmental factors? Here, Mead's data on gender roles among the Arapesh, the Mundugumor and the Tchambuli is quoted (1936: 171-172).

As far as child rearing is concerned, Bateson reports that there is no marked difference between the way that male and female Iatmul babies are treated; nor did it seem to him that babies of one sex were more welcome than those of the other (1936: 174). It is in the later training of boys and girls, he thinks, that we will find the origins of the contrasting sex ethoses. These are learnt by instruction and imitation in the post-infant years. For the boys, learning how to be an Iatmul man is a process which takes place continually in the junior ceremonial house, where they imitate the spectacular and boasting behaviour of their seniors. Then comes the painful, frightening ordeal of initiation. In earlier days, all this would have been combined with the activities and ceremonials connected with head-hunting. The naven given for the boy's first kill, in which he is made the "hero", would have been crucial in

this respect. In the case of the women, the female ethos would be learned by the little girl as she works with her peers and with the older women, occupying themselves with food-getting, child-rearing and domestic tasks (1936: 174-175).

But these problems of learning and imitation do not exhaust the mechanisms which accompany ethological contrast, says Bateson. They maintain the status quo, but other factors are at work which, if left unrestrained, would lead to changes in the cultural norms. Bateson sees the status quo as a 'dynamic equilibrium in which changes are continually taking place' (1936: 175). The use of the phrase 'dynamic equilibrium' is an expression of Bateson's scientific background and implicit assumptions here. He claims that these changes constitute processes of differentiation which on the one hand tend towards an increase in ethological contrast, and on the other continually counteract the tendency towards such increased differentiation. These processes of differentiation Bateson defines as schismogenesis.

'I would define schismogenesis as a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals' (1936: 175, Bateson's emphasis).

Instead of defining the process specifically vis-a-vis the various disciplines which he had tried to separate, Bateson suggests that we should study schismogenic processes from the different points of view which he had advocated: that is, the structural, ethological, and sociological. Also, he suggests that schismogenesis plays an important part in the moulding of individuals. It will be evident that his concern here, as noted in Chapter Four, is the redescription of biological drives or predispositions in social or cultural terms. Bateson continues:

'I am inclined to regard the study of the reactions of individuals to the reactions of other individuals as a useful definition of the whole discipline which is vaguely referred to as Social Psychology. This definition might steer the subject away from mysticism' (175-176, Bateson's emphasis).

Bateson argues that, when his subject is so defined, then we

must regard any relationship between two individuals as being liable to alter from time to time, even without any outside influence.

'We have to consider, not only A's reactions to B's behaviour, but we must go on to consider how these affect B's later behaviour and the effects of this on A' (1936: 176).

Bateson's reference to 'social psychology' is important here.

Against Durkheim, he is arguing that human action is both individual and collective. This refers to his notion of 'sociological function'. In attempting to formulate a theory of action, he is moving towards an ontology and away from an epistemology; this may explain why "eidos" has now disappeared from his analysis. The use of the label 'social psychology' introduces the subject of relations, and thus moves away from a description of things and objects. In this respect Bateson is pursuing a similar development to that of two of his contemporaries, namely Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Nadel (1951). Second, Bateson's definition of his subject as Social Psychology provides for the use of a reflexive, inter-subjective and hermeneutic perspective. Relations are by definition "double"; they have a dual face. The anthropologist is noting people's reactions, but the people themselves are also interpreting the reactions of others.

But this model of hermeneutic interpretation is also a model of action. Bateson is here attempting to cut through and transcend the Cartesian duality between body (as exemplified in behaviour) and mind (illustrated by meaning). The notion of schismogenesis is a model of both action and reaction; it is neither behavioural, nor is it purely hermeneutic (interpretive) or symbolic. Bateson's collapse of the Cartesian duality here parallels his collapse of ethos and eidos.

The problem can be phrased in terms of the question; is there a self prior to any social or cultural facts, or is the self a product of social interaction? Although Bateson himself does not use the term here, the argument is a dialectical one. It has

been developed by, among others, Peirce, Collingwood and particularly Taylor (1985), whose contribution I will discuss at some length in my Chapter Eleven below. The wider question of interpretation as constitutive of social reality goes back to Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. (1)

Bateson continues by saying that many systems of relationship, either between individuals or between groups of individuals, contain tendencies towards progressive change. Bateson delineates two patterns of schismogenic change. If an individual A behaves in a way which is culturally expected of him towards an individual B, for example in an assertive way, and B is expected to react towards A in a way which is culturally labelled as submission, then it is probable that B's submission will encourage a further assertion from A. This in turn will lead to a further submissive reaction from B, and so on. This is, potentially, an unlimited progressive pattern and, in the absence of additional factors which might tend to ameliorate the situation, A will become more and more assertive, while B will become more and more submissive. This will be likely whether A and B are separate individuals or members of different groups (1936: 176). Progressive change of this kind Bateson calls complementary schismogenesis. The other schismogenic pattern occurs in cases where, for example, A's assertive behaviour is met by similarly assertive behaviour on the part of B. Here, assertion results in more assertion, and so on. This kind of progressive change Bateson calls symmetrical schismogenesis (1936: 176-177).

Bateson now asks, can these formulations be applied to his Iatmul data? Can we say, for example, that the contrast in Iatmul sex ethics can be interpreted in terms of complementary schismogenesis? He claims that a complementary pattern is evident in the fact that the women are regarded by the men as an audience for their spectacular displays, and

'there can be no reasonable doubt that the presence of an audience is a very important factor in shaping the men's behaviour... it is probable that the men are more exhibitionistic because the women admire their performances' (1936: 177).

At the same time, the spectacular behaviour of the men is

'a stimulus which summons the audience together, promoting in the women the appropriate complementary behaviour' (1936: 177).

But this contrast between exhibitionism and admiration is only a part of the wider sex contrast in Iatmul society. Bateson asks if this wider contrast contains schismogenic patterns. The only evidence which Bateson feels able to produce here is the reaction of the men to the sad songs of the widow in mourning, when the former engage in harsh caricature of the latter (1936: 177-178).

I would suggest that the problem with Bateson's analysis here is that he conflates the notion of "passivity" with that of "submission"; this is the direct implication of his description of the women's role as audience as one of 'admiration' as opposed to that of the men as 'exhibitionism' (1936: 177). In a recent essay on agency in Bali, Hobart has criticised this kind of model in which he claims that existing modes of analysis represent people as

'either driven causally by their needs and desires (whether shaped by nature or the market) or dramaturgically they are actors in a play whose subjectivity is decided by someone else's script' (1986: 3).

Hobart follows Collingwood in saying that since

'actions and agents may differ both by degree and kind... classifying by exclusive properties and substantive differences is vacuous and often profoundly misleading' (1986: 3).

In Bateson's case, he has fallen into a holistic trap of simplistic comparison between Iatmul men and women, instead of considering the many varieties of day-to-day situations in which complementary schismogenesis occurs.

The important point to be made here is that the women are not mere objects on whom the males simply act and for whom they perform; they are subjects who constitute an audience, for whom and to whom the performance is directed. Bateson should acknowledge that the women are in a sense both active and passive - that is to say, they are both "agents" and "patients" (Hobart 1986) - in that they shape the exhibitions which are directed at them and, ironically, that the more women are made patients the more male agents depend on them for their continuing agency. This would be the logical implication of Bateson's admission in his schismogenetic model that

the women are reacting to the men, since schismogenesis, whether complementary or symmetrical, is a continuing pattern of interaction. We can also perhaps view Iatmul men's dependency on the "patience" of the women in the light of their apparent dependency on women's economic and household labour for more material goods (see Chapter Seven, page 148 above). (2)

In his claim that 'exhibitionism and admiration is only a part of the general sex contrast which includes a whole nexus of inter-related characteristics' (1936: 177) we can see Bateson now wishing to find an over-all system on which he can ground his analysis. Thus he quickly moves from a view of schismogenesis as a contextual process, a view which in my opinion contains a great deal of insight, to a view of it as a determining and constitutive system. This is a theme of much of Bateson's work; he continually works hard to collapse analytical oppositions (his own as well as those of other writers), only immediately to construct new ones.

Male initiation, writes Bateson, is another context of complementary schismogenesis. Here, though, the schismogenesis is not between male and female, but between two groups of males - i.e. the initiators and the novices (1936: 178). But the pattern of this particular example of complementary schismogenesis is not the circular one which Bateson has outlined. The initiators, with Iatmul masculine ethos, attribute the women's ethos to the novices, and treat them accordingly for a while, during the early phases of the rites. But the novices themselves do not react in a complementary manner; rather, Bateson's data suggest that their treatment pushes them towards taking on the masculine ethos themselves, so that in the future they will behave in the mould of the Iatmul man. Here, therefore, complementary behaviour on the part of one group results in a reaction which is eventually patterned in exactly the same way; or, in Bateson's term, in the form of a symmetrical reaction - albeit at one remove, since the novices must wait until it is their turn to become initiators before they are able to treat another group of unfortunate youths in the same way that they themselves have been treated (1936: 178).

Symmetrical schismogenesis does not apparently obtain between the sexes. It does, however, occur during initiation, when the rival moieties of initiators compete with each other in the harshness with which they treat their respective groups of novices (1936: 178).

The next section of Bateson's text, which is an account of the various contexts in which schismogenic patterns might be found, is of particular interest in the light of his later work. He suggests that the concept of schismogenesis might be applicable to the study of individuals involved in dyadic relationships, by which he means marriage, and the treatment of neurosis in the individual. As far as marriage is concerned, he notes that

'a great many of the maladjustments of marriage are nowadays described in terms of the identification of spouse with parent' (1936: 178).

We might be able to understand why it is that many marriages appear to begin well but later become unsatisfactory by applying the concept of progressive, or schismogenic, change. For example, if a husband identifies his wife with his mother, we can see that as the mother-son relationship in our culture is typically complementary - with fostering behaviour on the part of the mother, and helplessness on the part of the child - then such a marriage may well be satisfactory in its early stages, since the schismogenetic nature of the relationship will not yet be evident. But given that schismogenic change is progressive, then the complementary relationship between wife-identified-with-mother and husband-identified-with-child will eventually produce more and more extreme complementary behaviour between the partners, with the wife becoming more and more "motherly" and the husband more "childlike" (1936: 179). This part of Bateson's text addresses itself to problems which were to interest him later, in his work on disjunctive communication patterns which led to his role in the beginnings of family therapy in the United States.

In his section on the application of the theory of schismogenesis to the treatment of neurosis, these themes are even more apparent.

'In many cases the growth of the symptoms of the paranoid individual are attributable to schismogenic relationships with those nearest to him' (1936: 180).

Freudian psychoanalysis emphasises the diachronic view of the patient, who is encouraged to see his situation in terms of his early life experiences, in events which took place long ago. However, a more synchronic diagnosis would encourage an examination of present relationships, and this might lead the patient to a position where he is able to control the schismogenic progressions between himself and his friends and relatives. Bateson again uses a disjunctive marriage relationship as an example.

'I understand that it is usual to find that those paranoids who build their delusions around a belief in the unfaithfulness of their wives, almost invariably have wives whose utter faithfulness is obvious to every outsider. Here we may suspect that the schismogenesis takes the form of continual expression of anxiety and suspicion on the husband's side, and continual response to this on the side of the wife, so that she, either continually humouring him or contradicting him, is promoting his maladjustment, and he, in turn, becoming more maladjust, demands more and more exaggerated responses from her' (1936: 180).

Bateson continues:

'It is probable that schismogenesis is an important factor in neurosis as well as in psychosis, and that a new discipline of psychoanalysis could be built up on these lines supplementing the systems which are now being used' (1936: 181).

He goes on to suggest that it might be constructive to examine not only schismogenic relationships between the patient and others, but also the possibility that such relationships exist within the patient, so foreshadowing the existential psychotherapeutic approach of R.D.Laing. Indeed, the title of one of Laing's best known texts illustrates Bateson's theme here perfectly (1965).

'It is possible, in fact, that one half of the split personality promotes the other and vice versa, producing an ever-widening breach and incidentally causing each half of the personality to be less and less capable of adaptive behaviour in the patient's social setting' (1936: 182).

Bateson suggests that we might see the exhibitionism and the narcissism of the Iatmul men as two sides of a 'split personality' such that their exhibitionist behaviour, although connected to a large extent with the admiring reactions of the women (and other men),

is also implicated in the individual's self-admiration of his own performance. Thus, an external schismogenesis might induce the internal narcissism (1936: 182). The split here in the Iatmul man, then, is that he performs and at the same time enjoys watching himself perform; this would make for a complex schismogenic split within the individual male. But Bateson does not elaborate on this theme; such an elaboration would, again, require a more subtle notion of agency than the one with which he is working.

Bateson emphasises that he is not claiming that the notion of schismogenesis explains all the processes of character formation. It is necessary to enquire into the conditions upon which the existence of schismogenic relationships depend, for

'schismogenesis is impossible unless the social circumstances are such that the individuals concerned are held together by some form of common interest, mutual dependence, or by their social status (1936: 182-183).

But I would add that 'mutual dependence' surely implies a mutual recognition, and 'common interest' might cover a multitude of factors, including concerns, goals and purposes. Again, Bateson continues, the ethological component is necessary; schismogenic behaviour is always grounded in culturally patterned role playing of some kind. Thus, we must examine not so much the content of the behaviour as 'the emotional emphasis with which it is endowed in its cultural setting' (1936: 182-183).

The chapter ends with a section subtitled 'The Progress and Control of Schismogenesis'. The material in this section has important implications for Bateson's analysis of the naven. His first point is that the parties to a symmetrical or complementary relationship may at first find the relationship satisfactory. But, since the model is progressive, Bateson argues that either a complementary or a symmetrical pattern, once adopted, will be likely to affect the personalities of the parties in a distorting way. They will find themselves becoming over-specialised in the particular terms required by their role in the schismogenesis, whether this role requires exhibitionism, fostering, assertion, or submission. If this over-specialisation reaches a point of discomfort, then the individ-

uals concerned might attempt to return to the initial phases of the relationship, or to break out of it altogether; but this might actually lead to their specialising even further in their respective roles. A schismogenic relationship is a difficult net to get out of (1936: 187). This distortion of personality will probably lead to three consequences. First, each party will experience hostility towards the other, who will be seen as the cause of its own distortion. Second, in complementary schismogenesis at least, each party will become progressively more unable to understand the emotional reactions of the other. Third, feelings of mutual jealousy will be experienced.

'Thus the members of each group see the stunted parts of their own affective life fully developed - indeed over-developed - in the members of the opposite group! (1936: 188).

Bateson then asks if this mutual jealousy is a feature of the relationship between the sexes in Iatmul culture. He feels that the women enjoy taking the male role in the naven, and that this envy of the masculine ethos may be seen as an important motive in their transvestite behaviour. He is, however, more doubtful about the matter with regard to the men. He acknowledges that they outwardly despise the female ethos, and that this might indicate some kind of repressed envy. In any case, the male ethos would prevent them from acknowledging such envy which might reveal itself in the overt scorn of women. Such scorn can be seen, perhaps, in the wau's naven behaviour (1936: 188).

But in a footnote Bateson writes that, although the psychoanalytical theory of inversion is an attempt to express an important truth, he himself is reluctant to

'launch into phrasings which would render my "behaviouristic" reference to emotion ambiguous by implying that the behaviour may be the reverse of that primarily appropriate to the emotion' (1936: 188).

Thus, Bateson does not want to use psychoanalytical theory here because it refers back to an essentialized model of emotion and, ultimately, to the biosphere; furthermore, it is unfalsifiable. His model of schismogenesis is action-based; he does not want to have to refer to any separate realm. In Chapter Eleven I will draw on an essay by Charles Taylor, which criticises the notion that

any behaviour or emotion can exist prior to any social action (1985).

As the schismogenesis develops, the personalities concerned become further and further apart, until it is impossible for each to see the other's point of view. The reactions of each party now become simply the expression of distaste for the emotional adjustment which has been made by the other; the parties are now, in Bateson's terms, 'mutually contra-suggestible' (1936: 189). So, the relationship becomes more and more unstable. Bateson suggests that it might be possible to plot mathematically the differentiation of schismogenic progression by means of the isolation of some detail of behaviour which can act as an index of degree or specialisation, and that this index should follow an exponential curve if plotted through time. However, no indication is given of how this might be achieved.

Progress in a schismogenic relationship will be hastened by two kinds of factors. First, it may be encouraged by the inculcation of desirable behaviour patterns congenial to the schismogenic role within individuals. On the other hand, a fear of over-stepping cultural taboos might actually restrain schismogenic behaviour. The second factor which might hasten a schismogenesis is an attitude of tragic inevitability by the parties to the relationship. The schizoid individual's preoccupation with destiny is cited here (1936: 189-190).

It is apparent, however, that schismogenic relationships do not always progress inexorably from bad to worse. Not all schizoid individuals become schizophrenics. Not all marriages with some degree of schismogenic input break down. (It is possible, of course, that all marriages contain some such input, but Bateson does not mention this possibility.)

'We must therefore think of schismogenesis, not as a process which goes inevitably forward, but rather as a process of change which is in some cases either controlled or continually counteracted by inverse processes' (1936: 190).

He then says that the term 'dynamic equilibrium', borrowed from

chemistry, is useful as an analogy for social processes, but that the analogy cannot be pushed too far. It should in fact remind us that what we call 'equilibrium' may vary greatly from one culture to another, and from one schismogenesis to another. There are also likely to be differences in the strengths of restraining factors from context to context within one culture. We should ask if these patterns are dangerous in one context, and safe in another.

The term 'dynamic equilibrium' is used in chemistry

'to describe apparently stationary equilibria which theoretically can only be described in terms of two or more opposed chemical reactions occurring simultaneously' (1936: 190).

But, I would add, it should be noted that a chemical reaction, which is Bateson's model here, can be described in terms of behaviour, but not in terms of meaning-oriented action. This, in other words, is a language which can be used to describe objects, but not human beings. In fact, Bateson's analysis constantly shifts between a description of behaviour, and that of action and meaning. His use of a term taken from chemistry in this part of his text implies that Bateson is conceiving of human beings as objects passively caught up in roles and in various social processes.

Next, Bateson suggests two main groups of factors which can restrain schismogenesis. First there are those factors which merely limit schismogenic progression. Second, there are those factors which, if left entirely unrestrained, would bring about changes in the basic pattern of the schismogenic relationship (1936: 190-191).

The first group of factors - those which would only limit the schismogenesis - are connected with the socialisation of individuals. For example, although the Iatmul boy is brought up to be harsh and to admire harshness in others, he is also taught that certain extremes of harshness are socially unacceptable. Earlier, Bateson had given the example of an Iatmul man who was considered too violent, to the point of instability, by his peers. If a man is too violent, he will suffer actual or at least proffered violence

in return, including the threat of sorcery, from those around him (1936: 191-192).

The second group of factors - those which might bring about basic changes in the schismogenic pattern - are eight in number. First, Bateson suggests that no healthy relationship can be either purely symmetrical or purely complementary, and that any relationship can be considerably stabilised by an admixture of patterning which contradicts the primary pattern. A Village Squire, for example, has a predominantly complementary relationship with the villagers, but this might be eased if he partakes in the annual cricket match which affords an opportunity for him to engage in a little symmetrical rivalry (1936: 193). Bateson notes that among the Iatmul the ethos of each sex is marked by duality. The men admire not only the harsh, aggressive debater but also the speaker of discretion. According to Bateson, this might indicate an undercurrent of female ethos providing a symmetrical input into the usually harsh mode of inter-action between males. The women are for the most part co-operative and kindly towards each other, but they seem to enjoy exhibiting the proud male ethos on some occasions. Does this admixture of complementary behaviour by the usually symmetrically behaving women reduce the opposition between Iatmul sexes? Bateson views the ceremonial occasions when women tend to adopt the proud male ethos as evidence of this (1936: 193).

The second and third factors which might alter the basic schismogenic pattern would be a change in mode within a complementary and symmetrical relationship, respectively. In the complementary case, a marriage based upon a relationship of assertion-submission might be altered by illness or accident towards a relationship of fostering and dependency. An example of such a change in a symmetrical relationship of rivalry is afforded by the way in which the behaviour of the Iatmul males in the men's house can swing from harshness to buffoonery (1936: 193-194).

Bateson is now building a model of human relationships in which all conflict is seen as involving one side as passive objects,

rather than a model in which both sides are viewed as subjects, who are both contributing towards the schismogenetic pattern. We also have to consider a wider question, which Bateson does not address: This is whether all conflict can be described in these kinds of terms. Bateson would seem to be suggesting this; at least, he does not allow for any other possibilities in his analysis. Another problem here is that Bateson's analysis does not allow for the consideration of the history of action, for example the possibility that any one naven is constituted by previous navens. In the model of a chemical reaction, we do not have to worry about the past, since the factors involved are not consciously acting subjects. But in the field of social life, the situation is quite different.

Next, Bateson considers a situation in which a schismogenesis between two groups is halted by external factors which unite the two groups in either loyalty or opposition to an outside element. There are parallels here with Evans-Pritchard's analysis of Nuer social organisation (1940). An obvious example here is the way in which the outbreak of war can, ostensibly at least, reduce the schismogenic tensions within a nation. Of course, Bateson continues, this means that one schismogenesis is only replaced by another; and the second might be more difficult to control than the first. The next factor follows on from this example. How, precisely, will an external schismogenesis affect patterns of behaviour within each of the groups involved? If group A is involved in a complementary relationship with group B, what will be the relation between the behaviour patterns between members of group A and group B, and the behaviour patterns between individual members of each group? Bateson also asks how this will affect hierarchical orders within each group, and, in a schismogenesis involving only a pair of individuals, whether distortions and compensations will occur within each personality (1936: 194-195).

Next, Bateson mentions the possibility that if the individuals involved in a schismogenic relationship could become conscious of the processes involved, they might begin to react to this knowledge

rather than to their own schismogenic patterns (1936: 196). Here, Bateson is retreating from the insight behind the formulation of the schismogenetic model. For he is now saying that an individual's consciousness can somehow be viewed as lying outside the arena of action. Whereas the great virtue of the notion of schismogenesis is that it transcends the duality of consciousness and action by collapsing them, he is now suggesting that consciousness can be effectively or analytically divorced from action. It might, however, be possible to escape this dilemma by talking about degrees of reflexivity in action. But whether or not this would ultimately allow us to escape from the duality of consciousness and action, I cannot say.

The seventh factor which might restrain schismogenesis concerns the mutual dependence of two parties involved in a complementary relationship. A balance might in this case be reached between such mutual dependence and the schismogenic tendency in the relationship (1936: 196). Bateson would seem to be implying here that dependence is extra-schismogenetic rather than, as he wrote above, merely responsible for a switch in the schismogenesis from the symmetrical to the complementary mode, or vice versa. Again, I would suggest that this suggests that a mode of human interaction, in this case that of "mutual dependence", can be separated off from action. Consciousness, whether mutual or not, is always a crucial part of human action, unlike the case of molecules in chemistry. It should also be said that the notion of dependence is built into the naven, but it is constantly being reformulated in successive performances.

Finally, Bateson considers the possibility that schismogenesis might be counteracted by inverse progressive changes in the relationship between two groups or individuals. Such inverse changes would, like the schismogenic elements, take the form of cumulative reactions to the reactions of the other group or the other individual, but the direction of the changes would be opposite to those of schismogenic tendencies. The result would be an increase in feelings of mutual love, rather than an increase in feelings of

mutual hostility. Bateson emphasises that such a change can occur not only between groups, but also between individuals, and he ends his chapter with what must be one of his most memorable quotes, when he writes that

'on theoretical grounds, we must expect that if the course of true love ever ran smooth, it would follow an exponential curve' (1936: 197).

The main problem with Bateson's model of schismogenesis is that, although it is a good starting point for an ontology, in that it dispenses with false dichotomies, it ignores the problem of history and the past implications for present and future action. This is of course a major fault in structural-functionalism, and Bateson is only following his contemporaries in this regard.

In a critique of the dramaturgical model of social life as proposed by Goffman, Alan Ryan has compared analyses which stress "maximising" and those which stress "dramatising" (1978). He notes the difference between pretending and depicting, and reminds us that

'a thing might be both itself and a picture of itself' (1978: 74).

In view of Goffman's insistence on

'the essential gap between agent and role...the only question at issue is whether we should treat his (Goffman's) account of social interaction as a story about how we rig the market, or as a story about how we engage in putting on a good show' (1978: 75-76, my parenthesis).

Ryan's conclusion is that the answer might be either, or both. In the case of the Iatmul and the schismogenetic model of their society proposed by Bateson, I would suggest that, whereas the Iatmul are in an important sense maximisers like many New Guinea peoples, they are also dramatisers and that this latter factor is by far the more important for their ceremonial life. What Bateson describes as "schismogenesis" among the Iatmul is a dramatising of logical models, particularly of the implications of gender roles.

This can be seen in the convoluted play-acting in the naven, and also in the women's dances, in which the women dramatise their private domain as a public one. Here, they are able to submit the men to ironic caricature, just as the men submit the women to caricature in the naven.

NOTES to Chapter Nine

- (1) The approach outlined here differs radically from that of the symbolic interactionist school, as represented by G.H.Mead and E.Goffman. It is more subtle, since it does not require the dichotomy between symbol and referent, "game" and "real motives", etc., used by these writers. I shall return to this theme in Chapter Eleven below.
- (2) The hidden dependency of men upon women in our own culture has been an important topic in contemporary feminist literature. See for example Eichenbaum & Orbach (1984).

