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"Do not have a hundred rubles, have instead a hundred friends": Money and sentiment in a perestroika-post-Soviet Siberian city

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Introduction

In Dostoevsky’s Brothers Karamazov, Mitya’s interrogation and conviction centre on his deepest, most shameful secret, which he says he kept hidden and would continue hiding “here,” gesturing at the centre of his chest. Eventually, the object of this gesture, which we have for a significant portion of the book assumed was Mitya’s soul, where such shameful secrets reside, takes the terrifying, concrete form of a pouch sewn from a stolen rag which was dangling under his shirt. Mitya insists that this ultimate shame was not that he stole his fiancé’s money, but that he had calculated, soullessly hidden it for his future use.

In 1992, in Omsk, Siberia, after several theatre workers’ untimely deaths, I heard rumors from theatre employees that the theatre was cursed because the managing director was a businessman. The Soviet system had featured, as Grossman (1986:49) said of Soviet-type economies, a “low moneyness of money,” and, as the devil-belief appeared among the peasants of the Cauca Valley, “an image illuminating a culture’s self-consciousness of the threat posed to its integrity” (Taussig 1980:96), the theatre’s managing director, no doubt soul-impaired because of what was assumed by most to be his self-interested focus on and skill for making money, became lightly suspect of being mystically related to the theatre’s misfortunes. One of the things I do in this paper is suggest that what was so commonly called “our Soviet system” (sistema) was a collage of different systems in tension, a tension lived and expressed through a form that sneakily and conveniently united those systems, the attenuation of money’s importance and its flagrantly opposed opposite, money’s exaggeration.

Robert C. Williams has claimed that an essential quality of what, around 1840, became understood as “the Russian soul” was resistance to “the rationalist, materialist, work-oriented, and time-conscious world” of the West (Williams 1970:573). Toward the end of the old regime, according to Jeffery Brooks, although Russia’s social structure and popular culture was rapidly becoming more like that of the West, “What clearly distinguished Russia was a strongly felt, clearly formulated, and widely held antipathy to the functioning of the market economy” (Brooks 1984:355). Vera Dunham discusses the term ‘menschanstvo’...[which] denotes a style of life or a personality structure,” and which by the late 19th century had come to mean petty bourgeoisie, “in a looser, [derogatory] usage,... helped to stimulate the revolution...[and] represents today, as it did before, a middle class mentality that is vulgar, imitative, greedy, and ridden with prejudice. Both deficiency of spirit and the defensive mechanisms of philistinism are implicit in the term” (Dunham 1990:17-19). In her discussion of the embourgeoisement of the Stalin-era Soviet Union, Dunham describes a "deal" struck between the

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postwar middle class and the Soviet regime based on shared interests in stabilization, normalization, and material progress, as a result of which “in the Soviet world, mestchnost appears at every rung of the social scale” (Ibid:19). But not only Bolsheviks (whose tenets, to cite Dunham, “abhor everything to do with the middle class”), intellectual elite and peasants were uneasy about “middle class” values — it is clear that the “middle class” itself, on one level or another, either treated material success with ambivalence or surrounded elements of it, such as money itself, by specific ritual behaviour. In popular literature during the last decades of the old regime, Brooks writes, “Money [gained from business or commerce], although clearly sought after . . . was regarded with ambivalence of hostility by much of Russian society, both because it was not old . . . wealth and because commerce and industry were associated with the exploitation of others” (Brooks 1984:278). “Both the definition of success and the ambiguity regarding its achievement reflect the peasant origins [and attitudes toward wealth] of many of the writers and most of the readers of popular Russian fiction . . . in a village economy . . . anyone who got rich seemed to do so at the expense of some other person . . . Russian village economy in the second half of the 19th century was . . . not a closed, zero sum game, but traditional attitudes toward wealth remained strong enough to form an admixture with newer attitudes” (Ibid:285-6). This was very much the case during perestroika and early post-Soviet eras. A majority of my provincial urban Siberian acquaintances claimed that market relations, even if a necessary evil, inevitably led to opposition between people. Anything bought and resold to one’s “brother” or “neighbour” (in any of an infinite number of senses which could potentially, if poetically or politically opportune, include any human) was still widely considered to be speculation, though more and more people engaged in it.