**CHAPTER TEN: EIDOS AND EPILOGUES - FROM SYSTEM TO CONTEXT
AND BACK**

THE FINAL THREE chapters of Naven, namely 'The Eidos of Iatmul Culture', and the 1936 and 1958 Epilogues, are recursive in nature. They look back on and complement the main body of Bateson's analysis. I will comment first on Chapter XV which deals with Iatmul eidos.

In Naven Bateson creates two generative models. Ethos is generated by schismogenesis. In his Chapter XV he attempts to provide a second generative model to deal with eidos. This second model is not as successful as the first. It is apparent from his text that the notion of eidos is, by the end of the book, marginal to the analysis of the naven. There is, for example, no eidological complement to Chapter XIV: there is no chapter on The Expression of Eidos in Naven. There is also the important point that whereas Bateson discriminates between male and female ethos, he does not do so with regard to eidos. In a footnote he admits this, and notes that this is due to the fact that from the eidological perspective 'I have no data' although he adds that

'from the contrast in ethos between the sexes I should expect to find considerable differences in their eidos' (1936: 226).

But this expectation is not realised in his text.

In Chapter Four above I tried to show how Bateson's initial analytical model, which we can describe as "generative", is reduced to a "structural" model by the reduction from five to three aspects. Later, Bateson reduces the aspects from three to one, in his formulation of the notion of schismogenesis. The latter does not have internal complexity as a generative model; Bateson cannot generate cognitive complexity from schismogenesis. His problem now is how to generate such complexity from the notion of eidos.

Eidos is defined by Bateson as 'cultural structure', which is defined in turn as 'a collective term for the coherent "logical"

system which may be constructed by the scientist, fitting together the various premises of the culture' (1936: 218). One might note here that Bateson's "premises" are very similar to Collingwood's "presuppositions" (1972: 21-48). For Collingwood, cultural premises constitute a social and historical reality, and are not purely abstract. They are formed by particular historical circumstances; history is what people do.

But, for Bateson, the crucial eidological referent is the "standardisation" of the individual. He has standardised ethos by means of schismogenesis; he now needs to standardise eidos. His chapter on Iatmul eidos is an attempt to do this. Schismogenesis cannot cover much of his material, including eidos. Bateson now sees eidos as a negatively defined class; it is that which is "not-ethos". This is similar to the way in which philosophy has treated emotion, i.e. as a negative category, as that which is not intellect. Philosophy's neglect of emotion as an analytical category in its own right has been described by Rorty (1980).

Bateson's strategy for dealing with eidos is to reduce it to the culturally standardised individual. He does this by concentrating on training and socialisation, and then on the activation of memory.

Bateson's theme at the beginning of his chapter is that of cognitive complexity. He asserts that

'the culture has apparently some internal tendency to complexity, some property which drives it on to the fabrication and maintenance of more and more elaborate constructs, and since this tendency has evidently contributed to the shaping of naven, it is relevant to examine its nature in detail' (1936: 218).

He then asks if this complexity really exists in the culture, or if it is the result of a disparity between two languages and cultures, namely those of the anthropologist and those of the culture he is studying (1936: 219). Bateson can only trust to his

'impressions as evidence that the complexity is not entirely a creation of my own methods of thinking' (1936: 219).

If, then, this complexity somehow exists in the culture, and if this

complexity reflects native ideas and assumptions (the "premises" discussed earlier), it must follow that we are dealing with the

'cultural expression of cognitive or intellectual aspects of Iatmul personality' (1936: 220).

I would add here that surely 'some internal tendency to complexity' is a hallmark not only of Iatmul culture, but of many others.

Bateson's statement that such complexity must relate to the 'cognitive or intellectual aspects of Iatmul personality' is based on his assumed dichotomy between the individual and society.

Just as ethos represents the standardisation of emotions in individual members of a culture, so here we are dealing with

'a standardisation of the cognitive aspects of the personality of the individuals. Such a standardisation and its expression in cultural behaviour I shall refer to as the eidos of a culture' (1936: 220, Bateson's emphasis).

The question here is Bateson's criteria for distinguishing between the social and the individual aspects of personality, which he does not define.

He lists some of the more apparent evidence for the complexity of Iatmul eidos in this way:

'It is a culture which continually surprises us by the mass of structural detail which it has built up around certain contexts. Most conspicuously we have the fabric of fancy heraldry and totemism built up around the personal names and ancestors: but a similar tendency to what we can only describe as hypertrophy may be recognised in the initiatory system, with its plexus of cross-cutting dual divisions and staggered initiatory grades; and again in the naven ceremonial, where we have seen that the culture has proceeded upon simple structural premises to such lengths that the wau behaves as in some senses a wife of the laua' (1936: 218).

Bateson then describes the necessity for every Iatmul male to memorise the details of nomenclature involved in the naming system. In such feats of memory, which are of great strategic importance in debates but which are regarded as crucial in all aspects of social life, a variety of mnemonic techniques, and visual and kinaesthetic imagery, are employed (1936: 222-225).

'We have seen that vast and detailed erudition is a quality which is cultivated among the Iatmul. This is most dramatically shown in the debating about names and totems, and I have stated that

a learned man carries in his head between ten and twenty thousand names' (1936: 222).

This is related by Bateson to the pervasive tendency to represent social organisation diagrammatically.

'In almost every ceremony, the participants are arranged in groups so that the total pattern is a diagram of the social system. In the ceremonial house the clans and moieties are normally allotted seats according to the totemic system of groupings: but when initiation ceremonies are to be performed this arrangement is discarded and in its place comes another based upon the cross-cutting initiatory moieties and grades' (1936: 225).

Bateson claims that we can also see the naven

'as a further example of this proneness to visual and kinaesthetic thought. We have seen how the abstract geometrical properties of the kinship system are here symbolised in costume and gesture; and we may note this in passing as a contribution of eidology to our understanding of the ceremonies' (1936: 226).

In the matter of memorising names, Bateson states that this is not confined to a small number of specialists but is a skill prized in the majority of men (1936: 226). The importance attached to names, and a skill in memorising and using them, is pervasive throughout the culture and is not limited to their combative use in debates.

'The naming system is indeed a theoretical image of the whole culture and in it every formulated aspect of the culture is reflected...Every spell, every song...contains lists of names. The utterances of the shamans are couched in terms of names... Marriages are often arranged in order to gain names. Reincarnation and succession are based upon the naming system. Land tenure is based on clan membership and clan membership is vouched for by names. The man who buys names acquires at the same time membership in the clan to which the names belonged, and a right to cultivate the land of that clan. Every product of the river and gardens has its place in the system' (1936: 228).

The subject of memory is interesting and important for two reasons. First, it is one which philosophers find hard to deal with. Second, memory is inherently historical. This is one of the reasons that philosophers have difficulty with it; memory is an active process, in that it is constitutive of human reality. Memory and knowing are interdependent, each being implied by the other. Memory constitutes the nature of knowing, and brings back individuals and history to the social stage. We can see the naven, for example, as both a knowing and a remembering. Each performance can be viewed as a

re-knowing of previous performances.

Bateson continues by saying that much Iatmul thought is concerned with intellectual problems which might appear to us 'fundamentally unreal' (1936: 229). He states that there is, for example, a long-standing argument between the Sun moiety and the Mother moiety as to the nature of Night. According to the Mother moiety, Night is positive, due to overlapping mountains and other facts of nature, while the Sun moiety claims that Night is a negation of Day owing to the absence of their totem, the Sun (1936: 229-230). Another topic of intellectual debate is the problem of the nature of waves on the surface of water. According to one prevalent opinion, everything in the world is composed of patterns of waves. But this contradicts the Iatmul theory of reincarnation, according to which the spirit of the deceased is blown by the wind up the river into the womb of the deceased's son's wife (1936: 230-231).

After providing a few more examples of such debates, Bateson summarises Iatmul thought as being characterised

'not only by its intellectuality, but also by a tendency to insist that what is symbolically, sociologically, or emotionally true, is also cognitively true' (1936: 232).

But he goes on to admit that

'the same mental twist is, of course, recognisable in dialecticians and theologians in all parts of the world' (1936: 232).

Since, according to Bateson, Iatmul dialecticians and theologians are the chief contributors to the culture, he can then go on to state that

'many of the complications of the culture can be described as tours-de-force played upon this type of paradox, devices which stress the contradiction between emotional and cognitive reality or between different aspects of emotional truth' (1936: 232).

As examples of such contradictions Bateson lists the following.

1) There is a discrimination between, and the identification among, different aspects of social personality, for example in the naming of individuals. This discrimination of facets of personality is also carried over into descriptions of spiritual beings (1936: 232-234).

2) Bateson claims that the tendency to emphasise the more cognitively obscure of two truths can be seen in the kinship system. He has emphasised that, while the kinship system is patrilineal in its morphology, it is matrilineal in sentiment.

'I am inclined now to see in this almost sentimental stressing of the importance of the tie with the mother another instance of over-compensation in favour of the less evident truth... It would seem...that the patrilineal relationship is evident enough from clan organisation to need no stressing. But its clear existence casts a slight obscurity upon the matrilineal relationship which, though no less socially and emotionally real, is thereby rendered less cognitively evident. Therefore the matrilineal relationship is the more emphasised' (1936: 234).

Again, Bateson points to the identification of the laua with the ancestors of the maternal clan. The link in this equation is a purely emotional one. Pride in the achievements of both lauas and ancestors is the only common factor in the two relationships in question, that between a clan and its lauas and that between a clan and its ancestors (1936: 235).

3) The naven provides another example of the preference for an obscure rather than an evident truth. The Iatmul regard the wau as a mother and wife of the laua in a social, economic and emotional sense. Bateson argues however that, from a purely cognitive viewpoint, the wau is nothing of the sort.

'In the carrying out of the ceremonial, it is the emotional truth which is stressed which, of the two, is the more difficult of cognitive assimilation' (1936: 235).

Bateson then outlines five more motifs of mutually contradictory premises, namely: pluralism, that is to say the multiplicity and differentiation of objects, people and spiritual beings; monism, the sense in which everything is derived from a single origin; direct dualism, from the viewpoint of which everything has a sibling; diagonal dualism, from the viewpoint of which everything has a symmetrical counterpart; and lastly, patterns of cognitive structure which govern the seriation of individuals, seriation which is based upon the premises of direct and diagonal dualism (1936: 235).

Bateson's formulation of direct and diagonal dualism can be seen as the eidological parallel to the ethological generative model of complementary and symmetrical schismogenesis. Direct dualism, he claims, refers to the kind of relationship which exists between a pair of siblings of the same sex. In diagonal dualism the relationship referred to is that between two men who have married each other's sisters. In a footnote, Bateson writes that the concepts of direct and diagonal dualism are in fact eidological analogues of complementary and symmetrical ethos. The notion of direct dualism provides the basis for the formation of artificial relationships which are patterned on brotherhood; thus, for the Iatmul, everything in the world can be seen in terms of pairs. Each pair consists of an elder sibling, together with a younger sibling of the same sex. The case of diagonal dualism is more complex, since it stresses the fundamental equality and oppositeness of each member of a pair. In Iatmul thought, this leads to the creation of artificial affinal relationships and to the notion that everything has an equal and opposite counterpart. Thus, diagonal dualism is the basis of the relationship between the two moieties of Sun and Mother with their opposed totems Sky and Earth, Day and Night. It also underlies the initiatory system with its cross-cutting dual divisions. Here, one half of one moiety initiates the diagonally opposite half of the opposite moiety (1936: 237-240). Both kinds of dualist thought can be seen at work in the naven.

'On the one hand we have the emphasis upon the various direct identifications of siblings, of father and son, and of husband and wife, and on the other hand, as examples of the diagonal way of thinking, we have the whole patterning of the brother-in-law relationship and the beautiful reversed symmetry in naven on the two sides of the marriage tie, whereby the father's sister dresses up as a man and identifies with the father, while the mother's brother dresses up as a woman and identifies with the mother' (1936: 240).

This chapter contains a brief, but important, consideration of Iatmul phrasings of emotions. These are rare among Iatmul men, apart from those of an unpleasant, hostile kind. They name two, ngglangga and kianta (1936: 253). The former refers to hurt pride, or 'pique', while the latter is the Iatmul term for jealousy. This is in direct contrast to the women, as Bateson writes in a passage which is of crucial importance for his summarising analysis of the naven.

'Both of these terms are occasionally used in stating the reasons for behaviour, but I never heard any reference to pleasant emotions as the cause of any detail of behaviour. The term wowia kugwa, "to be in love", is used almost solely of women, and it is likely that among the women emotional phrasings of reasons for behaviour are very much more frequent than among the men' (1936: 253).

I would suggest that Bateson's material on Iatmul eidos reveals his tendency to be caught between what we might call a "systems" view and a "context" view of Iatmul society. I can illustrate this by referring to the two philosophies of Wittgenstein, that of his first book, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1961), and that of his later work, Philosophical Investigations (1958). (1) In the earlier book, Wittgenstein postulated a correspondence between language and reality, in that he proposed that the structure of language replicates in some important way the structure of reality. The Tractatus delineates a systematic relationship between language and reality.

The argument of Wittgenstein's later and still highly influential Philosophical Investigations, although to a certain extent built upon that of the Tractatus, is profoundly different from that of the earlier work. Language is now seen, not as one coherent system interlocking with a second coherent system (i.e., reality) but as an instrument which can be used in different ways in particular languages. There is no longer one language nor one reality; the meaning of any utterance is now seen to depend on the use to which it is put in a particular context. For the later Wittgenstein, use is a matter of custom and of history, and it is not necessarily reducible to a set of formal rules within each language or, as Wittgenstein described it, within each language game. Practice or use, rather than a set of formal rules, constitutes the prime determinant of meaning. Meaning is thus something which individuals learn as a result of finding themselves involved in specific language games (or, as anthropologists would put it, in specific cultures); it is not something which can be seen as enshrined in abstract rules or formal definitions which are divorced from actual practice. Wittgenstein's later philosophy,

in its stress on use, becomes more like a theory of action than a metaphysics; it opened the way for the speech act theory developed by Austin, Searle and others.

Generally, it is fair to say that while Wittgenstein's Tractatus is in the tradition of the British empiricists, the Philosophical Investigations enters the world as described by Hegel and Collingwood, i.e. the world as a series of contexts differentiated by history, culture and so on.

In his analysis of the naven, Bateson continually advances beyond a "systems" view towards a "contextual" view, but he always retreats back to a system. Using Wittgenstein's term from the Investigations, we can say that what links the various performances of naven are "family resemblances". There is no ideal, standardised naven which is the object of Bateson's search throughout the book. The naven is a shared creation and re-creation, not a standardised activity.

Wittgenstein's development in his philosophy is revealing for the way in which Bateson deals with Iatmul naming and memory. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein follows Russell's theory of naming which states that names are essences, not merely labels, and that words show things as they are. Language is a model of the world, and a model for the world. Bateson follows Wittgenstein's Tractatus here, in that he believes that if we can understand the Iatmul system of naming, then we will be able to understand Iatmul society. This would seem to presuppose some kind of correspondence between language and reality. Bateson thus reflects the belief of many anthropologists that we can understand cultures by understanding names, for example those names which constitute a kinship terminology. Bateson notes in his index to his chapter on eidos, 'the whole culture reflected in the system' (xix). This is also related to Bateson's attempts to delineate a system underneath the memorising of names. No society of any kind is possible without memory. Memory is always and everywhere within culture; it is not something that waits around to be activated.

We can compare the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus to the later Wittgenstein, and relate this to Bateson's analysis of the naven. In the Investigations language is historical and therefore particular. From this nominalist viewpoint naming becomes performative, since for the later Wittgenstein names exist only in use. Unlike philosophers, Bateson was already working within a context, in that he was an anthropologist. But his continual effort is to discover an underlying system which will "explain" the context by standardising the different cultural "bits" which he adduces. An emphasis on specific use or, in my terms, on performance, seeks an understanding of particular instances rather than the delineation of any such assumed coherent system.

Another important topic in Bateson's eidos chapter is his treatment of paradox (1936: 232). He believes that paradoxes in naming will reveal paradoxes in the "system". Here, he follows Wittgenstein's early philosophy as well as the work of Russell. Bateson wants to unravel the paradoxes to find the system underlying them. But the paradoxes themselves, qua paradoxes, might themselves constitute the social reality of the people; indeed, as Gellner has noted, the existence of paradox is often the important clue as to what is going on in a society (1979: 44-46). (2)

At the end of the chapter, Bateson formulates his eidological generative model, based on paradoxes and dualism. This is in parallel with his ethological model, namely schismogenesis. But he then returns to his five part model, with which he had started at the beginning of his book. He writes:

'If we ask an individual why he behaves in a particular way, there are certainly five types of answer which he may give' (1936: 250).

These five types of answer constitute the old perspectival model, namely sociological, structural, ethological, economic and developmental (1936: 250-251). Bateson has noted the importance of cultural variety, or context, but he has now returned to the standardisation of a system.

To conclude my account of Bateson's Naven, it remains for me to deal with the two Epilogues to the book. The first was written as the conclusion to the first edition (1936), while the second was added to the second edition in 1958. (The original text was left unaltered). The first Epilogue deals with the problems which Bateson faced in his material. The second contains an important theoretical updating, a central feature of which is the theme of cybernetics.

Bateson begins the first Epilogue with the statement that

'the writing of this book has been an experiment, or rather a series of experiments, in methods of thinking about anthropological material' (1936: 257).

His field-work had been 'scrappy and disconnected' (1936: 257). He did not have any overall plan in talking to his informants; he did not privilege any one form of enquiry over another. He was influenced greatly by his reading in the field of a part of the manuscript of Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture, and by conversations with Reo Fortune and Margaret Mead. Although he had recognised that the contrast in ethos between the sexes in Iatmul society was significant, it was only after his return from the field that he began to realise the importance of the reactions of the members of one sex to the behaviour of members of the other.

'The actual noting of facts was done at random before I even dreamt of ethos, eidos and schismogenesis' (1936: 258).

He emphasises this as a defence against any charge that he might have selected his facts to fit his theories.

He records that an outstanding step for his analysis was the realisation that the transvestite wau was a figure of fun. This altered his whole picture of the naven: before, he had only seen the proud behaviour of the transvestite women.

'Though I did not know what it meant, I knew that the wau's buffooning had altered my whole conception of naven, and, if this was so, the contrast between the bedraggled transvestism of the men and the proud wearing of homicidal ornaments by the women must somehow contain an important clue to Iatmul culture. The change in my way of thinking had arisen from the

addition of emotional emphasis to what was originally a purely formal picture, and so I came to believe that ethos was the thing that mattered' (259-260, Bateson's emphases).

The addition of emotional emphasis to the previously 'formal picture' is crucial. Bateson now notes that on ordinary occasions Iatmul men usually wear aprons, and Iatmul women wear skirts. Clearly transvestism is only possible on the basis of such a convention; but nowhere in the book so far has he remarked on the 'obvious' fact that the conventional differentiation of clothing between the sexes is a factor which promotes transvestism; indeed, any form of transvestism is impossible without such a convention obtaining in the first place (260-261).

But why should it be the mother's brother who thus acts the fool? In order to answer this question, Bateson had applied the concepts of formulation and structure. The kinship system, which was built up from formulations, was part of the structure of the society, and the naven was in turn 'built upon' this structure. So Bateson had arrived at a point where he had to try to determine the nature of the relationship between 'ethos' and 'structure' in Iatmul society.

'If a man scolded his wife, his behaviour was ethos; but if he married his father's sister's daughter, it was structure' (261).

He confesses that he had thought of the structure as a network which somehow guided the ethos, and which in turn was shaped by it.

In the 1936 Epilogue he argues that this line of thinking was wrong. His first step in his attempt to break out of what by this stage he viewed as fallacies was by adding the notion of pragmatic function to his list of subdivisions of culture. This was a combination of factors which met the satisfaction of the needs of individuals, and of those which contributed towards the integration of society (261).

He was faced immediately with an important problem, namely that he had provided no clear criteria for discriminating between the

different elements of culture which he could call 'ethos' as opposed to 'structure' or 'pragmatic function'. He carried out a simple experiment. He wrote down three bits of behaviour - pragmatic, a wau giving food to a laua; ethological, a man scolding his wife; and structural, a man marrying his father's sister's daughter. It would seem that 'pragmatic' here refers to his elaboration of his earlier sociological function, while 'structural' refers to the standardisation of cognition, or eidos.

He then drew a lattice of nine squares made up of three rows of squares with three squares in each row. The horizontal rows he labelled with his bits of behaviour, while the vertical rows were labelled with his categories.

'Then I forced myself to see each bit as conceivably belonging to each category. I found that it could be done' (1936: 262).

In other words, each 'item' of behaviour could be seen as structural, or in accordance with a set of rules; as pragmatic, or as satisfying either the needs of the individual or as contributing to the integration of society; or, finally, ethnologically, that is as an expression of emotion. He continues:

'This experiment may seem puerile, but to me it was very important, and I have recounted it at some length because there may be some among my readers who tend to regard such concepts as "structure" as concrete parts which "interact" in culture, and who find, as I did, a difficulty in thinking of these concepts as labels merely for points of view adopted either by the scientist or by the natives. It is instructive too to perform the same experiment with such concepts as economics, kinship and land tenure, and even religion, language and "sexual life" do not stand too surely as categories of behaviour, but tend to resolve themselves into labels for points of view from which all behaviour may be seen...We must expect to find that every piece of behaviour has its ethological, structural and sociological significance' (1936: 262).

However, to see human societies in this way poses profound difficulties. The source of the difficulty, as Bateson summarises it, lies in 'the habit of thought which attributes concreteness to aspects of phenomena' (1936: 263). He is writing here of Whitehead's notion of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, which has been

'an important principle or motif of European eidos, certainly since the days of Greek philosophy' (1936: 263). This attack on the reification and hypostatization of conceptual formulations is extremely illuminating and marks a final decisive stage in Bateson's analysis of the naven. Bateson sees that different aspects, or perspectives, apply to any one piece of behaviour. But he is still searching for a final analysis and this will be achieved, he believes, by the delineation of some kind of structure - in the Lévi-Straussian rather than the structural-functionalist sense, I would add - which will act as an objective explanatory referent. He thus approaches what could be described in later terms as a Lévi-Straussian analysis on the one hand, while making a provisional, and highly articulate, attack on such an analysis with the other. But behaviour can only exist within the context of a particular culture. Bateson does not go beyond his perspectival framework to see that what he actually needs is a non-perspectival view which will take account of the fact that behaviour arises everywhere and always within particular attributions of agency (whether the "agents" are humans or otherwise, as Hobart (1986) has suggested) and, further, that behaviour is a way not only of "doing things", but also of "seeing things" and "saying things". This view takes us out of the closed domain of a finalised structure qua structure and a search for sui generis behaviour existing somehow in itself outside the confines of cultural specificity, and towards a consideration of social life as the arena of interpretative activity by, through and for experiencing agents or, as I would phrase it, the arena of performance. Derrida has summarised these two strategies eloquently as 'two interpretations of interpretation, or structure, of sign, of freeplay'. One seeks

'a truth or an origin which is free from freeplay and from the order of the sign, and lives like an exile the necessity of interpretation. The other, which is no longer turned towards the origin, affirms freeplay' (1972: 264).

Bateson then poses a further problem. If informants discriminate, as Western Europeans do, say, between economics and law as subdivisions in their own lives and not as "aspects of culture", should the anthropologist not accept their view, at least to an extent? But, if we adopt the point of view that people sometimes

think structurally and sometimes in terms of economics, sometimes ethnologically and sometimes sociologically, then we need no longer be tied exclusively to how natives subdivide their culture, any more than to anthropological reifications of the same. His next statement presents a new problem which results from this one.

'I was justified in expecting every aspect to be represented in every bit of behaviour, and the fact that the natives were conscious only of one of these aspects in a given context was a point which might be significant in an eidological examination of the culture' (1936: 264).

The question here is how, and under what conditions, do indigenous peoples stress one aspect of the culture rather than another?

Besides the use of Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness, there are three other important steps in Bateson's analysis which he describes. The first is the separation of sociology from his "pragmatic function". This had been suggested by Radcliffe-Brown, who had advised Bateson that the latter's use of the term "structure" differed from his own. For Radcliffe-Brown, structure had meant the structure of society, whereas for Bateson it came to mean something more like "cultural structure". Bateson had then divided "pragmatic function" into data applicable to conventional sociology on the one hand, and "motivation" or the "expression of ethos in behaviour" on the other (1936: 264).

The second important step had been the separation of eidos from ethos. In a footnote to his main text, Bateson had commented that anthropologists should expect to find different sorts of logic in different cultures. For Bateson, the term "ethos" had originally been designed to cover all characteristics of a culture which are ascribable to the standardisation of individuals. He then realised that the question of cultural logic was an important one, and that data which had originally been presented under the term 'ethos' had to be divided in two: into "ethos" as designating affective aspects of the individual, and "eidos" as designating cognitive aspects. The idea for "ethos" arose in the first place from Ruth Benedict's concept of "configuration" (1936: 264-265). A performance oriented view such as the one I am proposing, however, would place less

emphasis on a contingent, notional dichotomy between individual and society, and consider rather the way in which human beings create and re-create such dichotomies, ideologies and roles - create and re-create, in fact, both themselves and society - through performance. I would see humans not as "mere" actors expressing through social inter-action a previously constructed cultural template, but rather as active, participant agents creating and re-creating - often, if you like, through acts of "recreation" - the various aspects, modes, styles and models of their reality.