My Omsk acquaintances clearly still had “souls” which, though far from identical to those of 19th century Russians, were their descendants; the transformation Dunham documents from asceticism and the orthodox combat against individual acquisitiveness to the postwar middle class mentality gave rise, during perestroika’s economic transformations, to an even more complex admixture, and materialism and money in particular had become issues even more truly “toughy” (Dunham 1990:41) than Dunham’s wonderful study found.

The Soviet system transformed and coopted a traditional Russian ideology and etiquette informed by village values of gratuitous generosity and mutual help in part by renaming it, coopting it in the name of a bright communist future. Ideologically, the Soviet system attenuated the “moneyness of money” in the interest of equality and reduction of exploitation; theoretically, this had the goal of, through centralized planning, balancing physical inputs and outputs. Practically, Russian values of community were exploited by this Soviet version, which was riddled with broken promises and self-interested behaviour on the part of the powerful. However, though it ended up “corrupted,” exploited by the elite, it seems that the Soviet system did not work exclusively in their interest, for it did allow for transformation and persistence of traditional village economy’s downplaying of the explicit image of exchange in favour of an economic system which included sentiment and “soul.” Apparent attenuation of the consciousness of money was so important not only to peasants but to many urban Russians that, as one writer told me: “When perestroika began I condemned (that corrupt, repressive, hypocritical Soviet) system, but what we are seeing now is worse, it’s no system at all. With all its problems, that system had more soul.”

Even kumostvo, a term used in Russia to indicate something considered “corrupt” (cronyism and/or nepotism), is taken from a traditional context of kinship where one hand washing the other was not considered unclean. One of my goals here and elsewhere is to show how the economic system was inseparable from a folk aesthetics of consciousness and sentiment which was labelled as and experienced as morality, humanity and soul, dusha. I hope to offer a different image of a relationship between economics and sentiment than Mauss’ “in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous, but . . . in fact obligatory and interested” (1967:1, emphases mine), which implies a constant and static unitary system and a conscious and static unitary consciousness.

The following is a segment from an interview with two Omsk writers in their forties, A, a man, and B, a woman:

A: Russians will never work on Western motivations. The idea of money, of getting rich, never shone in the Russian soul; until we find a new ideology, that soul will go into hiding. [Prerevolutionary] Russian millionaires built churches to pray to God and society for...

B: “It’s all on the principle of kumostvo — I you and you - me, one hand washes the other” (is-- tebe, ty mne; ruka ruku moer).

forgiveness for their sin of accumulation of wealth.  

B: I can’t speak for the Russian people, but I do represent a part of it, the part around me — total rejection of what is going on here. The idea of getting rich is in principle impossible. Even if we all start washing with American soap, in Russia we always pitied the poor, the downtrodden. Now, when I see those commercials, I will never buy that brand of soap. Never. Complete non-acceptance. 