Bateson writes that the concept of *eidos* is perhaps the weakest point in his exposition. There are difficulties in discriminating the affective from the cognitive aspects of personality.

'I am aware that psychologists are inclined nowadays to look askance at the terms cognitive and affective, but I still hope that if we first grant that these terms are aspects, and not categories of behaviour, and then go on to compare the *ethos* and *eidos* of various cultures, we may in the end arrive at a better understanding of thought and emotion' (1936: 265).

This issue becomes even more important if anthropologists allow indigenous categories into their analyses and ask, for example, how their informants conceptualise dichotomies between emotion and thought, or if indeed they have a place for such dichotomies in their own scheme of things in the first place. (3) This necessitates the construction of a double discourse which negotiates between two sets of categories, ours and theirs, rather than a one-way interpretative discourse which uses our categories as an implicit universal substrate. This does not mean that we should attempt to ignore our own constructs, for example our dichotomy between emotion and thought, since such constructs would be presupposed in any discourse originating from the West and any attempt to do without them would be factitious.

The third step in his analysis which Bateson summarises at this point is his formulation of the notion of schismogenesis. This developed out of his conversations with Margaret Mead and Reo Fortune. The idea of a complementary aspect to *ethos* was suggested

by Mead. Bateson then took the idea of complementary ethos further, and considered the possibility that the ethos of each sex might have some formative or active influence on the ethos of the other. This led to the concept of complementary schismogenesis. A comparison of his subject matter with that of European politics led to the idea of symmetrical schismogenesis. The mixture was leavened with 'a little Hegelian dialectic' (1936: 265-266).

So, Bateson was led to the isolation of five major points of view for the study of society: structural or eidological, ethological or emotional, sociological, developmental and economic. The last two items were left out of Bateson's picture, presumably because he had little data on these issues and they did not particularly interest him at the time he was in the field. But, Bateson claims, whatever the method, 'our material is the same and includes the whole ordered diversity of Iatmul behaviour' (1936: 266).

I would now like to consider the 1958 Epilogue to the second edition of Naven. Here Bateson discusses his earlier work in the light of several more recent strands in his thinking. These strands, which take in cybernetics, communications theory and Russell's theory of logical types, can be subsumed under the general heading of a particular form of epistemology, or theory of knowledge. This epistemology can be seen as the central theme in the volume of Bateson's collected papers (1973).

'Naven', writes Bateson, 'is a weaving of three levels of abstraction' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 281). The first consists of the presentation of ethnographic data, the second of the arranging of this data in order to build various pictures of the culture and the third consists of the discussion of the ways in which he had attempted to fit together 'the pieces of the jigsaw'. The second level is more abstract than the first, and the third is more abstract than the second (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 281). He further

argues that 'these theoretical concepts have an order of objective reality' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 281). They exist as real descriptions of processes of knowing. The trap consists in the temptation to believe that concepts such as "ethos" or "social structure" have more reality than this; the trap, that is, is that of Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness. The way out of the trap is through the use of logical typing.

'If "ethos", "social structure", "economics", etc., are words in that language which describes how scientists arrange data, then these words cannot be used to "explain" phenomena, nor can there be any "ethological" or "economic" categories of phenomena. People can be influenced, of course, by economic theories or by economic fallacies - or by hunger - but they cannot possibly be influenced by "economics". Economics is a class of explanations, not itself an explanation of anything' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 281, Bateson's emphasis).

This paragraph contains the theoretical substance of this second Epilogue. Believing that human reality can be explained by 'a class of explanations' is an example of a mistake in logical typing. Once we have understood how fallacies in logical typing occur, then we can benefit from the development of what Bateson calls 'an entirely new science'. This new science has no generic name, but it is represented variously by communications theory, cybernetics and mathematical logic. It offers

'a new set of conceptual frames and problems, replacing the premises and problems set by Plato and Aristotle' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 281-282).

Bateson also wants to use his new theoretical framework in order to make the book relevant to psychiatry. He wrote the original book without any detailed knowledge of Freudian theory. This he regards as positive, since he might otherwise have been tempted to concentrate on the interpretation of symbols. This would have been a distraction from the more important problems concerning inter-group and inter-personal processes (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 282). Another pitfall of a psychiatrically oriented perspective consists of 'the distractions of psychological typology' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 283).

This appetite for typology - which, after all, one would expect in a trained biologist - runs all through social and natural science, and he confesses that he himself hankers after

'a classification, a typology, of the processes of interaction as it occurs either between persons or between groups' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 283).

Bateson's dilemma is accurately articulated. Much of the material in his second Epilogue is built around Russell's theory of logical types, a discussion of which closes his text. But his concerns about 'the distinctions of psychological typology' would seem to militate against the privileging of one particular theory of mind and, further, a theory such as Russell's which posits discriminate levels of mentation.

Epistemological questions loom large here. The theory of evolution posits a similar problem.

'Do species have real existence or are they only a device of description? How are we to resolve the old controversies between continuity and discontinuity? Or how shall we reconcile the contrast which recurs again and again in nature between continuity of change and discontinuity of the classes which results from change?' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 283).

Bateson claims that his concept of schismogenesis provides a partial answer to these problems. He is now in a position to consider this model of schismogenic process in relation to cybernetics and logical typing. A dense discussion of the problem of change in evolution leads into a consideration of the nature of learning. Both evolution and learning are seen as examples of progressive change in a unit made up of an organism plus its environment. Learning is considered in relation to character formation, which Bateson sees as crucially implicated in schismogenic inter-action (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 284).

There are two levels of learning in this picture. In any learning experiment we can see these two levels at work (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 285). On the one hand, there is in the Instrumental Reward type of experiment the increased frequency of the conditioned response of the subject. The rat learns to press the lever. But

there is also a more abstract level of learning, in which the subject learns to deal with new contexts of a given type.

'The subject comes to act more and more as if contexts of this type were expectable in his universe' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 285).

The animal subjected to Pavlovian experiments framed in terms of reinforcement will acquire a sense of 'fatalism'. On the other hand, the animal subjected to Instrumental Reward experiments can be expected to learn (or, in Bateson's term, to 'deutero-learn') a character structure that will enable him to live in a world in which he himself can control the occurrences of reinforcement.

So learning to learn, or 'deutero-learning', is the mechanism by which animals are able to adjust to change in their environment and, further, to themselves contribute towards change. What Bateson is getting at here is that patterns of contexts of learning are, for certain purposes of investigation, more important than what is actually learned; e.g., in processes of schismogenetic inter-action. An individual in a symmetrical - say, assertive-assertive - relationship will form the habit of acting as if he expected assertion from the other individual - and, perhaps, from other individuals as well. So his own behaviour becomes more and more assertive. This is obviously the basis for the development of progressive change.

'We have here a case in which change in the individual affects the environment of others in a way which will cause a similar change in them. This will act back upon the initial individual to produce further change in him in the same direction' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 286).

There is an important problem however in applying this model to the Iatmul. We have here, Bateson points out, a one-sided picture of processes which, if permitted to develop unchecked over time, would lead to either more and more rivalry between symmetrical groups, or to more and more differentiation between complementary groups. The society would eventually explode. Bateson had been aware of this problem, and had attempted a solution by suggesting that a dynamic equilibrium was maintained in Iatmul society by

means of a balance between symmetrical processes on the one hand, and complementary processes on the other. This was unsatisfactory, since it assumed that the two variables will, coincidentally, have an equal and opposite value. It is improbable, however, that two such processes could balance each other out unless there was some "functional relationship" between them. But, at the time of finishing the original text, Bateson had been unable to see what the nature of such a relationship might be. The development of cybernetics in the 1940s provided him with an answer.

For Bateson, the cybernetic model represented a way out of teleological explanation. Teleology explains purpose and adaptation in terms of the end of a process; the end of a process is regarded as its purpose. (This is, of course, one of the formulations of classic functionalism.) Bateson writes that the notion of teleology, introduced by the Greeks, could be swept aside by means of the cybernetic model which is based on a circular feedback system rather than a linear chain of cause and effect. Such feedback loops are seen as seeking equilibria or steady states. Cybernetic ideas had been used in engineering and biology before the Macy conferences which Bateson attended in the 1940s, but it was at these conferences that their importance was recognised (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 287).

Chains of cause and effect in cybernetic systems are circular, and not linear. In a circular system containing elements A, B, C and D, A affects B, B affects C, C affects D and D then affects A, and so on. Such a system has totally different properties from those of linear systems. There are two kinds of feedback system. In negative feedback, the system seeks a steady state of operation; the nature of the mechanism is self-corrective. Within the circuit there will be at least one link in which the more there is of something, the less there will be of something else. A positive feedback system, on the other hand, develops exponentially until it reaches the "runaway" point, where it either runs out of energy or breaks up. It is the negative feedback system which is important for Bateson here (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 288-289).

The substitution of the concept of self-correction for those of purpose and adaptation gave Bateson a new perspective on the processes of schismogenesis in Iatmul society. He could now ask whether there might exist in the culture functional connections which would provide restraints against the increase of schismogenic tensions.

'It was not good enough to say that symmetrical schismogenesis happened by coincidence to balance the complementary. It was now necessary to ask, is there any communicational pathway such that an increase in symmetrical schismogenesis will bring about an increase in the corrective complementary phenomena? Could the system be circular and corrective?' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 289).

For Bateson, the answer was obvious. The naven ceremonial is a caricature of a complementary sexual relationship between wau and laua; and it is set in motion by exaggerated symmetrical boasting on the part of the laua. Bateson writes that it might now be more accurate to see laua's boasting as the primary context for naven, and to see his achievements as particular examples of his achieved ambition which place him in a symmetrical relationship with his wau. But, for the Iatmul, this is not the case; they phrase the reasons for naven primarily in terms of laua's achievements. For them, the less formal contexts in which laua boasts of his achievements and thus triggers the wau into the naven behaviour are secondary (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 289-290).

The link here between symmetrical and complementary behaviour is doubly inverted, for

'the laua makes the symmetrical gesture and wau responds not by overbearing complementary dominance but by the reverse of this - exaggerated submission. Or should we say the reverse of this reverse? Wau's behaviour is a caricature of submission?' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 290).

It is illuminating to relate Bateson's use of a cybernetic model with the distinction made by Paul Ricoeur between semiotics, considered as a science of signs, and semantics, considered as an investigation of discourse. Whereas semiotics

'is formal to the extent that it relies on the dissociation of language into constitutive parts',

semantics,

'the science of the sentence, is immediately concerned with the concept of sense...to the extent that semantics is fundamentally defined by the integrative procedures of language' (1976: 8, my emphasis).

Semiotics is unable to function analytically at the level of the sentence, let alone at the level of the complete text. This is important when we note that Bateson's use of the term 'caricature' to define the wau's naven role can be seen as a piece of linguistic analysis within the terms of his cybernetic model.

Meaningful speech carries what Ricoeur calls 'propositional content' (1976: 10). Such content is 'characterized by a single distinctive trait: it has a predicate' (1976: 10). Semiotic analysis cannot deal with predication, for the structure of discourse

'is not a structure in the analytical sense of structuralism, i.e. as a combinatory power based on the previous oppositions of discrete units. Rather, it is a structure in the synthetic sense, i.e., as the intertwining and interplay of the functions of identification in one and the same sentence' (1976: 11).

Kenneth Burke has written of irony as a 'master trope', or figure of speech, which is paired with the notion of dialectic (1969: 511). For irony, we can here substitute caricature. Now, whatever dialectic is represented by the caricature at work in the naven requires not merely a semantic rather than a semiotic analysis, but rather an analysis at a third and even more complex level, that is to say an analysis at the level of the text. I am suggesting that in terms of linguistics, the naven is neither a system of signs (semiotic), nor even merely a predicative sentence (semantic), but that it can be seen as a text. Dialectic and irony presuppose not only discourse, but also a text considered as a collection of sentences whose sense interpenetrates each other. We are here in the realm of hermeneutics, or that of a text composed of a number of contributory sentences. Further, any text implies the workings of a pre-text - or past texts (past performances of naven and other rituals?) - not to mention a context (other contemporary performances of naven and other rituals?), or the relationships at work, either implicitly

or explicitly, between the text and other texts.

Another critique of semiotic analysis has been summarised by Culler, and this too is relevant to Bateson's use of cybernetics. For semiotics

'though the source of meanings is no longer a consciousness in which they exist prior to their expression, their source becomes a system of differences which semiotics treats as the necessary condition of any act of signification...instead of depending on the prior existence of a system of concepts, expression now depends on the prior existence of a system of signs' (1981: 40). (4)

The relevance of these criticisms of semiotic analysis for Bateson's use of a cybernetic model is that this model constitutes what Culler refers to as 'the prior existence of a system of signs'. Bateson forgets that cultural existence is itself an intrinsic part of any feedback process, since humans acting in culture are at the same time agents of culture, instruments of communication and experiencing subjects. All cultural activity is inherently reflexive, and is thus involved in what can be described as "feedback loops" of one kind or another, but the important feature here - whatever theory of consciousness we wish to adduce - is that we are dealing with an arena of discourse rather than a delimited pre-existent structure which governs this activity. The activity is itself constitutive of the models which presuppose it and which make it possible. There is arguably no transcendent or immanent structure, composed of feedback loops or of anything else, outside the arena of discourse.

Bateson's use of the term 'caricature' is extremely illuminating, since it points to an ironic, dialectical perspective which in turn reminds us of the reflexive character of language. We thus require a hermeneutic, rather than a semiotic or a semantic, level of analysis. Hermeneutics concerns itself with the relations between different sentences within a text; this can also be seen, I suggest, as the domain of performance. But Bateson's epistemology prevents him from pursuing this domain. I will try to show in my Chapter Eleven below that more recent ritual analysts, such as Gilbert Lewis, have not pursued this avenue either.

In terms of sociological data, Bateson finds it difficult to demonstrate his thesis. He has to ask whether excessive symmetrical rivalry between the clans will increase the frequency with which lauas act symmetrically towards their waus, thus triggering exaggerated complementary naven behaviour on the part of the latter, and whether the resulting increase in the frequency of naven will contribute towards the stability of the society. He can provide no statistical data to demonstrate this. But he claims that there is a good case for making these claims, since the wau and laua involved in any one instance of naven usually belong to different clans. Any case of intense symmetrical rivalry between two clans will probably involve symmetrical insult between the respective clan members. When these members happen to be related to each other as wau and laua, then we can expect to see the performance of the complementary naven which will tend to restrain the potentially disruptive excess of symmetrical antagonism (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 290). We should note here that Bateson now wants to describe Iatmul culture only in terms of the system which he has delineated. The naven takes its place within a pre-established system, which is logically coherent and self-sufficient. There is no place within this system for any accidental, contingent cut-off points, rules or improvisations, which would be implied by the reflexivity of discourse or performance.

Bateson now asks whether there is also a 'functional relationship' in Iatmul society which restrains an excess of complementary schismogenesis by means of a symmetrical input. If his cybernetic model is to stand up, this must be the case. He claims that this can be seen in the following instances. First, the fact that any suggestion of passive male homosexuality is considered extremely insulting by the Iatmul, and that it immediately leads to brawling. Here, Bateson would claim that a potential instance of extreme complementary relationship between males is offset by assertive symmetrical behaviour. Again, the transvestite behaviour of the father's sister and the elder brother's wife in the naven can be seen as an expression of symmetrical rivalry vis-a-vis the men and as a compensation for the women's more usual

complementary relationship with the men. Here, too, we can see that the women act in this way at a time when a man, the wau, is expressing his complementarity towards the laua. Finally, Bateson mentions the fact that, among the men, the extreme complementarity of the relationship between initiators and novices is offset by extreme rivalry between the different initiatory groups. The symmetrical rivalry between the initiatory groups is seen by Bateson as a counterbalance against the complementary relationship between the initiators and the boys (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 290-291).

Again, this exegesis, with its cybernetic-mechanical bias, allows no room for the reflexivity and improvisation of individual performances. This could only be allowed into the picture by a more broadly semantic and hermeneutic, rather than a semiotic or cybernetic, approach. The model of equilibrium and disequilibrium which Bateson is constructing here does not allow for the use of caricature and irony, which he has just indicated is a crucial element in the naven. Bateson is in effect attempting to close down his analysis and restrict it to the confines of his cybernetic model, which he believes he has to do in order to justify his construction of the model in the first place. This closed, final analysis is required by a semiotic approach, whereas a performance view would allow for a wider, more open field of options, necessitated by the powerful relationship between subject and predicate and the reflexive use of tropes, or figures of speech, which semantic and hermeneutic analysis would allow for.

Bateson again confesses that it is impossible for him to give a sociological demonstration that these shifts from complementarity to symmetry effectively prevent social disintegration. But he claims that there is another aspect of such shifts which indicates that the oscillation from complementary to symmetrical behaviour, and vice versa, is very important in the society. He claims to have shown that Iatmul individuals recurrently experience such shifts, and participate in them.

'From this we may reasonably expect that these individuals learn, besides the symmetrical and complementary patterns,

to expect and exhibit sequential relations between the symmetrical and the complementary' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 291, author's emphasis).

Bateson would here be open to Quine's argument that experience is always under-determined by theory, or that, for any set of facts, there is always more than one possible interpretation (1960). A scientific view seeks predictability as the crucial additional criterion of theoretical validity. In the world of physical objects and of mechanics this is evidently an important consideration in choosing between theories; but in the realm of social life the notion of "predictability" is of doubtful relevance. Reality is not so powerful that it can determine what we think about it.

For Bateson, the notion of caricature is mechanical; it rests on a paradox in the naven role of the wau - i.e., the paradox between his "real" role as Iatmul man and his "assumed" role as Iatmul woman. Bateson does not open out his use of the notion of caricature to the full possibilities of ironic reflexivity which would require an investigation of discourse and of performance. This applies to all the other schismogenic interactions in Iatmul society which Bateson adduces in his analysis, although we can see the performance of what it is to be an Iatmul to be exemplified in the naven.

There is the additional point to be made, that schismogenesis as an explanatory device would not work so readily for societies which do not lay such exclusive value on individualism and competition. Presuppositions of self differ from culture to culture. In attempting to describe social practices, anthropologists need to look closer at the particular kinds of presuppositions as to the nature of "self", "person" and "individual" which are at work in the particular culture. We know this to be so from Bateson's own later writings; in one of his papers on Bali he admits that the schismogenic model of inter-action could not be applied to the Balinese, who prefer to maximise notions such as balance and etiquette (1973 (a) : 85-93). But schismogenesis reappears in the Balinese material written with Margaret Mead as an internal

tension within the Balinese individual (1942) and, later, as a model of disjunctive communication in the schizophrenic family and within the confused psyche of the schizophrenic (1973: (d)).

I would suggest that naven and other schismogenic performances influence each other and create each other. These creations - and re-creations - constitute Iatmul culture. There is no "essential", "standardised" Iatmul individual beneath these creations and re-creations. A performance view stresses that becoming and showing cannot be divorced one from the other, that they are mutually constitutive; it is about showing who you are and becoming who you are at the same time. In Chapter Eleven below I will refer to Sartre's famous portrait of the café waiter in Being and Nothingness in order to illustrate this dual nature of performance. Engaging in naven is an important part of what constitutes being an Iatmul wau. Naven and other practices are the contexts in which the Iatmul self is constituted in what Charles Taylor (1985) has called 'public space' (see Chapter Eleven pp. 261-265 below).

Bateson has adopted the strategy that most anthropologists have adopted in dealing with "ritual"; he asks what aspects of a given context, in this case that of the mother's brother-sister's son relationship, produce naven activity. In adopting this strategy he needs to adduce a system and then to eliminate any contradiction from the picture. This system is at first the kinship structure, then ethos, then schismogenesis and, finally, a system of cybernetic feedback loops. We see in this progression the continual oscillation in the development of Bateson's analysis from a system view to a context view, which I outlined earlier. His final statement in his 1936 Epilogue:

'Our unscientific knowledge of the diverse facts of human nature is prodigious, and only when this knowledge has been set in a scientific framework shall we be able to hope for new ideas and theories' (1936: 279)

is finally underwritten by the contents of his 1958 Epilogue, although the latter does end with a doubting caution about the difficulties posed by all this scientific endeavour:

'Certain mysteries are for formal reasons impenetrable, and here is the vast darkness of the subject' (1936: 1958 2nd edn:)

302).

The truth surely is that performative social activity is more flexible and subtle than can be allowed for by any "system". A good performance may be about many things and many aspects of social reality at once.

Bateson's strategy is also that of later commentators on his material such as Handelman, who also see contradictions as inherent in the wau-laua relationship which are then expressed in naven (1979). But the naven performance creates and highlights the relationship at the same time. Any one performance is a re-creation of previous performances; it is also, of course, a recreation. There is no reference in Bateson's analysis to the possibility of improvisation, nor how much this might be encouraged or frowned upon. Bateson ignores the crucial possibility that naven performances might be not so much strictly codified and set "ritual texts" as improvisations on a theme, the theme of what it is to be an Iatmul.

For Bateson, it is not only important to look at changes in a social network, and the effects of these changes on the individuals concerned, but we must also remember that the individuals in that network are themselves trained in some way to internalise the patterns of change, to initiate change and to adjust and respond to it. They are trained, that is, to 'deutero-learn' such patterns of change. So Bateson's cybernetic model refers not only to the social system regarded as a nexus of individuals but also to an internalised mechanism of adaptive, self-corrective change within each individual. But this model leads to a major problem for anthropologists.

'It is this fact - that the patterns of society as a major entity can by learning be introjected or conceptualized by the participant individuals, - that makes anthropology and indeed the whole of behavioural science peculiarly difficult. The scientist is not the only human being in the picture. His subjects are also capable of all sorts of learning and conceptualization and even, like the scientist, they are capable of errors of conceptualization' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 192).

This passage is important and illuminating for contemporary anthropologists in the debates about such topics as rationality and relativism, but it also highlights Bateson's epistemological prejudice that concepts explain action. For Bateson, there is always a bedrock of essential cognition which underlies behaviour; concepts are analytically prior to practice. It is this prejudice which prevents him from opening out his analysis of the naven as practice, that is as constitutive social action, or performance.

This prejudice is further demonstrated in the final section of his 1958 Epilogue, in which he discusses Russell's theory of logical types, and its application to the problem outlined in the above quotation. This discussion is important for an understanding of much of Bateson's later work since the 1930s, but a brief review must suffice here. Logical typing is closely associated with cybernetics in Bateson's thinking, in that for him it provides a way out of the blind alley of a certain kind of functional explanation; it does not, however, allow him to escape functionalist explanation per se.

Bateson's theoretical context here is composed of messages, parameters and hierarchies. It is the same context as that which he described in his earlier passage about orders of learning. Russell's central notion

'is the truism that a class cannot be a member of itself. The class of elephants has not got a trunk and is not an elephant' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 293).

The theory states that the class "elephant" is of a different order from actual elephants, and it is illustrated by means of the example of a self-corrective, thermostatically controlled heating system. This system can be divided into "variables" and "parameters", which control the variables. Here the variables consist of the range of temperatures around which the system oscillates, as set by the thermostat. But the thermostat settings can be changed by the householder; thus the parameters of the system can be altered at a higher order of operation than that of the variables. Changes in the parameters are of a higher order of operation than changes in the variables. As in the discussion of

orders of learning, Bateson states that we are here dealing with 'meta-relationships between messages' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 293). He continues:

'Any two orders of learning are related so that the learning of one order is a learning about the other, and similarly in the case of the house thermostat the message which the householder puts into the system by changing the setting is about how the system shall respond to messages of lower order emanating from the thermostat' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 293, author's emphases).

It is important to note that the example of feedback which Bateson adduces here is an extremely mechanical one. We should also ask what place caricature and irony, for example, could have in such a model; clearly, a thermostat cannot comment upon its own setting.

Bateson now relates learning theory and cybernetics to Russell's theory of logical types, which we can see as the essential bedrock, as a typology of typologies, for Bateson's epistemology as it developed in the 1940s and 1950s. Russell indicates a hierarchy of names, classes and classes of classes which are each logically discrete. This includes a hierarchy of messages, meta-messages and meta-meta-messages; what Bateson had earlier called "deutero-learning" might in this context be referred to as "meta-learning". Bateson claims that

'logical typing is an inevitable ingredient in the relationship between any describer and any system to be described' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 294).

The problem is one of levels of complexity in explanation. In his first Epilogue, Bateson had claimed that ethos and eidos are only alternative ways of presenting the data. He believes now that this is only another way of saying that they are generalizations of the same order, or logical type. The fact that these two kinds of description exist as formulated by Bateson, however, does not imply that the system itself possesses such dual complexity. But one duality certainly does exist here, namely that obtaining between any observation of behaviour and any generalization abstracted from that observation. This, according to Bateson, reflects

'the dual fact of learning and learning to learn. A step in Russellian typology inherent in the system is represented by

a corresponding step in the description' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: (296-297)).

A further important reflection of logical typing is marked by the concept of schismogenesis. This is seen as being of a higher order, or logical type, than ethos and eidos, since it refers to change within the system. The use of the concept of schismogenesis allows us to see that Iatmul society contains an extra order of complexity which is brought about by the combination of learning and the inter-action of persons.

'The schismogenic unit is a two-person subsystem. This subsystem contains the potentialities of a cybernetic circuit which might go into progressive change; it cannot, therefore, be conceptually ignored and must be described in a language of higher type than any language used to describe individual behaviour - the latter category of phenomena being only the events in one or another arc of the schismogenic system' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 297).