A: Our politicians with American bents are going to break their heads over this one. Russia will not . . . to force her to live according to the idea of the market is impossible — give her a worthy idea! The market cannot be a goal! “Get rich!” you say to the people. The people will answer you: “Go screw yourself!” Why do I need that? That never was the basis of life. The O.’s teachers, she in her forties, he in his fifties, told me in 1992: Zina: We can’t afford anything right now. We’ll wear out the clothes we have and that’s it. We can’t make money. Andrei: Even 10 kopecks over our state salary was considered speculation. Zina: We’re expected to do favours for our superiors. For free. My tongue would never move to say “pay me” — and how much!? If I ask for money, attitudes toward me will change, like to a speculant, a thief. In our country, we do not sell our intellects. And to sell anything — I’m not prepared for that. If I’m supposed to enter a market economy . . . Our psychology is completely different. I can’t sell . . . even a pail of those berries off my tree. If I don’t have enough sugar to preserve it myself, better let it rot, but no selling. I would be too ashamed to stand at the market and sell. Only bad people, we used to think, do that. Let it rot, I won’t sell. In school in the 60s we tormented one girl. She ended up in a psychiatric hospital. Her parents sold radishes and onions at the market and were considered profiteers, thieves. My mother was a saleswoman in a store and I was ashamed to tell my friends what she did. A profession that was considered disgraceful: “He who sells does something dishonest”. I have no money, but I would be ashamed to stand at the market and sell. I would feel as if I was standing naked there, that’s the way we were raised. Andrusha sold for the first time at the market not long ago. Andrei: I stood there and my face was burning. Zina: That’s our upbringing, way of life, psychology. It’s impossible to overstep it. I consciously understand now that I’m not doing anything bad, but to go out there and stand with a cart, I can’t do it. People would see, judge me, I’m ashamed. I’m not ready for business at all. I live according to a perfectly different moral code. Money itself was immoral, and now they are telling us to make more! When I told them that I had been told by others I had interviewed that Russians would only work in the name of a great idea, not for the sake of money, however, they objected — this was an oversimplification: “in Russia there are infinitely complex invisible threads connecting things, but everything is interwoven with the material.”

Most people I talked to, like the O.’s, claimed to be unable to sell. But I found out from Nadia that Grisha, who would sail on about only giving gifts, not selling, had sold some items they no longer needed. Even Anna Viktorovna, who was extremely shy, admitted to me that once she had sold a nightgown at the market. While she stood there with the nightgown she became warm and took off her sweater. Someone thought it was for sale and asked her for how much. She got flustered and sold it. Contact between the ideology of gratuitous giving and market pressures created complexity between ideology and action: acquaintances would hysterically rant about the immorality of selling and then quietly do what they had to. Simis says “It is impossible in one book to write about all the situations in which [a Soviet citizen] is compelled to resort to corruption . . . [it] permeates every aspect of Soviet life” (1982:247). His book as well as accounts of others who grew up in it document the Soviet everyday economic “system” better than I can. I will try rather to, if sketchily, point at the “soul” or more accurately, “souls” in the system. I begin with roles of and attitudes towards money and direct dealings with money, as Zina said, “itself immoral,” during a period when its importance was growing rapidly; then I discuss the blat system of informal networks of late

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6. Brooks discusses the virtually ubiquitous tendency in Russian popular literature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries for success and wealth, even when sought after or in the context of a “dream of easy money” to need some sort of justification (Brooks 1984:276-288); otherwise “the authors were unwilling to accept great extremes of wealth and poverty wholeheartedly” (Ibid.:293).

7. the suffix on the word vor (thief). voruzgi adds a nuance of scale, crudeness, despicability, and thorough badness of the thief.

8. Z.’s monthly salary at that time (late 1991 - early 1992) was 500. Inflation was extreme at that time, but a few sample prices give a sense of the insignificance of 500 rubles: A kg of meat at the market (not at state price stores, but there was no meat then in such stores) was about 200 rubles. A kg of oranges was between 25 and 30 rubles. A bottle of cognac at a kiosk before year’s end cost between 80 and 300 rubles. The street exchange rate for the dollar was around 100-125 rubles.
Soviet and early post-Soviet Russia.

I begin with one sentence Zina said: “My tongue would never move to say ‘pay me’”. Although Soviets and post-Soviets were, as rule, highly conscious of and interested in exchange, money and material goods, the open image of money was often avoided. Along with a growing economic elite and increasingly open interest in bourgeois comforts, many people simultaneously could and wanted to speak in a most heartfelt voice which strongly condemned these things. Simis discusses the increasing importance of rubles in the system since the 1960s, for bribes, tributes, favours and medical services (Simis 1982:80, 227). “In obtaining goods and services in real life a ten-ruble bill is sometimes more powerful than the KGB” (Ibid.:209). This salience and importance of money included explicit requests for specific sums for specific services or goods (Ibid.:259). Nevertheless, “bribes in the form of gifts and hospitality, as opposed to cash payments, play a . . . dominant role . . . a cash bribe spells things out [too] clearly” (Ibid.:130, emphasis mine). I will first examine details of everyday treatment of money as I found it.