In other words, Bateson is claiming that the use of the concept of schismogenesis enabled him to add a diachronic dimension to what had previously been a purely synchronic picture of Iatmul society. Statements about change, he says, will always be in a language one degree more abstract than the language which would be sufficient to describe the system in a steady state.

'As statements about acceleration must always be of higher logical type than statements about velocity, so also statements about cultural change must be of higher type than synchronic statements about culture. This rule will apply throughout the field of learning and evolution' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 298).

Here, in a few sentences, is the theoretical basis for Bateson's models of play, creativity and schizophrenia which he was outlining at the same time as he was writing this second Epilogue to his major work, first published over twenty years before.

The problem here is that Bateson is treating change as problematic, with an unproblematic stasis lying underneath it. This reads like an apology for much functionalist anthropology, which regarded continuity as welded to an essential cultural bedrock within which cultural and social change had little place. Ethos and eidos are illuminating and innovatory formulations, but they still require

human beings as instruments of culture, rather than as active agents interacting in a meaningful reflexive social nexus. Ethos and eidos are the "blunt instruments" exercised by an immanent culture which determines human action.

A performance perspective, on the other hand, can treat stasis and change as two elements in a continuity which negotiates between past, present and future perspectives. Surely a "steady state" is as much in need of explanation as a state of "change". The question is, how is it possible for human beings to often create and re-create culture and maintain the appearance of stasis? How is continuity in performance maintained? Under what circumstances does change take place? And, perhaps the most interesting question of all, how do particular cultures determine and define the difference between stasis and change? I would suggest that we can summarise these questions by asking, what are the possibilities generated in any one field of performance?

NOTES to Chapter Ten

- (1) Russell's Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus is listed by Bateson in his Bibliography to his 1958 Epilogue (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 302-303), but there is no reference to Wittgenstein himself in Bateson's text.
- (2) In this important paper Gellner attacks the influential Wittgensteinian notion that meaning equals use (1979: 45). The ramifications of Gellner's critique of, for example, Leach and Evans-Pritchard from this perspective is beyond the scope of my present argument.
- (3) There has been much recent discussion in the literature on this important issue, for example by Rosaldo (1985) and Lutz (1985). Rosaldo questions whether our conceptualisation of anger is relevant for the Ilongots of the Philippines, while Lutz delineates indigenous categories of emotion for the Ifaluk of the Pacific Islands and suggests that Western categories do not apply to Ifaluk notions of affect.
- (4) It is interesting to note that in his later work, Bateson often insists on a definition of "mind" as a realm inhabited exclusively by difference. See, e.g., his paper 'Form, Substance and Difference': 'I suggest to you...that the word "idea", in its most elementary sense, is synonymous with "difference" (1973 (e) 427). De Saussure, of course, defined language in exactly the same terms. I have, however, been unable to find any reference to de Saussure in Bateson's works. This topic arises again, briefly, in Chapter Twelve, pp. 287-288 below.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: DECONSTRUCTION VERSUS DRAMATISM

Needham, Wittgenstein, Lewis

IT CAN BE argued that the history of attempts to criticise traditional categories in British social anthropology began with Leach's famous critique of 'butterfly collecting' (1961). In that paper Leach wanted to draw attention to the sterility engendered by an obsession with the formulation of analytical categories in kinship studies. Leach's insight here was taken up by Needham in his Introduction to Rethinking Kinship and Marriage (1971). One of the achievements of Needham in this essay was to present for the first time a statement by a British anthropologist as to the importance of the explication of the philosophical assumptions which are implicit in the theory and practice of anthropology. Needham writes:

'A strenuous inner effort is called for, and an austere self-criticism that not all can be expected to find congenial' (1971: xvii).

A slight change in viewpoint, warns Needham, is not enough, for

'it is difficult to deviate from an old line of thought just a little' (Wittgenstein, 1967, quoted by Needham, 1973: xvii, author's emphasis).

Needham's use of Wittgenstein here points towards the former's 1972 study in the phenomenology of belief. This is an articulate attempt at a radical critique of what has always been one of the most basic categories in anthropological analysis, particularly in analyses of ritual (1972).

Needham's basic question is this: is belief a universal category of experience? Can we truly say that people in all societies have beliefs, or is the importance given to this notion a construct of Western thought? In one section, Needham asks what criteria we can adduce for the state of "belief" in another person. He argues that there are no outward criteria, and he quotes Wittgenstein's comments on how one would display an inward state of fear:

'What is fear? What does "being afraid" mean? If I wanted to explain it at a single showing - I should play-act fear. Could

I also represent hope in this way? Hardly. And what about belief?' (Wittgenstein, 1953, quoted by Needham, 1972: 102, author's emphases).

Needham replies in the negative. We cannot, he says, play-act belief.

'there is no facial expression, either natural or (so far as I know) conventional, which can be put on for this purpose, and there is no bodily act which can be taken as a sure and distinctive sign of believing' (1972: 102).

A further quote from Wittgenstein underlines the difficulty:

'Suppose someone were a believer and said: "I believe in a Last Judgement", and I said: "Well, I'm not so sure. Possibly." You would say that there is an enormous gulf between us. If he said "There is a German aeroplane overhead", and I said "Possibly. I'm not so sure", you'd say we were fairly near. It isn't a question of my being anywhere near him, but on an entirely different plane' (Wittgenstein, 1966, quoted by Needham, 1972: 73).

Needham argues that belief has been such an important subject of anthropological investigation because of our powerful prejudice in favour of a cognitive account of experience. It can be argued that this can be seen particularly in anthropological discussions about ritual. The most notable recent ethnography to examine this prejudice is Gilbert Lewis' account of initiation rites among the Gnau, a people who are close neighbours of the Iatmul, living in the West Sepik Province of New Guinea.

For Lewis, a notable feature of ritual is that 'it is practical. It guides action' (1980: 11). But reasons and motivations are another matter.

'Guidance on what to do is explicit, but the reason for doing it, the meaning, motive or interpretations of the action may not be. The explanations for what is done may be clear, or complicated or uncertain, or multiple, or forgotten; but what to do is known' (Lewis, 1980: 11). (1)

Motivation proved a prime riddle for Lewis in his attempt to come to grips with the Gnau initiation rites. His investigations centred around a Gnau penis-bleeding rite. At certain times Gnau males remove themselves from the company of women and cut their

penises to make them bleed. The first time this is done is at puberty; on this occasion the bleeding is carried out by an older man. Other reports on similiar rites from the same area, by Mead on the Mountain Arapesh and by Hogbin on the people of the island of Wogeo, had stated that indigenious explanations had equated male penis-bleeding with female menstruation. But when Lewis asked the Gnau for their explanation, they told him that this was not so. His problem was

'what significance to attach to the finding that Gnau men did not equate their similar practices of penis-bleeding with menstruation, while some other peoples in the area, or at least their ethnographers, did so equate it' (1980: 2).

Other ethnographic reports from various other Sepik societies stated reasons for customs shared by the Gnau which concentrated on tradition and the teaching of the forefathers. The Gnau also practised bleeding from the mouth in another male initiation rite. For the Gnau, reports Lewis, this was aimed at making them fierce, 'teethed men'. This is a practice they share with other Sepik societies such as the Kwoma, Wogeo and the Iatmul. Hogbin had reported that his informants had explicitly stated that tongue-bleeding, carried out on the young men at puberty, is to be equated with a pubescent girl's first menstruation. Hogbin had written that this tongue-bleeding is

'in a sense a youth's first artificial menstruation, corresponding with the initial menstruation of a pubescent girl. The tongue is selected for the bleeding because hitherto he will have absorbed the worst of the pollution orally with mother's milk...In a few years, when he is sufficiently mature for sexual intercourse, the penis will be the agent whereby contamination is transferred. Accordingly in later life this is the organ that receives menstrual treatment' (Hogbin, 1970, quoted by Lewis, 1980: 3-4).

Another puzzle for Lewis was the interdiction the Gnau place on the use of lime by women and young men when chewing areca nut. If lime is mixed with areca nut when chewed, the betel juice turns bright red. Just as the Gnau said that mouth bleeding turned young men into fierce "teethed men", so they told Lewis that to chew lime with betel juice was the privilege of grown men. If young men so indulged, it would interfere with their prowess as hunters. As for

the women, they

'chewed areca nut with ash as the young men did, until their reproductive life was over and they had grandchildren, when the women too were allowed to chew with lime and spit bright red' (1980: 3).

Lewis writes that he was told that this was so because of custom and privilege.

'Privilege, scarce lime and selfish pleasure seemed adequate to explain the rules which favoured senior men without looking for some recondite symbolic explanation' (1980: 3).

What did seem certain was that the Gnau did use similes which implied a parallel between mouth and vulva, and that Gnau society generally is permeated with taboos concerned with blood.

Lewis shows that it would be quite easy for him to put all this data together, 'to play with logic of a kind', for the anthropologist can be tempted to

'select what will fit, rather to remark what would not fit if one were as ingenious as a sceptic finding evidence to contradict the proposed system'.

But if we avoid this temptation, we then have to ask

'what use it is to suggest, by comparison within an area, possible or perhaps tendentious links of this sort; to find them where the people concerned ignore them, do not know them' (1980: 4).

One of Lewis' central arguments is that 'expression is not the same as communication' (1980: 1). When we think of communication, we immediately think that some form of clarity is implied. The problem with thinking about ritual as a form of communication is that the anthropologist feels himself to be crucially involved in the search for such specific clarity as he attempts to "interpret" the ritual. But

'people may express things unaware that they do so; they may express through actions things that they find hard to put into words' (1980: 18).

Or things

'are sometimes expressed in complex ways because it is the only way or the best way they can be expressed. There is no way except through music for some to express certain things; we

cannot put a perfume into words' (1980: 24).

Or, and here the earlier quote from Wittgenstein on play-acting seems apt:

'The ritual act is not necessarily a symptom of the performer's mental state' (1980: 26).

It would have been interesting if Lewis had explored the implications of the term "expression" here, e.g. how does something "express"? The notion that ritual activity expresses an underlying reality (albeit in a complex, subtle and multivalent way) runs deep in the history of social anthropology, and a critique of this assumption is an important theme of my own analysis of Bateson's description of the naven, and of the strategies which I would group together under the rubric of what I call an anthropology of performance.

Throughout his book Lewis argues against the identification of expressive and representational properties in phenomena which anthropologists, and others, regard as "symbolic". Much of what he says here echoes Sperber's attack on semiotic models of symbolism, models whose defenders maintain that symbols "mean" something in the same way that words "mean" something. Symbols thus viewed must not only be translated; they must also be optionally motivated. The anthropologist's task is not finished when he produces an "interpretation" of a symbol. The interpretation does not constitute an explanation. It is the interpretation itself which must be explained; and this explanation is, invariably, an optional one (Sperber, 1975).

A powerful point made by Lewis is that the notion of ritual as communication often carries the implication that

'the "author" is society or culture and is "communicating" with its present members' (1980: 34).

Such would be the view of, for example, Geertz and Turner. But, Lewis comments, such a view sounds absurd and, at any rate, certainly cannot account for much of what appears to happen in the ritual context, as

'for those who perform it, the ritual is more clearly something practical providing guidance on how to cope with some particular situation of difficulty or importance, and it is correspondingly valued. The ritual offers a contrived and complex experience' (1980: 34-35).

Lewis suggests that a clue to the nature of the kind of experience which ritual might often (but not, by any means, always) provide is to be found in Bruner's notion of "gating" and "ungating" as used by Gombrich (1965). This notion presents a picture of what might be called "symbolic experience" quite different from the kind of specific reference model criticised by Sperber. A spectator or participant in a performance finds that his attention is deflected from ordinary logical thought through some echo of meaning in the sequence, or by some complex of associations thrown up as a result of the sequence.

'By the device of making certain things in ritual the objects of peculiar attention, the spectator is prompted to speculate, he is invited to "ungate" the way he sees some object so that he is free to look for further and further echoes to its sense. And this also contributes to that feeling of meanings richer but less precise than those to be talked of clearly which some have said is the hallmark of the "true" symbol' (1980: 31).

But Lewis adds that we are not free to assume

'that everything occurring in ritual aims at mystery and has many meanings. The style in ritual may tend towards clarity, overt meaning and lack of ambiguity; or for certain purposes aim to disconnect, confuse or fascinate' (1980: 31).

Lewis' reference to the importance of style emphasises his argument that

'a recognition of the genre or style in ritual is intrinsic to its proper understanding' (1980: 24).

This is, again, linked with the fact that the expressive qualities of ritual might be lost in an analysis which stresses communication in a semiotic sense. So

'a minute description of observed ritual limited to the properties it presented and excluding any element of expression recognised would be something parallel to the minute description of a canvas as the concatenation of particular oily pigments in different-sized patches on a flat surface, when that canvas was a painting in perspective of a landscape. But it is hard

to see it so flat and meaningless, as it is almost impossible to hear the words of our language as pure sound. The "facts" can not be simply or sharply separated from their interpretation, nor description kept "pure" and unaccompanied by recognition' (1980: 25).

How, then, are we to approach ritual? For Lewis, the essential problem is that 'ritual is hard to define just as art is' (1980: 9). This is not to say that we should equate ritual with art, although Lewis would agree that many ritual products can be so equated. What he seems to be saying here is that the problems of description, analysis and interpretation are similar in both fields:

'We are sometimes uncertain how to distinguish a ritual act from a technique or a game; and we are sometimes uncertain how to separate an art from a craft or an amusement. So we may choose to say there is a ritual aspect to many actions; and we may choose to see artistry in many artefacts' (1980: 9).

But where does one end and the other begin? What are our criteria here?

The problem lies in the mind of the anthropologist quite as much, if not more, than in the minds of the people he is studying for 'meaning is present not in things but in people's minds' (1980: 222). (2) If the anthropologist is set on finding meanings, he will find them. But Lewis argues that

'we require positive grounds before we assume that we need to look for a symbolism or expression that is not apparent or explicit in the minds of the actors or in the reasons that they give for what they do...What seems strange to an outsider, and appeals to him for further examination, must be measured against his habits and experience. If we depend on what preoccupies him, or on what is evoked in his mind, we depend on something that may differ greatly from the responses of the people he set out to study' (1980: 220).

What the anthropologist should examine in ritual are

'conventions of performance, the intensity of the demand to follow a set pattern, the rules governing participation... The people's customs may be linked to their values as practice is to theory' (1980: 220).

Lewis writes here about 'genres of custom', which can be distinguished by paying attention to what the ritual addresses, and the

mode or modes of that address.

Lewis argues that meaning can never be divorced from people's understanding, and this will often appear confused to the outsider, for

'it is a matter of empirical observation that people may give varied interpretations of the meaning of their actions; or may be uncertain about them, or say they cannot find one' (1980: 221).

But many anthropologists have been intent on attempting to show that rituals or symbols

'have a meaning in themselves objectively present, sometimes even a single correct meaning, waiting there to be detected' (1980: 221).

So, we often find ourselves presented with interpretative analyses which provide "meanings" supplied by the anthropologist, rather than by his subjects. The anthropologist is, necessarily, always a stranger and, if he finds something which appears to contrast markedly with his own world, he may, mistakenly, conclude

'that the feature which arrests him is something that the other culture also pays special attention to' (1980: 223).

Lewis argues that too many anthropologists are driven by

'a desire to find an intellectual or cognitive component in everything that people do at the expense or neglect of the emotional, expressive and functional components' (1980: 222).

Lewis uses the term "functional" here in a particular sense. If we stress the representational aspects of ritual rather than the expressive, so confining our investigations within a specific field of possible "meanings", we will necessarily privilege representation as meaning over creation as action. Lewis takes a lead from Gombrich (1960, 1963) in suggesting that in ritual, as in art,

'making comes before matching, that creating or doing comes before imitating' (1980: 116).

In the West we have become used to the idea of representation as an 'imitation of external forms', whereas another important sense in which we might use the notion of representation is connected

with the use of substitutes.

'Objects, actions and images may represent in the sense of serving as substitutes rather than by imitating the external form of something else. The piece of wood may serve the gull as a substitute for an egg; the baby's thumb, as substitute for the mother's breast; the idol, as substitute for a god...' (1980: 116),

and so on. Here, the common denominator between object or action and the substitute is function, not form. The baby sucks its thumb not because the thumb represents the breast, but because the former is an adequate substitute for the latter. Gombrich used the child's creation of a hobby horse from a stick to illustrate the point. The stick-as-hobby-horse does not look like a horse nor, initially at any rate, does it have to; what is important for the child is that it can be used in the same way as a horse.

'It may be just a stick to ride on. The common factor is that it is rideable. To turn the stick into a hobby horse, the stick must have a form just possible to ride, and the child must want to ride' (1980: 117).

Once the stick becomes a focus for the child's fantasy, it can be used and, in fact,

'the greater his wish to ride, the fewer may be the features that will do for a horse' (1980: 117).

Later, the child might want to make the stick look more like a horse, but the creation of the stick-as-horse necessarily precedes the representation of a more life-like horse. So

'substitution may precede portrayal, creation may precede communication, making may precede matching' (1980: 117).

What is important for Lewis about substitutes or symbols, is their 'ability to release a response', not necessarily what they "mean". Efficacy here lies in

'a combination of their intrinsic attributes, the context in which they are set and the power of expectation (the mental set, arousal and readiness to respond) on the part of the animal or person who perceives them' (1980: 116).

If we keep this picture of efficacy in mind, Lewis asks, might it not lead us to question whether attempts to analyse ritual in terms of 'symbol, metaphor and communication' are headed in the

right direction?

'To the extent that we seek to find imitations of nature or symbols of other things, the communication of meanings, may we not misconceive the nature of ritual?' (1980: 116).

I would suggest that Lewis' use of Gombrich's aesthetics of "making" limits his perspective on the expressive nature of ritual and, in particular, prevents him from considering the "tropic" possibilities - i.e., those indicated by the power of figures of speech - of ritual activity, or the sense in which ritual might constitute ways of talking about things; I have made parallel suggestions concerning Bateson's analysis of the naven.

As a footnote to Lewis' commentary on his Gnao ethnography, I would add some observations made on a different kind of performance; they come from John Miller Chernoff in his recent study of African drumming. Chernoff writes:

'With our Western notions of "meaning" as being a special kind of knowledge, we must be cautioned against assuming that African music functions primarily on such a level and that we fail to understand the music because we lack knowledge of the details of the music's symbolic meaning' (1979: 124).

A performance by a group of African drummers provides a 'context of multiple rhythms' which allow people to

'distinguish themselves from each other while they remain dynamically related...The music works more by encouraging social inter-action and participation at each performance than by affirming a fixed set of sanctioned conceptions or beliefs' (1979: 125).

Here, participation, its manner, intensity and style, is more important than any particular set of "meanings".

Dramatism: Victor Turner

In his study of the Gnao, Lewis suggests that although the model of ritual as communication might have some value, we would do better to regard it as a performance,

'like a play, which is responded to in various ways: communication is only a part of it' (1980: 8).

A play is

'a contrivance of great complexity in which the most varied stimuli work on us to produce or spark off a complex response' (1980: 33).

Following Mounin, Lewis suggests that our response to a play and to a ritual is more like a response to stimulation, rather than communication. This applies to both performers and spectators, but in different ways. Lewis writes:

'We interpret a ritual or the performance of a play rather in the way we interpret an event at which we are present or in which we take part: we do not "read" the event as we experience it or as we reflect on it; we do not "decode" it to make sense of it or understand it. We are affected by it' (1980: 34).

Lewis' suggestion that we might compare ritual and theatre leads me into a consideration of the approach to ritual analysis I refer to as "dramatism", with particular reference to the works of Victor Turner and Richard Schechner. I would, however, regard Lewis' approach as sceptical, rather than as dramatic. This is because Lewis is inherently critical of the notion of ritual, in a way which is not true of either Turner or Schechner. I would suggest that much of the work I have previously referred to by such writers as Leach, Needham and Lewis points the way towards the possibility of a deconstruction of the anthropological category of "ritual".

Before considering dramatism, I would like to interpose some comments by Susan Sontag in an essay which criticises the assumptions running through the history of Western aesthetics. Plato and Aristotle, she writes, introduced the notion that art is essentially mimetic, or representational. For Plato, indeed, art was a lie. This extremely powerful formulation has resulted in the necessity to regard art as problematic and in need of defence, and defence of a particular kind. Form has been separated off from content; while the form has been regarded as contingent, content has been regarded as necessary, inherently significant but always mysterious and in need of interpretation (1961). Interpretation, writes Sontag, is

'a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain "rules" of interpretation...The task of interpretation

is virtually one of translation. The interpreter says, Look, don't you see that X is really - or, really means - A? That Y is really B? That Z is really C?' (1961: 5).

Sontag then makes the claim, which in another school of thought has been made more recently by Jacques Derrida and others, that:

'Interpretation is a radical strategy for conserving an old text, which is thought too precious to repudiate it, by revamping it. The interpreter, without actually erasing or rewriting the text, is altering it. But he can't admit to doing this. He claims to be only making it intelligible, by disclosing its true meaning. However far interpreters alter the text...they must claim to be reading off a sense that is already there' (1961: 6, author's emphasis).

Lewis' suggestion that ritual should be seen as an exercise in stimulation rather than communication comes to mind when Sontag writes:

'Real art has the capacity to make us nervous. By reducing the work of art to its content and then interpreting that, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art managable, conformable' (1961: 8, author's emphasis).

Thus:

'interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art. Even more. It is the revenge of the intellect upon the world. To interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world - in order to set up a shadow world of "meanings" ' (1961: 7).

Of the work of Victor Turner, Sontag could have written that dramatism is the revenge of some anthropologists upon ritual and upon theatre. By "dramatism" I mean the corpus of works produced in order to substantiate the claim made by Turner and other anthropologists of his school, as well as by many contemporary theatre practitioners such as Richard Schechner - and, perhaps, Peter Brook - that ritual and theatre should be approached as subdivisions of a greater whole and that each category can be seen as interpenetrating the other.

There are two important strands in the theoretical development of Turner's work. The first is the elaboration of an explicit ~~psycho~~-dynamic model of social interaction which places "ritual

dramas" or "social dramas" at its centre. The second is his particular style of symbolic analysis. The latter has been thoroughly criticised by Sperber (1975). I will concentrate on the former. In his earlier works, Turner developed a particular brand of Radcliffe-Brownian functionalism by a shift of concern in his analysis of Ndembu ritual from the maintenance of social order to the re-establishment of social relationships which have become disturbed through inter-personal tensions (Turner: 1957, 1968).

The "cults of affliction" which occupy Turner in the earlier works are seen as attempts, often successful, to overcome the perennial conflict which, according to Turner, exists in Ndembu society between the principles of matrilineal descent and virilocal marriage. In Turner's reading of the situation, these two principles are contradictory and are constantly giving rise to both antagonisms between different sets of kin and affines, and to internal problems within the psyches of individuals. The latter cases of individual pathology are viewed by Turner as expressive of the former inter-group and inter-personal conflicts which, in the absence of any overall politico-jural authority in the village-based Ndembu social structure, have to be handled at the local level by the people themselves. The "cults of affliction" constitute the Ndembu solution to the problems experienced within and between these small inter-related village communities (1957, 1968).

Emotional disturbances are dealt with by the curing rites, during which the patient is inducted into one of the many cults. He is presumed to be possessed by the shade of an ancestor; it is the diviner's task to discover the identity of the shade, and thereby locate the cause of the problem. The curing rite is attended by all the individuals who may be related to the sufferer either by kinship, affinity or residence, or by a combination of these. Turner claims that the rites achieve their efficacy by re-establishing social harmony not through an emphasis on political symbols, but by invoking cohesive principles which are adhered to by all Ndembu, principles such as the fertility of crops and women and the ideal of matriliney (1957, 1968).

The Ndembu rites are an example of what Turner calls "social

dramas". This term is indicative of the theme he developed later, in his elaboration of Gluckman's thesis of ritual inversion, namely the dual model of civitas and communitas (1969). Here Turner uses the "social drama" model to investigate such "anti-structural" movements as Christian free-thinking groups and the utopian ideals of the hippies. "Structure" and "anti-structure" are mediated by a "social drama" which effects a transition from one to the other. The development is seen as cyclical; the wheel, whether Turner is writing about the Ndembu villager or the Western bohemian, always returns once again to "structure". "Civitas" always seems to win the game.

The ultimate elaboration of the social drama model is a comprehensive dramatisitic theory about all ritual and, indeed, all social interaction. Turner's explication of this theory is to be found in his last book, From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play (1982). He outlines the phases in the social drama; first, a breach in social relationships within a community, second a state of crisis resulting for the members of the community, and third the redressive means taken to heal the breach and resolve the crisis. There are two possible outcomes. There might be a reconciliation of the conflicting parties or, if this is not considered possible, a consensual recognition of irremediable breach, after which the parties separate (1982: 68-71). For Turner, one of the important aspects of social dramas is that they 'suspend normal everyday role playing' (1982: 92) so that they

'interrrupt the flow of social life and force a group to take cognizance of its own behaviour in relation to its own values, even to question at times the values of those values...(Thus) ...dramas induce and contain reflexive processes and generate cultural frames in which reflexivity can find a legitimate place' (1982: 92, my parenthesis).

Remarking that his adumbration of the social drama corresponds closely to Aristotle's description of tragedy -

'in that it is "the imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude...having a beginning, a middle and an end" ' (1982: 72) -
Turner writes that this is not because he has tried to

'impose an etic Western model of stage action upon the conduct of an African village society, but because there is an inter-dependent, perhaps dialectic, relationship between social dramas and genres of cultural performance in perhaps all societies' (1982: 72).

Turner goes on to write that the social drama is

'the experiential matrix from which the many genres of cultural performance, beginning with redressive ritual and juridical procedures, and eventually including oral and literary narrative, have been generated' (1982: 78)

But these later elaborations always and everywhere contain the same elements, namely the content of breach, crisis and reintegrative or divisive outcomes together with the form of redressive procedures. In more complex societies we find more complex examples of the division of labour.

'The social drama remains humankind's thorny problem...At the same time it is our native way of manifesting ourselves to ourselves, and of declaring where power and meaning lie and how they are distributed' (1982: 78).

I would suggest that a comparison of Turner's model of social drama with Girard's notion of mimetic rivalry and Bateson's formulation of schismogenesis would be helpful in evaluating the possibility, or even the desirability, of attempting to delineate a universal theory of any kind of social action, be it in terms of "ritual", "drama", "performance" or any other category. For let us not forget that these are Western categories. There are of course many parallels between the three formulations listed, but all I would say here is that each of them arises from a particular area of ethnographic or - in Girard's case, literary and philosophical - investigation. For Turner, it is the Ndembu villager, for Bateson it is the locus of gender role differentiation among the Iatmul, and for Girard it is a particular reading of literary, mythical and psycho-analytical texts. We can also read Geertz's picture of the Balinese "theatre state" as the product of a particular ethnographic analysis informed by a particular style of hermeneutic interpretation.

For Turner, the redressive action in the social drama involves reflexivity, whether the redress is sought through ritual or through

juridical means and, apparently, whether or not it is successful.
The term "reflexivity" denotes

'the ways in which a group tries to scrutinize, portray, understand and then act on itself' (1982: 75).

Referring to Dilthey, Turner claims that

'it is only the category of meaning...that enables us to conceive of an intrinsic affinity between the successive events of life, or, one might add, of a social drama. In the redressive phase the meaning of the social drama informs the apprehension of itself, while the object to be apprehended enters into and reshapes the apprehending subject' (1982: 75-76). (3)

It is Turner's contention that the development of the social drama in advanced industrial societies has been marked by a shift from what he calls "liminal" to "liminoid" activity. This is because modern industry has produced a clear division between work and leisure. The notion of the liminal social drama is taken from van Gennep's map of rites des passage, combined with Huizinga's picture of "homo ludens" and the importance of play in human culture. For Turner, pre-industrial communal ritual is at once liminal and ludic because it involves the whole self and the whole community in the dramatic play of ritual performance.

'The whole community goes through the entire ritual round, whether in terms of total or representative participation. Thus, some rites, such as those of sowing, first fruits, or harvest, may involve everyone, man, woman, and child, others may be focused on specific groups, categories, associations, etc., such as men or women, old or young, one clan or another, one association or secret society or another. Yet the whole ritual round adds up to the total participation of the whole community. Sooner or later, no one is exempt from ritual duty, just as no one is exempt from economic, legal, or political duty' (1982: 31, author's emphasis).

But this, claims Turner, is not "work" as we in the industrial world regard it; ritual always contains a strong element of "play".

'Liminality, the seclusion period, is a phase peculiarly conducive to such "ludic" invention' (1982: 31-32).

The ludic elements in ritual drama can include

'joking relationships, sacred games, such as the ball games of the ancient Maya and modern Cherokee, riddles, mock-ordeals,

holy fooling, and clowning, Trickster tales told in liminal times and places, in or out of ritual contexts, and hosts of other types' (1982: 32).

Turner's point is that even these "play" or "ludic" elements are always crucially involved with the "work" at hand, that is,

'the "work" of the collectivity in performing symbolic actions and manipulating symbolic objects so as to promote and increase fertility of men, crops, and animals, domestic and wild, to cure illness, to avert plague, to obtain success in raiding, to turn boys into men and girls into women...' (1982: 32).

I would suggest that Turner here essentializes the notions of "work" and "play" - together with the binary opposition which immediately arises between them - on the basis of etic, Western categories. The problem is that he does not question his own use of these categories; it is a similar problem to that connected with Bateson's model of "play", which I consider briefly in my Chapter Twelve below.

Turner compares and contrasts liminal-ludic ritual with the 'liminoid-ergic' social dramas which have developed in the wake of the division of labour in industrial societies. "Liminoid" refers to activities which are similar to, but not identical with, liminal activities; the essential difference is that the liminoid domain is the product of the division between work and leisure in industrial society. Liminoid denotes the "privileged areas" which are set apart in our society for "leisure", in a wide sense of the term. Thus, Turner includes universities and colleges within the liminoid domain, as well as all work in experimental and political science (1982: 53-55). Turner writes:

'Liminoid phenomena develop apart from the central economic and political processes, along the margins, in the interfaces and interstices of central and servicing institutions - they are plural, fragmentary, and experimental in character' (1982: 54).

I would question Turner's placing of the "liminoid" at a remove from 'central economic and political processes', since the political arena of Western industrial societies contains much which would be defined as "liminoid" in his sense. How does the fact that the previous President of the United States was an actor fit here?

Is media coverage of the 'central economic and political processes' part of the liminoid domain? Are there not situations in which people speak of Parliament as, in some sense, a form of theatre? One might add criminal trials and so on. Surely, too, "show business" is as much a part of the 'central' economic processes as any other kind of business? And where do advertising and public relations, so crucial to our economics, fit into Turner's categories?

The "ergic" half of Turner's neologism pertains to the work/leisure division in contemporary industrialised society which makes liminoid activity possible. With the rise of the work ethic comes the need to turn "play" itself into a kind of "work". Not only do we divide our time between work and leisure, we also pay specialists to work at playing. Here, Turner's categories become ever more confusing. According to Turner, the industrial situation gives rise to

'the genres of industrial leisure, the theatre; poetry, novel, ballet, film, sport, rock music, classical music, art, pop art ...' (1982: 40).

In this context, Turner claims,

'the former integrity of the orchestrated religious gestalt that once constituted ritual'

has been 'burst open' by

'industrialisation, urbanisation, spreading literacy, labour migration, specialisation, professionalisation, bureaucracy'

and

'the division of the leisure sphere from the work sphere by the firm's clock' (1982: 85).

Turner quotes Geertz in support of his dramatisic approach, in contrast to Kenneth Burke, in whose writings drama is seen as persuasion. In Burke's symbolic action framework, theatre is allied with rhetoric. Geertz has, however, criticised Turner for concentrating too much on 'the general movement of things' while neglecting the cultural uniqueness of individual symbolic systems. Geertz proposes that this can be remedied only by a shift from a dramatisic to a textual analogy which in Geertz's words attends to

'how the inscription of action is brought about, what its vehicles are and how they work, and on what the fixation of meaning from the flow of events - history from what happened, thought from thinking, culture from behaviour - implies for sociological interpretation. To see social institutions, social customs, social changes as in some sense "readable" is to alter our whole sense of what such interpretation is towards modes of thought rather more familiar to the translator, the exegete, or the iconographer than to the test giver, the factor analyst, or the pollster' (Geertz 1980 (a), quoted by Turner 1982: 107. author's emphasis).

Turner answers Geertz by saying that he himself has often treated ritual and juridical systems of the Ndembu as textual material, but that he had 'tried to locate these texts in context of performance' (1982: 107, author's emphasis).

For Turner, the division and apparent contradiction between the dramatic and the textual approaches can be resolved if we see the relationship between the two modes of acting, in "real life" and "on stage" as

'components of a dynamic system of interdependence between social dramas and cultural performances' (1982: 107).

In Turner's formulation it would appear that there is some kind of evolutionary development from "social drama" towards "cultural performance", which is another way of saying that there is an evolutionary development from ritual to theatre. The difference in the kind of role played in each case would seem to be tied to the opposition between ritual-holistic and cultural performance-theatre-diversified. The advanced societies have diversified the social dramatic form (into different genres of cultural performance) and, in the process, the kind of role-playing involved has changed drastically. This is because

'in the simpler preindustrial societies, acting a role and exemplifying a status was so much a part of everyday life that the ritual playing of a role, even if it was a different role from that played in mundane life, was of the same kind as one played as son, daughter, headman, shaman, mother, chief, or Queen-sister. The difference between ordinary and ritual (or extraordinary) life, was mainly a matter of framing and quantity, not of quality' (1982: 115, author's emphasis).

Turner contrasts this with what has happened in our own culture.

'Against this symmetry between everyday life and its liminal double, ritual, we find the asymmetry of "life" vis-a-vis "acting" in post-Renaissance, pre-totalitarian Western societies' (1982: 115).

In our modern forms of entertainment, there has been a parallel split between the "persona" who works and the "individual" who is allowed to play. Turner seems to be claiming that whereas the persona of the modern Westernised self is concerned with the "real world" epitomised by "work", the individual is that part of the self which can indulge in the liminoid indulgences of entertainment and fantasy. Turner writes:

'the former (persona) is governed by economic necessity, the latter (individual) is "entertained"; the former is in the indicative mood of culture; the latter in the subjunctive or optative moods, the moods of feeling and desire, as opposed to those cognitive attitudes which stress rational choice, full (if reluctant) acceptance of cause-and-effect, repudiation of mystical participation or magical affinities, calculation of probable outcomes of action, and awareness of realistic limitation on action' (1982: 115, author's parenthesis).

It would perhaps be instructive to consider whether, bearing in mind the Durkheimian binaries pulsating away in the above passage and also recalling Turner's placing of the university within the "liminoid" domain, the anthropologist is to be considered as "persona" or as "individual", as "ludic" or "ergic", as "liminal" or "liminoid"?

Turner maintains that in the theatre we can still see a 'means of communication with invisible powers and ultimate reality' despite the fact that theatre in the West has abandoned its former ritualistic nature. Theatre, particularly in the wake of depth psychology, can claim

'that it represents the reality behind the role-playing masks, that even its masks, so to speak, are "negations of the negation". They present the false face in order to portray the possibility of a true face' (1982: 115).

I shall attempt to show in Chapter Twelve below that this view of theatre might be an accurate portrayal of the classic - Stanislavskian - contemporary Western model of theatre, but that this is

only one among many possible views. Writers as diverse as Artaud and Baudrillard, for example, might offer very different accounts of what "theatre" is, or what it might possibly be under certain circumstances. For the moment, however, I will refer to the critic Jan Kott. In this passage, he casts doubt on the kind of optimistic view presented by Turner, namely that the theatre is capable of portraying 'the possibility of a true face'. What, after all, is one to make of the obsession with illusion that lies at the roots of much of the greatest Western drama? Kott, in a study of Shakespeare's love comedies, has compared the interminable machinations of disguise and counter-disguise to be found, for example, in As You Like It, with the world described in the plays of Jean Genet.

'In the love scenes of the Forest of Arden, just as in those of Illyria, the theatrical form and the theme completely correspond with and inter-penetrate each other; on condition, that is, that female parts are played, as they were on the Elizabethan stage, by boys. An actor disguised as a girl plays a girl disguised as a boy. Everything is real and unreal, false and genuine, at the same time. And we cannot tell on which side of the looking glass we have found ourselves. As if everything were mere reflection...The borderlines between illusion and reality, between an object and its reflection, are gradually lost. Once more one has to recall the theatrical aesthetics of Genet. The theatre represents in itself all human relationships, but not because it is their more or less successful imitation. The theatre is the image of all human relationships just because it is based on falseness; original falseness, rather like original sin. The actor plays a character he is not. He is who he is not. He is not who he is. To be oneself means only to play one's own reflection in the eyes of strangers' (1965: 218-219).

While it is instructive to counter Turner's privileging of the theatre as a locus of truth with Kott's comments, it is also obvious that the latter is writing about one kind of perspective on only one kind of theatrical genre. Indeed, Shakespeare might not have agreed with Genet that all human relationships are predicated on falsity; Brecht certainly would not; Beckett might regard such a proposition as nonsensical. A critical evaluation of the aesthetics of Shakespeare, Genet, Brecht and Beckett would have to be very careful precisely not to pretend to be able to provide a grand

interpretative theory which would show how, for example, King Lear, The Balcony, Waiting for Godot and Mother Courage are all examples of the same kind of exercise in dramatic form. Obviously, they are not. The situation becomes even more complex if we include scenarios from genres other than those classically considered "theatrical"; James Bond films, for example, or Star Wars, or cabaret or strip-tease shows. Why then do anthropologists continually attempt to provide just such a grand interpretative theory of ritual?

Richard Schechner: Dramatism as Performance Theory

Twentieth century movements in the Western avant-garde theatre have often drawn inspiration from dramatic and performance forms from other cultures. Accounts of such performances - including anthropological works on ritual - have provided valuable source material for many of the most notable theorists and directors in the contemporary Western theatre. One thinks of Artaud and Bali, of Brecht and the Chinese Theatre, of Grotowski's use of Indian hatha yoga and kathakali techniques, and of the work of Peter Brook. Brook has himself conducted his own form of anthropological research by taking a troupe of actors on an exchange "show and learn" expedition through remote villages in central Africa. Along with all this has gone a general dissatisfaction with contemporary civilization. This has all been neatly summed up by Christopher Innes.

'But, in the theatre at least, this nihilism has taken two positive and highly productive forms, apparently contradictory but actually complementary. On the one hand there is the transformation of the theatre into a laboratory for exploring fundamental questions about the nature of performance and the relationship between actor and audience. On the other, primitivism in various shapes: the exploitation of irrationality, the exploration of dream states, the borrowing of archaic dramatic models, mythological material or tribal rituals' (1981: 9).

Innes continues by writing that the 'scientific' and the 'quasi-mythical' aspects of avant-garde theatre research are united by a desire to return

'to the "roots" of theatre, whether in its primitive origins or by divesting it of scenic or illusionistic "accretions",

as much as to the psychological or prehistoric "roots" of man' (1981: 9).

This view among contemporary theatre practitioners and theorists, parallel in many ways with Turner's, that theatre can be seen as being rooted in ritual forms, has a previous incarnation in the work of Gilbert Murray and Ellen Jane Harrison. Its more recent resurrection receives one of its most articulate commentaries in a series of essays by the theatre director and Professor of Drama at New York University, Richard Schechner. A summary of his views is to be found in his collected Essays on Performance Theory 1970-1976. I will refer to one essay in that book, 'From Ritual to Theatre and Back: The Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad', which illustrates his position well.

He starts with an account of the kaiko pig festival celebrated by the Tsembaga of New Guinea, as described by Rappaport. This festival, he writes, is made up of activities which are both 'actual' and 'symbolic' (1977: 65). The dancing which features in the ritual

'is a vehicle for debtors and creditors to exchange places; it is also the occasion for a market; and it is fun' (1977: 65).

Schechner stresses that

'the dancing is not an isolated phenomenon - as theatre-going in America still is usually - but a behaviour nested in supportive actions' (1977: 64).

Here,

'what starts in dancing ends in eating; or, to put it in artistic-religious terms, what starts as theatre ends in communion' (1977: 66).

Schechner continues:

'Perhaps not since classical Athenian festivals and medieval pageants have we in the West used performances as the pivots in systems involving economic, social, political and religious transactions' (1977: 66).

The kaiko dances

'are not ornaments or pastimes or even "part of the means" of effecting the transactions among the Tsembaga. The dances both

symbolize and participate in the process of exchange' (1977: 66).

Schechner claims that the heart of the kaiko celebration consists of a transformation of combat behaviour into performance.

'The dances are a pivot in a system of transformations which change destructive behaviour into constructive alliances. It is no accident that every move, chant and costume of the kaiko dances are adapted from combat; a new use is found for this behaviour' (1977: 66). (4)

He continues:

'This transformation is identical in structure to that at the heart of Greek theatre (and from the Greeks down throughout all of Western theatre history). Namely, characterisation and the presentation of real or possible events - the story, plot or dramatic action worked out among human figures (whether they be called men or gods) - is a transformation of real behaviour into symbolic behaviour' (1977: 66, author's parentheses).

Transformation in this view is the heart of the theatre.

Schechner claims that there are only two fundamental kinds of theatrical transformation. First there is

'the displacement of anti-social, injurious, disruptive behaviour by ritualised gesture and display'

and second

'the invention of characters who act out fictional events or real events fictionalised by virtue of their being acted out (as in documentary theatre or Roman gladiatorial games)' (1977: 66, author's parenthesis).

According to Schechner, these two kinds of transformation always occur together, but in any one event one kind will usually be dominant over the other. In the Western theatre we have emphasised characterisation (role-playing) and the staging of fictions. The other transformation, the displacement of anti-social behaviour, has been emphasised in Melanesian, African and Australian aborigine theatre. Schechner claims that those forms which balance the two kinds of transformation - and here he lists Japanese Noh, Indian Kathakali and the Balinese Ketchak, and medieval drama as well as some examples of contemporary avant-garde performances - offer 'the best models for the future of the theatre' (1977: 66). I would note here that Schechner places great importance on power-

ful dichotomies; witness his strategy at this point in his argument. It is also a feature of Turner's thought. Indeed, the use of dichotomies appears to be a prime feature of dramatisitic argument.

Schechner's purpose is to

'outline a process through which theatre develops from ritual; and also to suggest that in some circumstances ritual develops from theatre' (1977: 68).

He claims that contemporary sources from other cultures (by which I take him to mean ethnographic reports) and from our own (the work of contemporary theatre practitioners, including himself) can document this. It is necessary to use this evidence

'because so often the jump from ritual to theatre is assumed, or attributed to ancient events the evidence for which is suspect' (1977: 68). (5)

I would suggest here that it would be salutary for an anthropologist of performance to consider the possibility that a shift "from ritual to theatre" - or a shift the other way round - is a shift not so much in actualities, but in analytical categories. By this I mean a shift not so much in "things", but in "the ways in which we talk about things"; in this case, the ways in which we talk about performance. I would further argue that a consideration of the ways in which we talk about performance and different kinds of performances necessitates a consideration of the history of what Foucault would call our "discourse" about performance. I will return to this important topic in Chapter Thirteen below.

Schechner claims that ritual performances like the Tsembaga kaiko are concerned with efficacy; something happens during the performance. His paradigm for this is a rite of passage. In the kaiko festival,

'giving and taking the meat not only symbolizes the changed relationship between Group A and B, it is the change itself' (1977: 73).

In Western theatre, what Schechner calls 'aesthetic' theatre, this convergence of symbolic and actual event is missing. The opposite of efficacy is entertainment. Schechner writes:

'Efficacy and entertainment are opposed to each other, but they form a binary system, a continuum' (1977: 75).

Schechner summarises the factors in this opposition thus:

'Efficacy (ritual)	Entertainment (theatre)
results	fun
link to an absent other	only for those here
abolishes time, symbolic time	emphasises now
brings other here	audience is the Other
performer possessed, in trance	performer knows what he's doing
audience participates	audience watches
audience believes	audience appreciates
criticism is forbidden	criticism is encouraged
collective creativity	individual creativity'
(1977: 75).	

I would note in passing that this picture (1) again relies on a powerful set of dichotomies, and (2) it implicitly links "theatre" with the cognitive ('performer knows what he's doing, 'criticism is encouraged', 'audience appreciates') and with the individual ('individual creativity'), while "ritual" is linked with action seemingly non-cognitive ('performer possessed, in trance', 'criticism is forbidden', 'audience believes') and collective ('collective creativity'). Theatre here is tied to thinking and to epistemology, as opposed to ritual which is tied to action.

All performances, Schechner stresses, are mixtures of the two ideal types. 'No performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment' (1977: 75). There are many ritual aspects to a Broadway show, both in backstage life and in the way rehearsals and performances are organised. Recent experimental productions have tended to emphasise the machinations of theatre work, those aspects which a previous generation attempted to conceal. Schechner sees in this development

'attempts at ritualising performance, of finding in the theatre itself authenticating acts' (1977: 76).

A braid made up of the intertwining poles of entertainment and efficacy can be drawn up to show that the two tendencies have always been present throughout the history of Western theatre. When both efficacy and entertainment are present in nearly equal proportions,

Schechner writes, theatre flourishes; he suggests that this balance was present in the theatres of 5th century Athens and Elizabethan England.

Schechner's conclusion is that rather than seeing performance as originating in ritual or, for that matter, in entertainment, we should see it as originating in the binary system "efficacy/entertainment", which includes a subset, "ritual/theatre" (1977: 89). Both terms of the binary are always and everywhere present. But

'at any historical moment there is movement from one pole toward the other. This oscillation is continuous - performance is in an active steady state' (1977: 90).

Schechner sums up his position with a passage quoted with approval by Turner in his own From Ritual to Theatre.

'The whole binary system efficacy/ritual - entertainment/theatre is what I call "performance". Performance originates in impulses to make things happen and to entertain; to collect meanings and to pass the time; to be transformed into another and to be oneself; to disappear and to show off; to bring into a celebratory space a transcendent Other who exists here-and-now and later-and-now and to celebrate here-and-now only us who are present; to get things done and to play around; to focus inward on a select initiated group sharing a hermetic language and to broadcast out to the largest collection of strangers. These oppositions - and all the others generated by them - comprise performance: it is an active situation, a steady process of transformation' (1977: 90).

I would suggest that the problem with Schechner's "Performance Theory", in common with Turner's own brand of dramatism, is that it embraces too much and explains too little. On the strength of the passage quoted immediately above, the reader might assume that "performance" is coterminous with the entire spectrum of social life. It becomes an amorphous essentialism, amorphous because it permeates, or can permeate, every area of human interaction; it is an essentialism because both Schechner and Turner claim to know precisely what performance is, and where and how it takes place. To say that performance manifests itself as "a steady process of transformation" is certainly a truism and is probably a tautology - it is a statement which can be applied to any event

anywhere. Schechner offers us two poles in a classic binary opposition, between "efficacy/ritual" and "entertainment/theatre". But the notions of what constitutes "efficacy" and what constitutes "entertainment", as well as the definitions offered of "ritual" as opposed to "theatre" here, are drawn from Western categories. The point is that any event or activity can be interpreted as a performance, as entertaining or as efficacious; it depends on who is doing the interpreting.

For this reason, I would argue that it is necessary for an anthropologist of performance to eschew any precise definition of what performance actually is, for - as I shall suggest in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen below - we cannot know what form performance might take except within a particular given ethnographic context. To argue as Schechner does, that performance is a process which continually oscillates between "ritual" and "theatre" compounds our difficulties, because of his use of these two powerful essentialist, etic categories as the basis for his universal theory of performance. If one were interested in investigating the possibilities of theories of performance, one would want to keep the notion of performance deliberately open-ended in order to investigate particular cultural use. Such a project is doomed from the start if it is determined by the use of categories such as "ritual" and "theatre" which may constitute indigenous formulations for contemporary European intellectuals such as Schechner, Turner and Geertz, but which might not do so for the Iatmul, the Balinese and other societies around the globe.

Dramatism: Performance as Role Play

I have tried to show that the main problems with the dramatisitic model of ritual and performance embraced by Turner and Schechner are that, first, it is predicated on Western notions of ritual, theatre and performance and second, that it soon slides into a universal theory of human social action. I would now like to briefly consider a body of work which can be considered as an offshoot of dramatism, namely role theory as used by Goffman (cf., e.g., Goffman 1959).

Goffman's picture of social interaction presupposes a radical division within the acting subject, between on the one hand a "role" or "mask" which is presented to the external world in various strategic ways for the gaining of various ends, and on the other hand a "real self" which remains hidden from the external world. Role theory in Goffman's terms has become a powerful paradigm in recent psychotherapies including the encounter group movement and, particularly, in dramatherapy.

In a recent paper, Hollis has summarised Goffman's picture of 'actors as individuals, living on the seamy underside of society and working the system for their own ends. Their attitude to rules, norms and roles is (largely) instrumental and their real motives (usually) are the pursuit of perceived private advantage' (1985: 226, author's parentheses).

But Hollis notes that there is a fundamental difficulty here, for surely we need to have some idea of what precisely lies behind the mask which "lies". As Hollis writes:

'The key to understanding what an actor is up to in Goffman's scene is therefore to spot the man behind the mask; and the theoretical crux is whether there can be such a man. Goffman is oddly silent about the self' (1985: 226-227).

Hollis quotes the 'occasional remarks' scattered throughout Goffman's works which refer to the self at one point as

'a repertoire of behaviour appropriate to a different set of contingencies' (Goffman 1959, quoted by Hollis 1985: 227)

and at another as

'the code that makes sense out of almost all the individual's activities and provides a basis for organising them' (Goffman 1971, quoted by Hollis 1985: 227).

But, Hollis continues, Goffman

'never explains what organises the repertoire, supplies the continuity of motive or establishes the code' (1985: 227).

In Hollis' view, our contemporary notions of self can be roughly split between a picture deriving from Hume which sees a self as

'a bundle of preferences, which are then traced to socialisation

and thence to the (social) system itself' (1985: 227, my parenthesis)
 and the Hobbesian "core" individual engaging in life strategies for the gaining of maximum advantage. But the self which supposedly lies behind Goffman's "roles" evades analysis from both of these perspectives. If this self is viewed as Hume's socialised bundle of preferences, it is immediately itself part of the very social structure of role play which it was meant to explain. If, on the other hand, we regard it as the Hobbesian individual forever hidden behind an endless distancing series of roles, then

'the real man is impenetrable, it vanishes from scientific enquiry' (1985: 227).