**Money avoidances**

Speaking about money was often avoided. In 1992, a young Russian woman wrote to an American acquaintance: “Talk about money is embarrassing, complicated, do you know what I mean? That’s why I won’t give you too many words of thanks for the envelope.” Many of my acquaintances complained that *speaking* of money spoke of a person’s low spiritual and/or cultural level. Talk about money was often called petty and a sign that Russian culture was dying (even sometimes when the speaker was referring to his or her own talk about money); a middle-aged man told me that “conditions of life now have made it necessary to talk openly about such matters.” Discussions about money and economics were constant, sometimes accompanied by guilty, self-conscious aisdes. The fairly new expression *skurmye voprosi* (from an old expression for a self-interested person, *shkurnik*) was sometimes used to refer to such issues, a sort of apology before broaching the subject of money or concrete favours, the realm of unclean “soulless” practical concerns. Even the word “money” could in certain contexts and to certain speakers and listeners seem indiscernible. Saying “means” was considered more refined.

As Zina said, during the Soviet era people could not *mention* compensation for their work. “If you are interested in soul,” another woman said, “such talk about money and pay was ne prinaieto [not done, not acceptable], nefulturno. And now it’s the first thing people discuss.” During coverage of the 1992 St. Petersburg marathon, a television sports announcer awkwardly announced a commercial, apologizing: “These days, even in the context of pure athletics we are obliged to mention our sponsors; without them there would have been no marathon”.

When possible, exchange was not only discussed but experienced in terms of friendship and help. Gifts were often distanced from the notion of material gain; if several things were given, the least commercially valuable and closest to being able to be classified as “spiritual” was often the most lauded. I thanked a young woman for fiction lessons (for which I had been forbidden to pay by the man who had introduced us), with an assortment of gifts: a cosmetic bag with cosmetics, a thank you note on my stationery, a pen, two postage paid envelopes with my American address on them (international postage at that time had inflated to the equivalent of between one and two days’ worth of that woman’s salary), and a cassette and two written pages of text which I had made for her to study English with. She silently accepted the gifts. The next time we met she twice thanked me for the gift: the cassette was [thumb up, the silent gesture for “great!”] and “especially, especially [thanks] for the note.” She did not mention the other gifts at all, though by the absence of offense in her thanks it was clear that the unmentionables were also appreciated. For her it was clearly *nekul’turno* or *neudobno* (uncomfortable) to thank me for things such as cosmetics, a rare and expensive commodity at that time, in the same breath as for “spiritual” gifts, though other individuals might have had no problem thanking me equally for all the parts of the gift; such open admissions of their need of such items and help could actually serve as intimate revelations and signs of trust and friendship. This omission of certain gifts from the thanks was not one person’s idiosyncrasy, however: after he had helped her in Omsk, one American woman presented a local translator with a gift-wrapped paperback with an envelope inside. He laboriously opened the wrap, opened the book, *saw* the envelope, and thanked her explicitly for the book.

Tradition has it that one ought not say *spasibo,* thank you, on receiving a gift of medicine. This was usually observed in the form of the recipient actually thanking the giver, who in turn reminded him or her not to, or the recipient reciting “one is not supposed to say thank you for medicine.” Such a gift is indeed help for which one may later be “appreciative”, but health is, as often as possible, distanced from reference to unclean self-interest or exchange, even in the form of thanks.