How, asks Hollis, can we escape this dilemma?

Hollis then makes the penetrating comment that in Greek tragedy a self is exposed when a character becomes trapped in roles which conflict. (6) Antigone's problem, for example, is that she is both sister and subject; her choice is between acting as sister and burying her brother, thereby disobeying the edict of her uncle, King Kreon and head of state; or acting as loyal subject by obeying the edict against burying her beloved brother Polynices. But this is not ultimately a choice between two courses of action, for Antigone

'must resolve not merely what to do but who to be' (1985: 227).

It is via this fusion of identity and role, Hollis claims, that we might come closer to understanding more about the category of self:

'It is tempting to suppose that the ethical fix occurs only because Greek tragedy lacks an ego. The typical modern presumption is that there is a self distinct from both roles, who must choose between them' (1985: 227-228).

Next, Hollis criticises a more contemporary picture of self, that presented by Sartre's existentialism. Bad Faith is ascribed by Sartre to

'anyone who performs the duties of an office just because he holds the office' (1985: 228).

But the question for Hollis is the nature of the "authentic

self" which, presumably, lies behind the choice and, for good or ill, actually makes that choice. In Sartre's philosophy, however, we are the choices we make. Hollis' quote from Sartre himself is telling here:

'In life a man commits himself, draws his own portrait, and there is nothing but that portrait' (Sartre 1973, quoted by Hollis 1985: 228).

But, Hollis concludes, if this is so, then someone, 'an inner being', must be available to sit for that portrait. In Hollis' words:

'This ultimate self would not be applying a measure but creating one and that would leave us still stuck with my complaint about Sartre. Considerations of utility thus fail to be neutral and the addition of a pure self does nothing to help. If Antigone is to have any sort of assessable choice, we must work with what Sophocles provides. There is no missing piece' (1985: 229).

The crux of Hollis' argument is that 'pure self' is in fact

'an illusion: but a plausible illusion when conjured up against limiting cases at the other extreme' (1985: 229).

Hollis refuses to accept that we must choose between a self totally constituted by social factors, in the tradition of Durkheim, and a self

'so pure that it vanishes into darkest privacy' (1985: 229).

The way out of this dichotomy, claims Hollis, is to follow Kant rather than either Hume or Hobbes; we should see that

'the social analogue for reflective consciousness is intelligent agency. We identify the positions and roles of the social world by acting intelligently within them. Intelligence depends on continuity of the self, by analogy with the unity of the self required to weave phenomena into physical objects. For meaningful social phenomena, the apperception is that of a social agent' (1985: 229).

Thus, we can see that Antigone's actions are her actions not because of some pure self which lies behind the different, and conflicting, "roles" with which she is confronted, but because action and role cannot be separated in the way which role theory requires. If we ask who it was that buried Polynices, Sophocles

tells us that Kreon's niece did it - and that she is the same person as the Antigone who is Polynices' sister.

'It adds nothing to this answer to invoke a pure self as a gloss on what is meant by "same person". That Antigone is the same social actor is both necessary and sufficient' (1985: 229-230).

For Hollis, what is peculiarly modern about our category of "self" is that 'we construct our own social identity' (1985: 230). This is possible owing to our heritage of Roman law and mediaeval Christianity, which left us with

'notions of individual persona and private spiritual substance. With them behind us, we can picture a social actor as an individual who paints his own social portrait, for whom there is nothing social but the portrait' (1985: 230).

But, Hollis continues, this cannot be entirely true. The idea that identity is something which we construct for ourselves comes easily to us

'only because we do not suppose that people construct all of their own personal identity' (1985: 230).

There is still an anchoring self which, for example, engages in the strategies of "self-development" so popular now in the West, and which also acts socially in our choice of roles and in our interpretation of the roles which we choose:

'This gives more scope for the construction of self than there is in Greek tragedy but a great deal less than individualism would have us believe' (1985: 230).

Hollis argues that we cannot postulate a dichotomy which 'assigns individuals to nature and persons to society' (1985: 231), as anthropologists in the Fortesian tradition such as La Fontaine (cf. 1985: 123-140) attempt to do. This is simply because the division between

'the powers of an office and their exercise by individuals' (1985: 231)

is predicated on a notion of individual which is social as much as natural. What Hollis seems to be saying here, if I read him correctly, is that there are no "natural" individuals. On the other hand, and this is an important statement by Hollis which

is in tune with my reading of Bateson's Naven:

'Social forms can never shape human beings completely, because social forms owe their shape to the fact that human beings are social agents with ideas about social forms' (1985: 232).

We can, I suggest, apply Hollis' critique of role theory to Bateson's analysis of the naven. Throughout Bateson's text, there is an assumption that the naven is an expression of Iatmul ethos. I have argued that it is possible to view the situation as the reverse of this; that by engaging in naven and other activities, Iatmul males and females become what they are - that is, Iatmul males and females. There would, from this perspective, be no "natural" Iatmul individuals existing behind the naven performances. There would be no natural, presocial individuals existing first, later to be transformed into waus, lauas and so on.

As a footnote to this aspect of the matter, I refer to a thinker quoted by Hollis, in a passage used approvingly by Goffman himself in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959: 81-82). This is Sartre's famous illustration of Bad Faith which uses a portrait of a café waiter.

'Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step too precise, a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually re-establishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. All his behaviour seems to us a game. He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a café. There is nothing there to surprise us. The game is a kind of marking out and investigation. The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the café plays with his condition in order to realise it. This obligation is not different from that which is imposed on all tradesmen. Their condition is wholly one of ceremony; there is the dance of the

grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor' (1969: 59, author's emphasis).

The important point about this passage for an anthropologist of performance is that, regardless of the reader's stance on Sartre's existentialism, it is a penetrating, and evocative, commentary on action. With Hollis' critique of Goffman, and Sartre, in mind, I would ask if it is possible to view the waiter as a man who is "merely" playing a part, "merely" realizing a role - which is Goffman's view. I would suggest that in viewing the waiter's "act" as "activity", rather than as the playing out of a constraining role, we can avoid the dualisms of individual-versus-role, of authentic-versus-artificial and of actor-versus-character which role theory, predicated as it is on a particular notion of theatrical performance, requires. From this perspective, Sartre's café waiter is not busy making choices between "instrumental" as opposed to "expressive" activity. Viewing his activity "as" performance, we can say that it is reducible to neither pole. If we view his activity "as" ritual, we can say that there is something real going on; coffee is being delivered to the table, tips are being picked up, and so on. If we view the scene "as" theatre, we can pay attention not so much to the "actual" individual who is pretending to be a waiter - in the critical mode of Western drama - but instead, perhaps, we can address ourselves to his style, his technique and his presence, all of which are brilliantly conveyed by Sartre.

As for "who" the waiter might be, that is another matter.

Charles Taylor: Public Space

Whether or not we consider the theatre to be a locus of truth or illusion, or sometimes one and sometimes the other, whether or not we use notions of "theatre" and "ritual" as a basis for a theory of performance, somewhere along the line we have to consider the relationship between self, society and language. Martin Hollis and Charles Taylor, in recent essays contained in a collection dealing with the theme of personhood, have made important contributions to

this topic. In the previous section of this chapter I considered Hollis' essay and its relevance to role theory. I would now like to discuss Taylor's paper.

Taylor writes that language is the 'locus of disclosure' which is the pre-condition for all human intercourse (1985: 276). Our feelings, thoughts and sensations about ourselves are 'bound up with language, disclosed in language' (1985: 276). Further, this

'makes clear why our human feelings and emotions are constituted by our understanding of them. They are shaped by the language in which they are disclosed. This is reflected both in the fact that different cultures have both different emotive languages and a different gamut of emotions; and also in the fact that we are always struggling to find the right way of thinking/talking about ourselves' (1985: 276).

According to Taylor, language has at least two important aspects here. First, language enables us to focus on, and to describe and analyse, the world, ourselves and others, or at least to make some attempt to do so. Language 'articulates' the world.

'Language, in short, enables us to be aware of what we discourse about in a way which has no analogue for non-linguistic animals. Being able to say it is being able to make it the focus in a way which is peculiar to language...A non-linguistic creature can act in such a way that we can understand it as guided by a standard; its behaviour is shaped by a standard. But only a linguistic being can recognise a standard. The standard needs to be focussed in language' (1985: 272).

This is one sense in which Taylor uses the notion of "formulation". But there is another sense, which is to do with the fact that language is concerned with a formulation which is shared, in other words with communication. Two strangers travelling on a train in very hot country might remark to each other how hot they feel. As Taylor says,

'this doesn't tell you anything you didn't know; neither that it is hot, nor that I find it so. Both these facts were plain to you before...What the expression has done here is to create a rapport between us, the kind of thing which comes about when we do what we call striking up a conversation. Previously I knew that you were hot, and you knew that I was hot, and I knew that you must know that I knew that...up to about any level you care to chase it. But now it is out there as a fact between us that it's stifling in here. Language creates what

one might call a public space, or a common vantage point from which we survey the world together' (1985: 273, author's emphasis).

We might here put Taylor's description of the two ways in which language formulates the world - description and communication - together with the point made about Shakespeare's comedies and Genet's plays by Kott. Language, indeed, makes a shared reality possible. But it also immediately puts that reality into question, a point which Taylor ignores. Language introduces "facts" into the world, if you like; but at the same time it introduces "fictions" into the same world. It introduces the possibility of fact and fiction at once. (7)

For Taylor, a crucial implication of language is the creation of what he calls 'public space'. Language makes

'the matter talked about no longer just for me or for you, but for us...You can't understand how human society works at all ...unless you have some notion of public space' (1985: 273, author's emphasis).

In our civilization, we have disconnected the 'articulate formulation' aspect of language from its 'public space' or 'shared' aspect; we have, claims Taylor, 'brought solitary formulation to a high art' (1985: 274-275). But the link remains, for

'our solitary formulations depend on the language which we could only learn in conversation...I become a person and remain one only as an interlocuter' (1985: 275-276). (8)

In his essay Taylor criticises those views of the person which stress representation and consciousness, views which are extremely powerful in our culture. These views, he claims, constitute an attempt to

'interiorize personhood, to read these powers as possessions of the individual' (1985: 277).

The locus of language has always been public space, but this has not always been seen as the realm of human language. It has variously been identified with, for example, some region of the cosmos, some mythical region, some sacred space or

'the space of social intercourse but seen as independent of the actual conversation of men...For Plato, this space was that of the ideas' (1985: 277).

Taylor claims that the constitution of the modern subject/person has involved the unification of all these possible spaces, and then the interiorization of this unification. For us, the space of disclosure is 'inside, in the "mind" ' (1985: 277, author's emphasis). Any sense we might have of the world itself being the source of a plenitude of possible disclosures has been undermined by this movement of interiorization, which

'suppressed altogether the sense that we are persons only as interlocuters; and gave us a view of the subject as capable of purely inner, monological thought; of this monological thought as preceding any conversation' (1985: 278).

I would suggest that it is possible to draw a parallel between Taylor's notion of "public space" as the locus of disclosure, and Turner's liminal-liminoid domains. The difference is that, in placing reflexivity specifically within the latter, Turner has claimed for one particular area of human experience (social drama/genre of performance) what Taylor claims - and I think correctly - to be a fundamental quality, in one way or another, of all human experience. All language - or, more precisely, all discourse - has the inherent possibility of reflexivity, as Taylor points out when he writes that

'our human feelings and emotions...are shaped by the language in which they are disclosed' (1985: 276).

If we qualify this statement by substituting "discourse" for "language", as indicating that we include all potential media in the category referred to by Taylor as "language", then Taylor's claim here is of crucial importance for an understanding of the limitations of Bateson's analysis of the naven, and for those fields of investigation which would be opened out by an anthropology of performance. If Turner could have taken Taylor's words to heart, he would have had to admit that an implication of his claim that reflexivity lies at the heart of performative activity would be that all human interaction is, in some sense or other, perform-

ative in nature. But this makes a nonsense out of any attempt to delimit an analytical category of performance. Can this be done? Are we any nearer to understanding ritual if we make such an attempt? What is the domain of performance? Or, to put it differently: when is a ritual not a ritual? When is theatre not theatre? When is a performance not a performance? And who decides?

NOTES to Chapter Eleven

- (1) Hollis has made a similar point, noting that a man might make the sign of a fish in the dust in order to make contact with a fellow Christian, or on the other hand he might be acting as an agent provocateur employed by the anti-Christian authorities (Personal communication, Mark Hobart).
- (2) Compare Bateson's statement: 'All experience is subjective' (1972(a): 47).
- (3) For a critical overview of the centrality of the notion of "meaning" in Western thought in general, and in anthropology in particular, cf. Hobart 1982. Lewis also articulates serious doubts as to the usefulness of this ubiquitous notion, warning us that, 'since "meaning" is a word of such easy virtue...we would do well to be wary of its temptations' (1980: 221).
- (4) In basing the kaiko dances in combat activity, Schechner's analysis is similar to the picture of play presented by Bateson; for the latter, play is developed out of animal combat. I consider this topic briefly in my Chapter Twelve.
- (5) Here Schechner is referring to the Cambridge school at the turn of the century. I refer to this School briefly on p. 250.
- (6) I would suggest that this is true of all tragic drama; the conflict of roles, surely, lies at the heart of the predicament of Hamlet and of Lear.
- (7) The Balinese, for example, would readily agree that language lies as easily as it tells the truth (Personal communication, Mark Hobart).
- (8) Compare Bateson on conversation: 'Sometimes if both people are willing to listen carefully, it is possible to do more than exchange greetings and good wishes. Even to do more than exchange information. The two people may even find out something which neither of them knew before' (1972(b): 12).

CHAPTER TWELVE: AN ECOLOGY OF MIND: BATESON'S WORK AFTER NAVEN

IN THE MAIN body of the thesis I have tried to show that Bateson's importance as a thinker is demonstrated by the fact, not that he produced the right answers, but that he asked important questions. It can be argued that a primary question which anthropologists should consider is, "What is usefully askable?" This question runs all the way through Naven, and informs the two major transitions in the book, i.e. from a concern with "social structure" to the formulation of "eidos" and "ethos", and then from a collapse of eidos and ethos into the model of action which Bateson calls "schismogenesis". These transitions can be glossed as a progression from, first, a sociological epistemology grounded in structural-functionalism ("How does the society work?") to a more subtle epistemology which dichotomises the phenomenology of eidos ("How do the Iatmul know what they know?") and the ontology of ethos ("How does an Iatmul become an Iatmul?") and second, from epistemology per se to the schismogenic model of action. As I argued in Chapter Four above, Bateson thus collapses two of the basic binary oppositions widely used in anthropology, namely between intellect and affect, and between intellect/affect and action.

These transitions can also be read as a progression from a concern with system - in the form of the analysis of social structure in the classical sense - to a concern with context, or the delineation and description of the corpus of ideas and values which shape Iatmul culture and, in particular, the naven itself. The formulation of schismogenesis represents the culmination of Bateson's attempt to contextualise the naven; it is a subtle and flexible model of action which allows us to view Iatmul social life from many perspectives - epistemological, phenomenological, ontological - without giving analytical priority to any one viewpoint.

In the final section of the book, consisting of the chapter on eidos and the two Epilogues, Bateson returns to a concern with system which - as I have attempted to show throughout my reading

of his text - never entirely eluded him. The chapter on eidos, which he himself considered his least successful, remains an unsatisfactory attempt to rescue the phenomenological aspect (eidos) from the marginal position it occupies with respect to the ontological aspect, or eidos. The First Epilogue evocatively summarises the author's intellectual difficulties and contains the important attack on the fallacy of "misplaced consciousness", or 'the habit of thought which attributes concreteness to aspects of phenomena' (1936: 263). (1) In the Second Epilogue, however, Bateson betrays this and the other important insights which generated the progression from system to context, by using Russell's theory of logical types and cybernetic theory in order to place the naven again within a particular systemic model. Using these epistemological referents acquired since the writing of the original book, Bateson can now claim that

'the concept "schismogenesis" is an implicit recognition that the system contains an extra order of complexity due to the combination of learning with the interaction of persons. The schismogenic unit is a two person subsystem. This subsystem contains the potentialities of a cybernetic circuit which might go into progressive change; it cannot, therefore, be conceptually ignored and must be described in a language of higher type than any language used to describe individual behaviour - the latter category of phenomena being only the events in one or another arc of the schismogenic subsystem' (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 297).

Thus, in the terms of Bateson's later work on creativity and play, naven as an instance of schismogenic activity must be regarded as a "meta"-activity.

It is not within the scope of this thesis to give a detailed account of Bateson's later work in detail, but any analysis of Naven as a contribution to an anthropology of performance would be incomplete without some reference to this work. I will here comment on three notable topics; the research carried out with Margaret Mead in Bali, the theory of play and creativity and the double bind theory of schizophrenia. The results of the work

in Bali are to be found in the book Bateson wrote with Mead (1942), and in two papers in the volume of collected essays (1973); papers on play, creativity and the double bind are also included in that volume.

As a result of his field-work in Bali, which began in 1936, Bateson reported that 'Schismogenic sequences were not found in Bali' (1973 (a):84). There is, however, an important exception to this, namely in patterns of interaction observed by Bateson and Mead between mothers and young children. These patterns take the form of a mother teasing an infant and then turning away and ignoring the child as the latter becomes excited. Bateson writes:

'The mother will either play a spectator's role, enjoying the child's tantrum, or, if the child actually attacks her, will brush off his attack with no show of anger on her part. These sequences can be seen either as an expression of the mother's distaste for this type of personal involvement or as a context in which the child acquires a deep distrust of such involvement. The perhaps basically human tendency towards cumulative interaction is thus muted' (1973 (a): 85).

An example of this sequence between mother and child is illustrated in one of the sets of photographs in Bateson and Mead's Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis (1942, plates 47-53 and 69-72: pages 32-36). Bateson interprets the mother's behaviour here as 'diminishing the child's tendencies towards competitive and rivalrous behaviour' (1973 (a) : 85). Bateson's observation that schismogenic interaction is a crucial element in the upbringing of Balinese children, despite the fact that 'Schismogenic sequences were not found in Bali', is an obvious contradiction, a contradiction in his thinking which he did not follow up in any depth. However, it can be argued that his interpretation of Balinese mother-child interaction marked an early step in the development of the idea of schismogenesis as taking place not only between individuals, but also inside the individual psyche. (2) In terms of the later "double bind" theory of schizophrenia, the Balinese mother in Bateson's picture is seen as inducing a state of continual excitement and frustration in the child.

Bateson had gone to Bali believing that the schismogenic patterns he had described amongst the Iatmul are universal. The behaviour Bateson observed between Balinese adults appeared to deny this. He reported that the Balinese conduct their social lives in a spirit of determined tranquility and calm, a spirit which allowed for no emotional climaxes and which psychologists would describe as one of "flat affect". Moderation prevailed. Balinese society was, according to Bateson, organised by a structure of rigid social hierarchies permeated with strict rules of interpersonal etiquette. The rampant emotional climaxes and culturally prescribed fits of aggressive boasting considered socially desirable amongst the Iatmul could not have been further from the ethos which Bateson described as standardised in Bali. This lack of climax was to be found in Balinese music, drama and pictorial arts (1973 (a) : 85-88). Bateson concludes that the deciding factor which differentiates Iatmul from Balinese ethos is to be found in child-rearing; but this conclusion is merely stated, and not explored fully.

'We started with the hypothesis that human beings have a tendency to involve themselves in sequences of cumulative interaction, and this hypothesis is still left virtually intact. Among the Balinese the babies, at least, evidently have such tendencies. But for sociological validity this hypothesis must now be guarded with a parenthetical clause stipulating that these tendencies are operative in the dynamics of society only if the childhood training is not such as to prevent their expression in adult life' (1973 (a) : 87-88).

Bateson analyses Balinese ethos in terms of the theory of games devised by Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944). For the player in the Von Neumannian game, the aim is to maximise a simple variable, which might for example be financial gain, prestige or power, in alliance with and in competition against other players. For Bateson, game theory is obviously applicable to 'competitive' societies such as the Iatmul or our own, for:

'it is important to note that competitive contexts - provided the individuals can be made to recognize the context as competitive - inevitably reduce the complex gamut of values to very simple and even linear and monotone terms. Considerations of this sort, plus descriptions of the regularities

in the process of character formation, probably suffice to describe how simple value scales are imposed upon mammalian individuals in competitive societies such as that of the Iatmul or twentieth-century America' (1973 (a): 96, author's emphasis).

But, according to Bateson, this cannot be true of Balinese society. The Balinese individual is not engaging in strategies to maximise any one variable, but rather something more subtle:

'Neither the individual nor the village is concerned to maximise any simple variable. Rather, they would seem to be concerned to maximise something which we may call stability, using this term perhaps in a highly metaphorical way' (1973 (a) : 96).

Bateson discerns this concern with stability, or balance, in all areas of Balinese life, from relationships between villages to the movements of Balinese dancers. The model for the ubiquity of this concern is to be found in the technique of a tightrope walker with a balancing pole, who

'will not be able to maintain his balance except by varying the forces which he exerts upon the pole' (1973 (a): 97, author's emphasis).

Thus, for Bateson:

'it seems that the Balinese extend to human relationships attitudes based upon bodily balance, and that they generalize the idea that motion is essential to balance. This last point gives us, I believe, a partial answer to the question of why the society not only continues to function but functions rapidly and busily, continually undertaking ceremonial and artistic tasks which are not economically or competitively determined. This steady state is maintained by continual non-progressive change' (1973 (a) : 98).

It is, in fact, a case of the "Steady State" of the Balinese being contrasted with the "Schismogenic System" of the Iatmul. I would argue that Bateson's use of von Neumannian game theory illustrates the same positivistic bias in his thinking found throughout the pages of Naven and, in particular, in the final section on cybernetics and logical typing. An articulate critique of game theory has been mounted by Ions, who points out that von Neumann and Morgenstern's model relies on a reified sense of the notion of "rationality" which is equated with a simplistic means-end strategy to maximise utility by an isolated, competitive

individual (1977: 36-41). It is open to question whether Bateson's picture of the Balinese as maximising game players, albeit of a value more subtle than those usually associated with game theory, provides an adequate account of Balinese society and culture. I would suggest that the important feature of the paper summarised above is that for the Balinese case Bateson smuggles schismogenesis in through the back door in another form, that of game theory. The maximisation is no longer of simple variables such as prestige, as it is for the Iatmul, but of "balance" and "stability". One might argue that Bateson's analysis of Balinese ethos here resembles the classic equilibrium model favoured by functionalism. Behind this picture of the Balinese maximising balance, schismogenesis lurks in the shadows. It would, indeed, be easy to analyse Iatmul ethos in von Neumannian terms but this, interestingly, Bateson does not do.

I turn now to a brief consideration of Bateson's work on play, creativity and the double bind. One underlying theme runs through the papers published on these topics, namely the development of the use of Russell's theory of logical types which underpins the arguments of the 1956 Epilogue to Naven. Two papers published in Steps To An Ecology of Mind are of crucial importance to these topics, namely 'A Theory of Play and Fantasy' (1973 (c)) and 'Towards A Theory of Schizophrenia' (1973 (d)).

In terms of logical typing, Bateson claims that a central facet of human communication is 'metacommunication', in which 'the subject of discourse is the relationship between the speakers' (1973 (c) : 151). This is in contrast to a 'seemingly denotative level ("the cat is on the mat")', and to a more abstract level

'where the subject of discourse is the language. We will call these metalinguistic (for example, "The verbal sound 'cat' stands for any member of such and such class of objects")! (1973 (c) : 150, author's emphasis).

A metacommunicative communication, one which would refer to the relationship between the speakers, would for example be 'My telling you where to find the cat was friendly', or 'This is play' (1973 (c) : 151). (3)

Bateson recalls an episode in which he visited a zoo, and was astonished by the sight of

'two young monkeys playing, i.e., engaged in an interactive sequence of which the unit actions or signals were similar to but not the same as combat. It was evident, even to the human observer, that the sequence as a whole was not combat, and evident to the human observer that to the participant monkeys this was "not combat" ' (1973 (c) : 152, author's emphasis).

For Bateson, play is only possible through metacommunication, or in his words it

'could only occur if the participant organisms were capable of some degree of metacommunication, i.e. of exchanging signals which would carry the message "this is play" ' (1973 (c) : 152).

The message "this is play", Bateson writes, is a statement of the paradoxes which arise as a result of the application of Russell's theory of logical types. The paradox in question contains

'a negative statement containing an implicit negative statement containing an implicit negative metastatement. Expanded, the statement "This is play" looks something like this: "These actions in which we now engage do not denote what those actions for which they stand would denote" ' (1973 (c) : 152, author's emphasis).

This final sentence can be expanded to read:

' "These actions, in which we now engage, do not denote what would be denoted by those actions which these actions denote" ' (1973 (c) : 153).

In the domain of animal play, this can be translated as referring to the fact that

'The playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite' (1973 (c) : 153).

This statement contains the essence of Bateson's theory of play and creativity. Both are only possible when humans and other animals send 'signals standing for other events' or, in other words, when there is a communication such that denotation is used at 'two levels of abstraction' (1973 (c) : 153). It would thus appear that for Bateson "play" is a quasi-cognitive activity in which organisms "read off" various levels of communication between each other. Bateson does not explore the possibility that "play" might

be connected with sheer physical enjoyment, that it might be "fun"; I would suggest that it is instructive that Bateson's template for "play" is a bite, rather than a cuddle or a hug. (4)

For Bateson, the phenomena of threat and histrionic behaviour are similarly grounded in metacommunication; he does not mention the naven in this context, but the implication would be that naven, like other rituals, is to be equated with metacommunicative activity. Play, threat and histrionic behaviour mark an important step in the evolution of communication in that they manipulate the relationship between what Korzybski calls "territory" and "map", that is

'the fact that a message, of whatever kind, does not consist of those objects which it denotes ("The word "cat" cannot scratch us"). Rather, language bears to the objects which it denotes a relationship comparable to that which a map bears to a territory' (1973 (c): 153).

There are, perhaps, obvious parallels here with Wittgenstein's "picture theory" of language described in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Language is seen to be transparent and one-dimensionally referential to the "territory" or the "reality". I would ask how a metalinguistic or a metacommunicative level of language fits such a simplistic map/territory model? For, if language can refer to itself, as well as to "reality" (whatever we mean by that), then surely there can be no simple one-to-one relationship between language and the world, or as Korzybski would have it, between "map" and "territory". There are deep and troubling waters here which Bateson does not enter.

Bateson then draws on the Freudian distinction between the unconscious, or "primary process" and the conscious, or "secondary process". He claims that

'in primary process, map and territory are equated; in secondary process, they can be discriminated. In play, they are both equated and discriminated' (1973 (c): 158).

Play, therefore, is not a communication but a "metacommunication"; not an activity, but a "meta-activity". This "meta-activity" arises from the paradoxes which are connected with the application

of the theory of logical types; Bateson's reading of this theory here is a critique of Russell, for:

'the paradoxes of abstraction must make their appearance in all communication more complex than that of mood-signals, and... without these paradoxes the evolution of communication would be at an end. Life would then be an endless interchange of stylized messages, a game with rigid rules, unrelieved by change or humour' (1973 (c) : 166).

One might ask if any "communication" is possible at all without a degree of "metacommunication" in the first place.

In a paper concerned with Balinese painting, Bateson enlarges on the relationship between primary and secondary process mentioned above. Art, too, manipulates levels of abstraction in that it acts as a bridge between conscious and unconscious, since:

'mere purposive rationality unaided by such phenomena as art, religion, dream and the like, is necessarily pathogenic and destructive of life; and...its virulence springs specifically from the circumstances that life depends upon interlocking circuits of contingency, while consciousness can see only such short arcs of such circuits as human purpose may direct' (1973 (b) : 119, author's emphasis).

It is a 'sense or recognition of the fact of circuitry' which Bateson equates with 'wisdom' (1973 (b) : 119). This is an important theme of much of Bateson's later work, namely that neither conscious purpose nor unconscious irrationality alone lead to "wisdom", which can only be achieved by an appreciation of the pathways which link conscious and unconscious. These pathways, Bateson maintains, include play, art, fantasy, dreams and religion. He does not, however, question the use to which he puts the all-important analogies of cybernetics, logical typing and game theory. These analogies, for him, express essential truths about the human condition; the important question, however, is to consider the point at which these analogies lose their applicability - for analogies always run out. Ultimately, there is no analogy which is true; what is true is that there are analogies.

Finally, I refer to the double bind theory of schizophrenia, formulated by Bateson in work carried out with Jackson, Haley and

Weakland (1973 (d)). In the schizophrenogenic family unit, the paradoxes of communication result, not in play and creativity, but in a pathological impoverishment of communication such that the "patient" or "victim" is forbidden to metacommunicate, or to comment on the relationships within the family group. The double bind, which is seen as the result of recurrent events in the life of the victim rather than a single trauma, is composed of three injunctions. The first, described as 'a primary negative injunction', may take either the form of a command to do something or not to do something, on the threat of some kind of punishment such as the withdrawal of love. The second injunction is one which conflicts

'with the first at a more abstract level, and like the first (is) enforced by punishments or signals which threaten survival' (1973 (d) : 178, my parenthesis).

This injunction is likely to be communicated by non-verbal means, for example by posture, tone of voice and so on. However,

'Verbalization of the secondary injunction may...include a wide variety of forms; for example, "Do not see this as punishment"; "Do not see me as the punishing agent"; "Do not submit to my prohibitions"; "Do not think of what you must not do"; "Do not question my love of which the primary prohibition is (or is not) an example"; and so on. Other examples become possible when the double bind is inflicted not by one individual but by two. For example, one parent may negate at a more abstract level the injunctions of the other' (1973 (d) : 178-179, authors' parenthesis).

The third injunction is one which forbids the victim from escaping from the situation - but this might not be necessary since, if the double bind pattern continues during infancy, then escape will become impossible.

The result of this conditioning, carried out over a long period of time, results in the victim learning

'to perceive his universe in double bind patterns. Almost any part of a double bind sequence may then be sufficient to precipitate panic or rage. The pattern of conflicting injunctions may even be taken over by hallucinatory voices' (Bateson, et (1973 (d): 179).

The inability of the victim, or "schizophrenic", to discriminate between messages of different logical types is the crucial outcome of double bind conditioning. For Bateson and his colleagues, this inability may explain why the schizophrenic is unable to distinguish between the literal and the metaphoric in his thought and speech; why he develops the peculiar "word-salad" language of schizophrenia, and why his behaviour, that of a self riddled with confusion, doubt and contradiction is - quite systematically - structured in such a way that nobody can "make sense" of it, since he cannot "make sense" of it either. The schizophrenic has, literally, been driven mad by those around him. (5) In terms of the development of Bateson's thinking, we can see the double bind theory as a picture of the internalisation of schismogenetic patterns within the individual psyche.

It can be argued that double binds of the type described by Bateson and his colleagues occur frequently in all situations of human interaction, and not only within family groups. Even granted that double bind contexts drive some people mad, the question can be asked, why do they drive some people mad and not others? It might be more instructive to regard the double bind theory as a model for poor human communication, rather than as an explanatory model of schizophrenia. (6)

In my previous section I briefly outlined some of the more salient features of Bateson's later work, work which developed the themes of the final pages of Naven. There are at least two problems here. The first is, what, in any specific context, are the criteria for distinguishing between an "action" and a "meta-action", or between a "communication" and a "meta-communication"? The second problem, which arises from the first, is how many kinds of original, first-base "actions" and "communications" are there? In other words, how does Bateson's meta-level model of play and

creativity relate to the complexities of cultural specificity? These questions are crucial for an anthropology of performance. The problems are similar to those posed by Goffman's role theory. We can ask, for example, if Sartre's waiter is engaging in an "activity" or a "meta-activity" in his café activity. (See Chapter Eleven pp. 260-261.) Is the waiter "playing" in the Batesonian creative mode, or is he the victim of the pathological double bind context? I would suggest that it is always possible to build a theory of human action by introducing additional levels of abstraction, but that any theory built in this way will necessarily be reductive. Human reality is more subtle and complex than any such theory can allow.

The dichotomy between "action" and "meta-action", grounded in the paradoxes arising from logical typing, allows Bateson to escape from the problems posed by schismogenesis, play and fantasy seen as models of activities which issue from past activities, and by instances of, for example, the naven as particular events which, although to an important extent improvised, are re-creations of previous creations; that is to say, this dichotomy allows Bateson to escape from the problems posed by history and cultural specificity. In the theory of logical types Bateson discovers a universal system which can be applied cross-culturally to the Iatmul, and the Balinese, and to Europeans and Americans ("the double bind") and, further, to species other than the human, to chimpanzees and to otters too (in the work on play).

I would argue that the use of logical typing, and the attendant picture of society as a series of cybernetic feed-back loops, is - in Bateson's terminology - a "higher level" functionalist model than the model with which he began, i.e. the classic structural-functionalist paradigm of society as an organism operating by means of a number of interlocking parts. The use of the analogy of a thermostat, in Naven (1936: 1958 2nd edn: 292) and throughout his later work (e.g. 1980: 212-214) in order to illustrate the workings of a cybernetic system, betrays Bateson's continuing functionalist scientism; for the thermostat is also a classic illustration of functionalist teleology. From this perspective,

we can say that both the structural-functionalist and the cybernetic views constitute a correspondence description of an alien culture, and the answers thus adduced are couched in terms of referents - either explicit or implicit - located within the anthropologist's own conceptual framework. The correspondence theorist asks, "How do the phenomena observable in another culture correspond to the phenomena observable in our culture?" It is apparent that such a question presupposes that such correspondences must exist; once this assumption has been made, it only remains for the anthropologist to decide where the correspondences lie, and to describe them. This strategy is innately essentialist, and its proponents adhere to a belief in universals which must be sought, discovered and described cross-culturally; these universals are legion, but some of the more notable include certain notions of structure - whether it be the empirically existing social structure of Radcliffe-Brown and Fortes, or the cognitive structures generating binary oppositions in the work of Lévi-Strauss; as well as a privileged rationality which is seen as underlying human action everywhere, along with a social philosophy which sees the ideological debates of contemporary Europe reflected in all other cultures and, again, analytical categories such as kinship and marriage, belief and, of course, ritual.

This correspondence view of anthropological endeavour can be compared and contrasted with the approach taken by Bateson in the sections of Naven which lead to the formulation of the notion of schismogenesis. In this part of his text, Bateson grounds the naven activities in Iatmul eidos and ethos before providing a dynamic model of action which subsumes both eidos and ethos. Action, in the form of schismogenesis, then occupies the space thus cleared. In this way Bateson both contextualises the naven within Iatmul phenomenology and ontology, and indicates the possibility of viewing the Iatmul as humans acting in terms of a culturally specific situation, while at the same time creating and re-creating the elements, behaviours, gestures and styles which constitute that situation. Here Bateson shows himself to be an adept contextualiser, seeking to frame human action in the terms of the actors,

rather than seeking correspondences between Iatmul culture and our own. However, in the chapter on schismogenesis this stress on context is betrayed when the author attempts to justify the formulation by endowing it with universal, cross-cultural significance and applicability. This is also a notable feature of the chapter on ethos. Finally, at the end of the book, the correspondence view of schismogenesis is privileged at the expense of the contextual view in the use of logical typing and cybernetic theory, introduced as universals which lie behind all human action in all cultures. They are seen as universal truths which can be applied to culturally specific problems.

Thus, after proving himself as potentially a perceptive contextualiser, Bateson turns back to correspondence and rationalism. What encouraged him to do this? I suggest that the answer to this question lies in Bateson's scientific prejudices which led him to seek truths of universal applicability to the study of human culture and society. From the perspective of my thesis, the formulation of schismogenesis approaches the arena of performance theory but ultimately eludes it. This is because of the important fact that Bateson does not follow through the implications of a performance perspective which would view the naven as a series of events which create and re-create relationships crucial to the workings of Iatmul society. Bateson maintains that it is the other way round, i.e. that Iatmul ethos produces schismogenic interaction and the naven. Someone interested in performance might suggest that it is instructive to consider the reverse possibility; that human action can be viewed in its own right as constituting discourses which exemplify ways of doing things, and that such practice then constitutes further action in the continuation of discourse and the elaboration of mores, attitudes to kin, gender stereotyping, the marking of stages in the life cycles of the participants, and so on - roughly speaking, that is to say, the elaboration of what Bourdieu has called "habitus" (1977). Seen in this light, action is both constitutive and constituting, rather than a mere reflection - or "expression" - of an underlying, immanent essence, whether that essence is assumed to be epistemo-

logical, phenomenological or ontological.

Bateson's problem throughout is that he is caught in one of the classic dilemmas - perhaps the dilemma - which faces all social anthropologists, between a faith in cultural context (and, by implication, relativism) on the one hand (after all, if cultures are all the same why bother to study them?), and on the other hand the belief that there is something essentially common to all cultures (otherwise, surely, it would be impossible to study other cultures in the first place). This dilemma has been well articulated by Victoria Hamilton in a review of a book concerned with the theoretical background to family oriented psychotherapy - a field in which Bateson was extremely influential:

'...these concepts are part of two separate, and conflicting, belief systems. One holds that there is an absolute true reality which may be accurately represented by the correct method, the other that theoretical schemas are relative to a specific culture and time' (1981: 23).

In Naven Bateson falls prey to a common symptom which anthropologists display as a result of being caught in this dilemma, a symptom which Leach (1961) addressed, and which became known as "secondary ethnocentrism". Ethnographic research in a particular society is framed within a particular methodological perspective. The latter then becomes "theory" which is often applied to societies other than that studied by the anthropologist in question, i.e. in the process of cross-cultural comparison. Thus, approaches to data very quickly change from phases in a methodology to being solidified into grand theory. This kind of reification can be seen in many of the examples of the analysis of ritual which I have examined in my previous chapters, for example in the works of Lévi-Strauss and Turner. I would suggest that Bateson can be added to this list. Schismogenesis, logical typing and cybernetic theory remained the cornerstones of all Bateson's later work. Although the Balinese did not fit the Iatmul picture of schismogenic maximisers, for Bateson the Balinese played a version of the game in the "maximisation of balance". But if schismogenesis per se could not be applied to the Baliense à la the Iatmul, it could be

applied to American mental patients diagnosed as schizophrenic. The internalisation of schismogenesis within the self is one of the crucial facets of the double bind theory. Logical typing and cybernetics feature heavily in the papers on play and creativity. They form essences which are seen as working for all humans in all societies, e.g. creative play and art are made possible by the manipulation of logical types, while the plight of the schizophrenic is the result of his logical typing being manipulated for him by others. I would not deny that much of this work is illuminating, but the problem posed by it from a performance perspective is that any comprehensive, cross-cultural theory of human action requires for its basis a comprehensive, cross-cultural theory of society, which in turn will involve a fairly rigid set of metaphysical assumptions. I would argue that schismogenesis and logical typing are "ways of talking about things", rather than essences at work out in the world. But Bateson attempts to make the model of logical typing applicable to all societies and cultures. Again, it is a matter of specificity; the Iatmul might think like that, or they might not; the Balinese might think like that, or they might not - and so on. There is no logical, or onto-logical, essence existing in the world as an objective fact.

Whereas the correspondence view of society stresses the necessary and universal operation of scientific, rational enquiry, contextualism stresses the cultural context within which human action takes place. A strategy linked to a contextual and relativist approach, in contrast to an approach which stresses correspondence and rationalism, can be summed up by the term coherence. An anthropologist interested in coherence asks how different phenomena in the same culture relate to each other. Questions asked about coherence are attempts to make sense of context.

The choice here is not composed of a rigid dichotomy between rationality on the one hand and relativism on the other; the coherence view leaves open the question whether or not data from other cultures can be compared with data from our own. If we

follow this route, we might agree with Evans-Pritchard's illuminating suggestion that it is more important to be 'first...an ethnographer and secondly...a social anthropologist' (1965 : 34).

It is enlightening to consider briefly the differences in approach illustrated by the work of Bateson and Evans-Pritchard. As I have argued throughout the thesis, Bateson's approach to culture remained avowedly scientific. Despite the fact that much of his work can be read as a refreshing riposte to the simplistic crudities of sociobiology, he never escaped the positivist prejudices acquired during his upbringing and in his education as a natural scientist. To the end of his life, Bateson saw the study of culture as a necessary adjunct to the study of the natural world. Owing to his sophistication and subtlety, his vision of a "necessary unity" between Mind and Nature led him to some of the remarkable insights to be found in his collected papers (1973) and summarised in his last book (1980). I am in some sympathy, for example, with the following statement, made at the onset of a period during which, as Bateson mournfully announced, the very survival of humankind is at risk from a whole range of self-imposed ecological crises:

'This identity between the unit of mind and the unit of evolutionary survival is of very great importance, not only theoretical, but also ethical' (1973(e) : 435).

This is an extract from a paper written long after Bateson's move out of anthropology proper, but the following page contains a pronouncement which I would argue elaborates the theme of the biology/anthropology loop while also exemplifying that crucial element in Bateson's thinking which marks his limitations as an anthropologist:

'The individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is immanent also in pathways and messages outside the body; and there is a larger Mind of which the individual Mind is only a sub-system. This larger Mind is comparable to God and is perhaps what some people mean by "God", but it is still immanent in the total interconnected social system and planetary ecology' (1973(e) : 436).

The problem with this for an anthropologist, particularly an anthropologist adopting a coherence perspective, is that "mind"

is a product of "culture" and that particular minds are products of particular cultures. Sahlins has criticised this picture of "Mind" as a sub-set of a higher-order biosphere, noting that a

'sacrifice of the autonomy of culture (and cultural science) would be the consequence of its subordination within a larger system of natural constraint. Insofar as the latter is conceived as a cybernetic order, as is common in ecological studies, including culture in a "unified science" would also entail displacing the property of "mind" from humanity to the ecosystem' (1976: 90, author's parenthesis).

Human culture, that is the entire domain of cultural specifics which forms the field of research of social anthropology, is subsumed within the functional workings of the biosphere and thus disappears as an authentic and innovative realm in its own right.

'Within the ecosystem, the interactional node or subsystem encompassing man and his immediate environs would be characterized by feedback relations as reciprocal and equal as those between any other elements of the circuit, notwithstanding that the man-nature transaction is mediated by culture. Culture here is merely the self-mediation of nature. It is merely the human mode of response, and hence systematically governed, inasmuch as man is but a functional variable of the whole - a reactive component in mutual determination with environmental variables, themselves as much subject to his object as vice versa' (1976: 90).

Evans-Pritchard, from a somewhat different perspective, criticises many kinds of use by anthropologists of the "comparative method" which aim at the construction of general laws believed to apply cross-culturally. We should ask ourselves,

'if we should not question whether the basic assumption which has so long been taken for granted, that there are any sociological laws of the kind sought; whether social facts, besides being remarkably complex, are not so totally different from those studied by the inorganic and organic sciences that neither the comparative method nor any other is likely to lead to the formulation of generalizations comparable to the laws of those sciences. We have to deal with values, sentiments, purposes, will reason, choice, as well as with historical circumstances' (1965 : 33).

In this passage Evans-Pritchard stresses his concern with cultural specifics and, more particularly, with what the philosopher Collingwood called "presuppositions".

For Collingwood, a presupposition is something which is involved in every question; we cannot ask questions without presuppositions. There are two kinds of presuppositions, relative and absolute. A relative presupposition is one which we believe to be verifiable, e.g. we might presuppose the accuracy of a measuring tape and we believe that we can demonstrate this accuracy in the act of measuring (1972: 29-30). But when we say that the tape is capable of measuring accurately because, say, accurate measurement per se is possible, then we are adhering to an absolute presupposition. Thus, for Collingwood, we can trace three important absolute presuppositions in the development of Western physics:

- '(i) Some events have causes.
- (ii) All events have causes.
- (iii) No events have causes' (1972: 51).

These absolute propositions, according to Collingwood, lie behind Newtonian, Kantian and Einsteinian physics respectively. Absolute presuppositions change with history and for Collingwood the proper study of metaphysics is the study of changes in absolute presuppositions through history. This often leads to resistance from scholars in other fields:

'In my own experience I have found that when natural scientists express hatred of "metaphysics" they are usually expressing this dislike of having their absolute presuppositions touched' (1972: 44).

For Collingwood, therefore, "metaphysics" consists of a historical account because, following Hegel, Collingwood maintains that there are no ideas outside history and the specific circumstances which arise within different historical epochs. All presuppositions, and therefore all ideas, must be framed in terms of their historical situation. In the essay quoted above, Evans-Pritchard refers approvingly to Collingwood, and it can be argued that there are important parallels between the work of the two thinkers. Evans-Pritchard's most notable book achieves its results by a close description which allows the reader to view witchcraft as a phenomenon which can only be understood in the light of data specific to Azande society and culture (1936). It is a masterly exercise in

cultural translation. (7) Azande witchcraft is culturally framed in a sense in which Bateson's description of the naven, ultimately, is not. There is no elaboration of a "general theory of witchcraft", no need for the use of an explanatory model comparable with Bateson's use of logical typing and cybernetics. Again I quote Evans-Pritchard, from the same essay, on his Azande book:

'Other people can, and some have, made studies of witchcraft in other societies in the light of which it will be possible to say whether some of my conclusions are likely to hold as general ones while others are valid, assuming the observations and interpretations to have been correct, only for Zande society or for some societies and not others. If a sufficient number of studies of that topic are made we end up with certain general conclusions about it, though I would not claim for them the status of universal laws. I do not see what other procedure can be adopted...I would suggest that it is in trying to solve...small problems and not by attempting sweeping generalizations that we shall make progress: piecemeal and little by little, it is true, but firmly grounded in ethnographic fact' (1965 : 31).

Evans-Pritchard's concerns here can be seen as arising out of a humanist approach to science in the tradition of Collingwood, an approach which can be compared with the more recent Continental school of the "history of the present" associated with Foucault (although the latter might have questioned whether his work should be viewed as a deconstruction of humanism rather than as a contribution to humanistic studies as such.)

In contrast to Evans-Pritchard, Bateson's approach from Naven onwards can be viewed as a combination of empiricism and rationalism; ultimately, Bateson's concern is not with cultural translation, but how to build a bridge between Mind (or Culture/Society writ large) and Substance (or Nature, the Biosphere or Eco-System). Bateson, I have suggested, came to view the solution to the representation of reality in the form of a total mega-system constructed out of a hierarchic series of strata or levels, with Mind as a sub-system of the greater whole, or 'organism-in-its-environment' (1973 (e) : 426).

There is an illuminating parallel here with Lévi-Strauss who, like Bateson, privileges the notion of "communication" as a key or

root metaphor throuout his writings. There are however important differences between the two approaches, a detailed consideration of which lies outside the scope of this thesis. Briefly, for Lévi-Strauss the communication metaphor is grounded in the necessary logics produced by the operations of the human brain. These logics, which can be reduced to one and one only, namely the logic of binary opposition, generate the structures observable as kinship systems, rules of marriage, myth and so on. This constitutes an essentially rationalist picture of human activity, and it is this picture which marks Lévi-Strauss as an intellectualist who places the cognitive domain as the fundamental arena of social and cultural activity. Bateson's own brand of rationalism, on the other hand, leads him to a project which aims to ground culture and society within an empirical whole, a "natural order of things", with the theory of logical types providing the ladder on which can be built the "Steps" to an Ecology of Mind.

In contrast to both Bateson and Lévi-Strauss, writers such as Collingwood, Evans-Pritchard and Foucault would argue that the notion of culture as a communication system must be viewed as a product of the anthropologist's own epistemology rather than as a universal, cross-cultural essence which is held to account for all alien epistemologies. In Collingwood's terms Bateson's statement that 'All behaviour is communication' (quoted in Wilden, 1980: 1) would constitute an absolute presupposition. In their different ways, both Lévi-Strauss and Bateson have been major contributors to the powerful contemporary metaphor which views the world as a sytem of communication. For an anthropologist interested in performance, perhaps, the power of this metaphor might lie largely in the fact of its constant production and reproduction over the past twenty or thirty years.

There is a final and remarkable similarity between Bateson and a major influence on Lévi-Strauss. I am referring to de Saussure's model of language which is based on the opposition between identity and difference. This is similar to Bateson's own definition of the fundamental unit of cybernetic/mental process, the "bit" of

information, in his statement that:

'what we mean by information - the elementary unit of information - is a difference which makes a difference' (1973(e) : 428, author's emphasis).

I have found no evidence to the effect that Bateson ever read de Saussure, but there can be little doubt that the notion of the difference which makes a difference as constituting a "bit" of information acted as a crucial input to the early work on cybernetics by researchers such as Wiener (1964) and the related work on game theory by Morgenstern and von Neumann (1944), in which Bateson himself was involved and which in turn influenced his own later thinking (cf. Lipset 1982, pp. 178-183).

In Chapter Ten above, I noted that Ricoeur made a distinction between semiotics, the theory of signs developed out of de Saussure, and semantics. According to Ricoeur, while the latter is capable of analysing sentences which can only be understood as exercises in predication, the realm of semiotics is limited to a consideration of the one-way passage from signifier to signified. Both Lévi-Strauss and Bateson, in their own ways, are constrained by a semiotic approach; for the former, difference becomes simply "opposition", while for Bateson it forms the unit, or "bit", which carries information. For Bateson every human action (and indeed every action of every organism everywhere) is viewed as an exercise in the carrying of information.

'When I strike the head of a nail with a hammer, an impulse is transmitted to its point. But it is a semantic error, a misleading metaphor, to say that what travels in an axon is an "impulse". It could directly be called "news of a difference" (1973 (e) : 428).

I would argue that one way of reading Bateson's works as a whole is as a proto-structuralist exercise. In Chapter Six above I tried to show that Bateson's analysis of Iatmul society implied many of the features later made explicit by Lévi-Strauss in the latter's formulation of alliance theory. I would now suggest that the stress throughout Bateson's oeuvre on information and communication invites a comparison with Lévi-Strauss's model of culture as a system of signs. Both styles of structuralism rely on a

semiotic rather than a semantic model of communication and language, and may usefully be viewed in the light of the work of later, post-structuralist theorists such as Ricoeur who stress the predicative, semantic nature of linguistic communication.

Finally, I would refer to the deconstruction of the de Saussurian binary opposition between signifier and signified carried out by Derrida (1973). Derrida replaces de Saussure's notion of "difference" with the term "différance", a term which plays with the space between signifier and signified in its double sense which indicates both "difference" and "deferral". The use of différance both retains de Saussure's original differentiation between signifier and signified, while at the same time indicating the perpetual distance between language and its referent, between intention and meaning and between utterance and origin. As Norris summarises it:

'This involves the idea that meaning is always deferred, perhaps to the point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification. Différance not only designates this theme but offers in its own unstable meaning a graphic example of the process at work' (1982: 32, author's emphasis).

We can perhaps utilize Derrida's notion here and combine it with Goodman's use of the idea of "exemplification" (cf. Chapter Three, pp. 66-68 above), to suggest that we might start, not by assuming that reality is a communication or information system, but by asking "What are the implications of viewing reality as, or understanding it as, or experiencing it as, a communication or information system?" We should not assume, with Bateson, that we can delineate an analytical category such as "play" which is reducible to one mode of description, i.e. one based on the manipulation of logical types. In the light of the work of Foucault, we can ask how it is that the notion of "play" has assumed such graphic importance in the writings of a prominent biologist/anthropologist within the context of the modern episteme (cf. Chapter Thirteen, p. 293 below). I would ask if Bateson's discourse on "play" is open to the same kind of historical analysis to which Foucault has subjected the discourse on sexuality

(1981). In the wake of Derrida, we can ask if Bateson's analysis of the naven as the product of a cybernetic communications system - "schismogenesis" - restricts the "play of signification" of instances of the naven to a series of delimited signifier-signified loops working within the confines of an assumed essence (the naven, as opposed to all potential navens).

If Derrida is correct, if all signification relies on an endless supplementarity, then we must ask not whether Bateson is right - for, as I hope I have shown throughout the thesis, Naven is a crucial text for contemporary anthropology - but we should ask, how many other ways are there in which he could have been right? We must enquire not only into the Iatmul play of signification, but Bateson's own. It is a remarkable achievement on Bateson's part that, in an important sense, he managed to do precisely that in his own text. I would argue that in the pages of Naven he was as close to a deconstructive reading of his own work as any writer could be in the 1930s. But it was not possible for him to extend his own play of signification beyond the cybernetic analysis.

The formulation of ethos and of schismogenesis brings human action into prominence, while at the same time concealing it as the end product of an all-embracing system. This failure, which is also crucially a partial success, is I suggest traceable to the underlying assumption that the naven is open to a final analysis, effecting a closure within the domain of the category called "ritual". There is here no question of other possibilities. These possibilities would be signposted by Derrida's notions of freeplay, supplementarity and différance. To consider such possibilities would not remove the naven from the category of "ritual" altogether, but would allow us to open up domains of descriptive and theoretical approaches which would reserve judgement on whether the naven is a ritual, or whether certain instances of naven can be considered to be rituals, or not. The naven could then be reconsidered in terms of action, of which ritual would be one possible classification. Such an approach to action would leave previous categories such as ritual, belief and symbolism open to criticism without denying their possible validity.

I am aware that "performance" is an emic category, as are ritual, belief and symbolism. Recalling my own observation at the beginning of this chapter that an important question for anthropologists is, "What can we usefully ask?", I would suggest that a focus on performance should not start by asking, "What is performance?" Needham and Sperber have argued that the respective questions, "What is belief?" and "What is symbolism?" are unanswerable; I would argue, similarly, that the question, "What is performance?" is also unanswerable. There is no essence, "performance", at work out there in the world - a fact which brings us back again to our own categories. An anthropology of performance would not be tenable, or valid, or even possible, unless it began from the standpoint of a consideration of the history of the notion of "performance" in our own culture. Only then can we ask about performances in other cultures, for we can never be sure of the truth of any description predicated on an emic category the validity of which has been taken for granted. Ultimately, there can be no true descriptions; what is true is that there are descriptions.

NOTES to Chapter Twelve

- (1) This was to become an important theme of Bateson's later work; cf. particularly 1973 (e) : 423-424.
- (2) Bateson first noted the possibility of schismogenesis occurring within an individual personality in the chapter on schismogenesis in the first edition of Naven (1936: pp. 179-182).
- (3) Bateson's notion of "metacommunication" would appear to be similar to Jakobson's "poetic" or "aesthetic" function of language - cf. Hawkes (1977: 83-87).
- (4) It can be argued that Bateson's concern with play as an intellectual puzzle is traceable to his childhood. Bateson's biographer Lipset claims that youngsters of the 'academic middle class...at the turn of the century...(were) treated more as students than as children' (1982: 43, my parenthesis). Lipset records that Bateson had recalled having had 'a didactic childhood' in which 'walks were field trips and conversations were explanatory' (1982: 44).
- (5) The "anti-psychiatry" of Laing and other radical psychiatrists is based on similar premises; Laing himself has always recognised Bateson's double bind theory as a major influence on his work. For a critical account of Laing's ideas and career, cf. Sedgwick, 1982 (Chapters 3 & 4).
- (6) I am grateful to Liam Hudson and to Alfred Gell (personal communications) for the critical observations on Bateson's double bind theory in this paragraph.
- (7) Evans-Pritchard, of course, has not been without his critics (e.g. Gellner 1970 and Winch 1970). To explore their important comments would, however, be outside the scope of this thesis.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF PERFORMANCE

IN THE ORDER OF THINGS Foucault traces the development of the human sciences, including psycho-analysis, linguistics and anthropology, as constituting a particular field of study, that of Man (1974). This field of study arises at the end of the nineteenth century. Before then:

'man did not exist...and the human sciences did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, some practical concern, it was decided to include man (willy-nilly, and with a greater or lesser degree of success) among the objects of science - among which it has perhaps not been proved even yet that it is absolutely possible to class him; they appeared when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known' (1974: 344-345, author's parenthesis).

The human sciences constitute the underlying presuppositions, or in Foucault's term the "episteme", of contemporary Western consciousness, introducing that style of thought we call "modern" and which Foucault describes as "ironic". This modern consciousness both constitutes a certain view of the human, and is constituted by it. We can summarise Foucault's picture of the ironic episteme by saying that it dichotomises Man into a series of appearances, or surfaces, on the one hand, and a series of hidden depths, on the other. The task of linguists, psycho-analysts and anthropologists is to explain the surface appearances in terms of the hidden depths. The notable works produced in the era of the "ironic episteme", those of Freud, Chomsky and Lévi-Strauss, for example, all conceive of human reality as a structure constructed from a series of layers which have to be uncovered with the aim of discovering and describing the "truths" concealed beneath, be they the truths of the workings of the unconscious mind, or the dynamics of transformational grammar or, in Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, the truths of human reason and binary logics. It is with Foucault's notion of the ironic, or "surface-depth", episteme in mind that I would attempt an exploration of our contemporary notions of performance.

In the concluding section of the thesis I can do no more than

indicate possible starting points to the study of performance, but I would begin by considering the work of a number of writers whose work has had a crucial impact on theory and practice in the Western drama of the twentieth century, and thereby on our notions of performance. These writers would include Stanislavski, Brecht and Artaud as well as Brook and Grotowski. I would then discuss the possibilities of criticising these notions in the light of a post-modernist perspective, that is to say a perspective which would take into account both Derrida's attack on authenticity and presence, and Foucault's "history of the present". I would also refer to the recent critique of the ideology of "representation" by Baudrillard.

A classic picture of theatre-as-illusion, but an illusion which promises a portrayal of the "real", is to be found in the works of Constantin Stanislavski. These works, including An Actor Prepares (1980) and Building A Character (1979), remain a blue-print for the work of actors and directors in realist Western theatre and other media. For Stanislavski, the actor's task is to uncover the truth of his text by discovering the hidden "sub-text" which lies underneath the printed dialogue. Thus, the text of the play is a surface appearance which conceals a truth, the truth of the sub-text. It is perhaps instructive to compare this with Freud's model of the psyche as constituting a "conscious" which attempts to disguise the truth of the patient's desires, desires which are situated in the hidden domain of the "unconscious". (1) "Motivation", in both psycho-analysis and in the realist theatre of Stanislavski, is something which begins as implicit but which must ultimately be made explicit. In an important sense, the aim is the opposite in each case; whereas the analytic patient is encouraged to shed the already-formed fantasy "self", adopted through strategies of repressive defences, in order to recognise an authentic "self" concealed since childhood, for the Stanislavskian actor the role must be given verisimilitude by the creation of the illusory "presence" of a "real" character on the stage. As Stanislavski writes:

'in ordinary life, truth is what really exists, what a person really knows. Whereas on the stage it consists of something

that is not actually in existence but which could happen' (1980: 128).

In the Stanislavskian theatre and in psycho-analysis, the "work" is mediated by a co-ordinating authority, a repository of mastery; the rehearsals in the theatre of realism are managed by the director, whereas in the latter case, of course, the patient's exploration of his psyche is made possible through the manifold strategies of the analyst via transference, counter-transference and so on.

The similarities between the processes involved in the preparation of a piece of realist theatre and those in psycho-analysis - between the relationships between actor and director in the first case, and between patient and analyst in the second - have not gone unnoticed by other writers. The analyst Stephen A. Kurtz has stated in a recent article:

'The psychoanalytic situation is...a theatre whose "play" can develop according to internal or external necessity. Allowing it to evolve by its own rules, however, requires the highest level of expertise' (1986: 103).

It can be argued that the metaphor of therapy-as-performance has become a major facet of much psychotherapeutic theory and practice in the West during the past twenty years. I would cite the development of psychodrama, the encounter group movement and EST, as examples of this. (2)

We should view Stanislavski's work, which has had a commanding influence on the theatre and other performance media in the contemporary West, in a broader perspective and see it as deriving from the notion of art as the imitation of reality found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, and also as an expression of the ironic episteme which stresses the surface/depth dichotomy. (3) It is tempting, too, to apply a Derridean deconstruction to An Actor Prepares and the other titles in the Stanislavskian canon, which would view them as illustrations of the metaphysics of presence exemplified in the notion that the realist mise-en-scène of any production can uncover the "truth" of any given piece of scripted dialogue. Such exercises are beyond the scope of this

thesis.

My intention here is to question the implications of our notions of theatre and performance, of which Stanislavskian realism is a crucial example, for an anthropological approach to performance. Perhaps we should reconsider the "dramaturgical" picture of ritual and society, as represented by the works of Turner and Geertz, from this perspective. I would suggest, for example, that a comparison can be made between the Stanislavskian project of reconstructing the lived reality of a theatre text with Turner's picture of society as a series of "social dramas" and with Geertz's description of Balinese ritual as the symbolic expression of a "theatre state". With Derrida, we can argue that, for Turner and Geertz as for Stanislavsky, "there is nothing outside the text", whether the text is that of a written dialogue, or that of a "ritual process" the truth of which can be uncovered by hermen-
e-utic interpretation.

I would now like to briefly consider the work of Brecht as constituting an important development of the Stanislavskian tradition. While Brecht was in some sympathy with Stanislavski's desire to bring truth to the stage, Brecht wanted to move beyond a mere "realism" or "naturalism" towards an "epic" theatre which would present "truths" not as given and necessary, but as creations of particular social and economic circumstances. In Brecht's view this could be achieved by highlighting the historical forces at work in any given situation, while playing down certain of the imperatives demanded by Stanislavski. Both directors aimed at clarity in the theatre, but for Brecht the important point was to show, not how individuals act "really and truly" in the real and true world, but how our beliefs as to what constitute the "real" and the "true" are the results of supra-individual necessities manifested in relations of power, class and dominance. This is achieved by means of the famous verfremdung, or alienation effect, which allows actors - in direct contrast to those working in the Stanislavskian mode - to step outside their "roles" and to comment about the events, characters and situations portrayed in the play.

Brecht's intention is always to foster a social awareness in the minds of his audience, rather than a concern for the plight of individuals. Thus, the aim of a production of Mother Courage should not be to evoke sympathy for the Mother and her children, but to show:

'That in wartime the big profits are not made by little people. That war, which is a continuation of business by other means, makes the human virtues fatal even to their possessors. That no sacrifice is too great for the struggle against war' (1980: 101).

To achieve this, a sacrifice of "illusion" must be made.

'The illusion created by the theatre must be a partial one, so that it can always be recognised as illusion. Reality, however completely represented, must be changed by art, in order that it may be seen to be subject to change and treated as such (1980: 100).

Hawkes has summarised the views of Brecht here in comparing the aims of the school of Russian Formalism with the theatre of alienation. For both the Formalists and the Brechtians,

'the object of art is seen to be the revolutionary goal of making the audience aware that the institutions and social formulae which they inherit are not eternal and "natural" but historical and man-made, and so capable of change through human action' (1977: 63).

It is this insight into the historical particularism of the human condition that, I would argue, makes Brecht an important thinker for any anthropological approach to performance. The manipulation of the relationship between actors and audience to be found in any Brechtian production which retains Brechtian integrity questions our preconceptions as to the nature of that relationship and, therefore, our preconceptions as to the nature of performance itself. It is this challenge which arguably is lacking in the dramaturgical picture of ritual and society. I would suggest that a comparison of activities such as ritual and theatre as different kinds of performances will not be fruitful as long as it is limited to a consideration of particular dramatic structures, forms and content; as long as, that is, it is constrained by Western notions of drama, play, theatre and performance. We should widen

our range of enquiry as ethnographers of performance and ask what is held to be "performance" in any one given society and for whom. We should investigate the particular modes of experience and activity which, when engaged in certain kinds of interactive nexus, produce the activities which might be described as "performance", whatever the outward manifestation of such events. It is because of these imperatives that the question, "What is performance?", is not askable.

What is askable, and what may constitute a useful starting point for any particular approach to performance, is, "What are the implications of viewing certain activities as performance in any given society?" This question should be asked, because it does not postulate an essence of performance - or drama, or theatre, or ritual - either in the particular society, nor in the world at large. We cannot presuppose an antinomy between "performance" and "normal behaviour", simply because that antinomy is such a crucial one for us. As anthropologists we should not be tempted by Peter Brook's vision of a "universal theatre". One should always return to specific ethnography, and remember that the notion of "theatre" is itself culturally specific. What underlies a vision like Brook's, and many of his contemporaries in Western drama, is a peculiarly modern Western yearning for a unified, pan-cultural consciousness which can be found in, and which can express itself through, such a universal theatre. But what Brook is doing is itself the workings of human consciousness, a consciousness formed within a particular cultural milieu entranced by the attractions of the alien, the other, the exotic - attractions which are often shared by both anthropologists and avant-garde theatre people. Neither should we ignore, as writers such as Geertz, Turner and Schechner have done, the crucial question of what form indigenous notions of theatre and performance might take; we should not assume that the members of other cultures share contemporary or recent Western notions. The question might rather be, "Which notions are centred by which societies?" This is a question which can only be answered by means of specific ethnographic research.

Here I suggest we can fruitfully refer to Wittgenstein's stress on "use" in his later philosophy. I do not imply that we should follow him when he asserts that the meaning of any utterance can be demonstrated by its use, but that enquiries into performance as "action" and performance as "use" would decentre recent anthropological concerns with "belief", "symbolism" and "ritual" and focus on culturally specific usage. We might, for example, take up the implications of the work of the Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski whose recent "theatre laboratory" experiments have focused on the notion of "paratheatre", a term which refers to a jumble of elements which, in various combinations, can be viewed as forming what we might want to describe, in our culture, as "theatre". Such elements would include games, play, clowning, conjuring, magic, ritual, acrobatics, dance, story telling and caricature. **(4)** For the performance theorist, any of these - or any combination of them - might constitute performance, or they might not. What is important is how such elements are conceived - if at all - and how they are used, or not used as the case might be, in particular cultures.

The antinomy between normal behaviour and performance alluded to above forms the basis of Artaud's critique of representation as the foundation of all Western theatre (Artaud, 1958. cf. also Esslin, 1976). As Derrida has shown in an evocative article, Artaud's tragedy was to endure the realisation that his "theatre of cruelty" which would effect the closure of representation remains a necessary impossibility (Derrida, 1978: 232-250). It is necessary for Artaud because he wanted to transcend and transform his own culturally moulded consciousness by taking theatre outside the stage of representation; outside, that is, the modern stage which interprets action in terms of hidden depths. It is impossible because the theatre of cruelty would escape the metaphysics of presence. This meant, in Derrida's words, that Artaud

'wanted to save the purity of a presence without interior difference and without repetition (or, paradoxically amounting to the same thing, the purity of a pure difference)' (Derrida, 1978: 249, author's parenthesis).

Representation, for both Artaud and Derrida, implies repetition - and we should remember that in French, 'répétition' means 'rehearsal'. Artaud is himself caught within representation and within repetition. 'Because it has already begun, representation therefore has no end' (Derrida, 1978: 250). In the light of the post-modernism of the 1980s, however, it is possible to glimpse the closure of representation. But this closure does not invite, as would have been the case for Artaud, a joyful festival of pure performance in which

'The director and the participants (who would no longer be actors or spectators) would cease to be the instruments and organs of representation' (Derrida, 1978: 237, author's parenthesis and emphases).

Rather, according to one view the closure of representation has been effected by means of a technology of mass media which dissolves signifier and signified, not in a play of signification, but in 'the radical negation of the sign as value' (Baudrillard, 1983: 11). For Baudrillard, our contemporary consciousness is at the mercy of an escalation of representation conceived originally as 'the reflection of a basic reality' but which is then able to 'mask and pervert a basic reality' including the masking of 'the absence of a basic reality' and which, finally:

'bears no relation to any reality whatever; it is its own pure simulacrum' (Baudrillard, 1983: 11, author's emphasis).

We are then left, not with a closure of representation as the end of a dichotomy between representation and its object nor that between reality and illusion, nor do we find ourselves living in the "global village" of instant, world-wide communication envisioned by McLuhan; we find ourselves instead in a world where 'the real is no longer what it used to be', and where 'nostalgia assumes its full meaning' (1983: 11). In this world, that of the 'ecstasy of communication', the closure of representation has been effected by the obliteration of any "reality" which can be "represented". Instead we have

'a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality: of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. There is an

escalation of the true, of the lived experience; a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared' (1983: 12).

In the ecstasy of communication, all functions 'are abolished in a single dimension, that of communication' (1985 : 131). For Baudrillard; this ecstasy marks an obscenity which

'begins precisely when there is no more spectacle, no more scene, when all becomes transparence and immediate visibility, when everything is exposed to the harsh and inexorable light of information and communication' (1985 : 130).

For Baudrillard, the modern West faces the obliteration of both public and private space. The former is being destroyed in a plethora of advertising and news media in which

'the theatre of the social and the theatre of politics are both reduced more and more to a large soft body with many heads';

the latter by means of the same media which bombards us with slices of "real" life in the forms of exposés, documentary programmes and the like. Public space and private space disappear, for 'the one is no longer a spectacle, the other no longer a secret' (1985 : 130).

An anthropologist interested in "performance" should take note of Baudrillard's analysis of our present predicament. For it would seem as if Andy Warhol's notorious aphorism that "In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes" no longer appears quite so fatuous nor, perhaps, quite so enticing. The fact that celebrity, performance, fame and stardom are such powerful notions for our own contemporary consciousness, notions which pervade our thinking, our language, our communications media and our descriptions of human relationships over an entire spectrum from salesmanship to academic debate and psychotherapy, makes an anthropology of performance an intriguing possibility, but a dangerous one. Baudrillard warns us that we might no longer have access to the Western theatre. In a sense in which Artuad could not have predicted, and which he certainly would not have welcomed, the theatre is closed.

NOTES to Chapter Thirteen

- (1) Freud and Stanislavski produced their most innovative work at the same time. It was during the 1890s that Stanislavski began to direct his productions of plays by Chekhov and others which made the Moscow Art Theatre famous. Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams was first published in 1900.
- (2) A recent study of "stage fright" amongst actors, written by a psychotherapist who also works as a theatre director and acting teacher, focuses on an important topic which deserves further research by anthropologists, namely the relationship between performance and anxiety (Aaron, 1986). Many psychoanalysts have taken the theatre metaphor into the individual psyche itself with, for example, dreams being seen as in some sense comparable with theatrical performances. (See, e.g., Resnik, 1987). The classic work on psychodrama is by Moreno (1946). But, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy apart, the theatre metaphor has been ubiquitous in Western culture for a long time. Shakespeare, of course, knew this very well and used it throughout his work. In the process he also ensured its continuing longevity. (See, e.g., Righter, 1967).
- (3) For a politically based critique of Aristotle's theory of tragedy, cf. Boal (1979). For a wide-ranging review of the philosophical, aesthetic and historical tensions between the writings of Plato and Aristotle and the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, cf. Kaufman (1969).
- (4) For an introduction to Grotowski's notion of paratheatre, I am indebted to Nick Sales of Exeter University's Drama Department (personal communication).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: CONCLUSION

IN MY THESIS I have attempted a reading of Bateson's Naven as a text on performance, and I have tried to link this reading with suggestions as to the possibilities of, and the dangers which arise from, an anthropological approach to performance. The opening chapters introduced Bateson as an important thinker whose central ethnographic text employed strategies which are applicable to contemporary concerns with the criticism and deconstruction of established anthropological techniques and categories. In Chapter One I also commented on various contemporary views of ritual which bear on my own concerns in the thesis. I suggested in Chapter Six that Bateson's analysis of Iatmul kinship and marriage patterns foreshadowed Lévi-Straussian alliance theory. In Chapters Seven and Eight I tried to show how an emphasis on performance might open out Bateson's analysis of the naven, with particular reference to a system of asymmetrical sister exchange and the life cycle of Iatmul males. In Chapter Nine, I suggested that a feminist critique of Iatmul gender ethos might assist in questioning Iatmul emic gender stereotyping with regard to the performances of the men and with regard to the wider social interactions in the society, e.g. those concerned with economics, housekeeping and so on. Chapter Nine dealt with Bateson's important formulation of schismogenesis, which, I attempted to show, formed the high point of Bateson's analysis of the naven. At the end of my reading of Bateson's analysis, I tried to demonstrate that Bateson's struggle to free himself from established anthropological thinking (that is, in the terms of the 1930s, from structural-functionalism) was ultimately checked by his predilection for scientific determinism and universal cross-cultural model building.

In Chapter Eleven I reviewed some of the recent texts which I take to be symptomatic of important trends in the study of performance from an anthropological perspective. I raised doubts as to the validity of the "dramaturgical" picture of ritual and society espoused by such writers as Turner and Schechner, for in the hands of such writers everything in the social picture quickly

becomes a performance; this makes any description of "performance" per se difficult if not impossible. I then drew on recent work by Hollis and Taylor which points out the limitations of views of social action, and of performance, which rely on notions of role and persona, and on individual consciousness, respectively. Chapter Twelve continued my critique of Bateson's search for cross-cultural universals, in a brief consideration of his later work. Finally, in Chapter Thirteen I suggested that anthropologists need to re-examine Western categories such as "performance", "drama" and "theatre" before they attempt to describe and analyse what they take to be "performances" in other cultures. I ended the thesis with Baudrillard's warning as to the vacuous emptiness of our present day obsession with media and "communications", and with what might seem to some a depressingly pessimistic view of how this obsession might vitiate any future attempt at delimiting an anthropological approach to performance.

Throughout the thesis I have deliberately refrained from any overt attempt at a definition of "performance". I wanted to allow a broad arena of potential implications of the term to arise in the course of my exposition, rather than to attempt to lay down a strict "meaning" which would then require the ministrations of adherence and coherence for its justification. There is, however, the substantive problem that, as I suggested in Chapter Eleven, any activity can be viewed as a performance, or at least can be seen as having performative aspects. It does seem to me, however, that there are some statements we can make about performance with relative safety. I would agree with Turner that 'Performance... is always doubled' (1982: 105); it is linked to many words which are prefixed with "re-"; reflexivity, reflection, restatement, reliving, retelling, recreation (in its "double" sense of both relaxation and creating something anew) and so on.

I have suggested at various points in the thesis that a performance perspective might be of use in dissolving the powerful dichotomies which still inform much anthropological thinking and writing; the dichotomy, for example, between mind and body, or between intellect and affect; or between intellect/affect and

action, or between instrumental and expressive. In Chapter Thirteen I suggested that anthropologists cannot presuppose an antinomy between "performance" and "normal behaviour". A mistrust of this antinomy has been a central theme of the thesis. It might appear ironic to suggest that dichotomies might be dissolved by means of a notion as embedded in doubling as performance appears to be; but if anthropologists of the 1990s are to take up the serious challenges posed by the "reflexive" trends of the anthropology of the late 1980s, there are, perhaps, even more curious ironies around the next epistemological corner. The present disquiet which many anthropologists have voiced at the centrality of the notions of "meaning", "interpretation" and "truth", reflects ("re-" again!) a turning away from the modern epistemic concern with surfaces and depths, and a movement towards an interest in surfaces for their own sake. Thus, the doubling of reflexive anthropology in its turning back, questioning and (re-) examination of Western categories goes hand in hand with an appetite for the dissolution of the void between surface appearance and the concealed Truth which, to follow Foucault, constitutes the rationale for the "modern" consciousness but which, in Derrida's terms, has haunted Western thought for over two thousand years in its "ontotheological" faith in a Presence existing self-present to itself, beyond deferral and without need of a language to describe it.

It was Bateson's Iatmul ethnography which originally inspired the writing of this thesis, together with my own interest and involvement in performance. The anthropology of the future certainly requires ethnography as radical and as self-questioning as was Bateson's in his day; any anthropology of performance requires its own Navens even more so. A book such as Naven is not written without the taking of enormous risks. Any performer will acknowledge that no worthwhile performance is possible without risk; it is possible, on one view, to see performance as an exercise in risk. What is so for performance, must also be so for any anthropology of performance.

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