The sight of money and direct physical contact with it were often avoided. In Omsk I received my lecture fees camouflaged in decorative envelopes. Once, when a man I had known for years was responsible for giving me my lecture fee, the bills were in an envelope as usual, but not even brought traditionally not supposed to take money for their help, though most accepted gifts. Margaret Paxson (personal communication. February, 1996) confirms that there was a prevailing ideology that “to accept money in healing is ‘wrong’ in the sense that it is ‘profiting from people’s illness’.” It was in exactly this way that reisele was considered speculation: it was “profiting from people’s misfortunes” in the form of needs, poverty, shortages, etc. I twice heard stories describing how, when a babushka saw that money had been left on her table, she ran out and begged the people to take it back, saying that it was a sin for her to make money using her gift.
near me, he opened my purse (which lay across the room) and placed the envelope inside. Clearly, he felt that opening my purse was less intimate, less of an invasion than handing me an envelope of cash. When I bought two pair of earrings from a friend who makes them she wouldn't touch the money I counted out for her, but rather opened the corner of her straw bag and silently indicated that I was to put it in there. A former Muscovite who had been living in Chicago for ten years once folded a check (payment for a job I did for her, a new business acquaintance) and handed me the folded edge, sparing me both the sight of the sum and physical contact with the money side. A woman from Omsk who heard a lecture I gave in Ireland in 1996 reminded me that when friends repay debts to friends, it is customary to place the money, folded or otherwise diminshed, on a table. Only after the friend had left would the money be touched, and it certainly would rarely pass directly from hand to hand without such a "cooling off" process. When money matters had to be settled between people, it was often "in private", in a separate room, a corner or outside the door, not in sight of "others."

Returning from weeding potato plants at a friend's dacha, she and I were waiting for the bus. While standing and talking to her on the almost deserted village street in the steppes, I took out my bus fare. Suddenly my friend, in an uncharacteristic tone, as if unable to restrain herself from scolding me for doing something unpleasant or embarrassing, said "put that away," pointing at my exposed three ruble bills. I hid them in my hand, assuming that she intended to pay for me. In the bus she got in line and with a demonstratively competent, punitive air bought tickets for both of us, but then proved my assumption of hospitality behavior on her part wrong by unhesitatingly taking the three rubles I offered her. In line, on the bus, her money had been showing as much as mine had been on the street, but on the street, in public, it had been indecent.

These issues, present in everyday Soviet and post-Soviet life, were aggravated when foreigners first began coming to Omsk. Foreigners for whom I worked as interpreter during my fieldwork were guests of the city, and guests must be gratuitously hosted, given what was often called "everything," e.g. When an American journalist tried to pay a local interpreter I had provided for him, she refused, saying to give me what he felt proper and I would get it to her! She repeatedly tried to use both me and the time it would take the money to circulate through me and back around to her to mediate the transformation from helping to doing a job for money. The physical presence of pay alleged that she was selling out to the world of necessity rather than holding out for a nobler world: at the sight or mention of cash, she would back off, gasp, shield herself, waving "no". I, a warm, Russian-speaking human friend positioned between her culture and the market culture she was facing in the form of that job, that time, and those Americans, could mediate. An Omsk native who heard that an American guest had been trying and failing to buy postcards offered to find him some and subsequently presented him with a set. When the American began taking out his wallet to reimburse her, the Russian woman gasped, backed off, shielded herself with turned hands, close to her body, waving them in the exact physical response I had witnessed in the translator.

Of course Americans were not only guests. They were also potential thresholds to the prosperous other world of the Market. Out of embarrassment, general innocence of the habit of evaluating work exclusively in terms of money, fear of under- or overcharging, Omsk craftspeople often asked what one wanted to pay. In many such cases it was awkwardness at having to take money at all from guests that caused this response, though there was certainly also, simultaneously, often a nuance of calculated wanting to see how much would be offered, both to get as much money as possible from these people who, it was assumed, all had it in carefree abundance, or to get as much as was fair, and certainly, in any case, in order to have their work informatively "priced" by American "experts" at this unknown art of assigning monetary value to human work.

The weakness of money and the blat system

Money avoidances were supplemented by money's economic impotence. For example, it was often said that "Money won't do it, only bottles will" (cf. Pessen 1995). If money was, until the late- to post-Soviet rise in its importance, weaker than commodities in proportion to their demand in any individual context, money was also less important than connections. Monthly salaries during my stay became so minuscule that they lost what marginal reality they would have and became an absurd, joking curse: "may you live on your salary alone!"

Food, for example, might be discovered and waited in line for in stores, an event of chance, luck, serendipity, and then perseverance, patience, and even aggression, but in terms of price, under socialism, very inexpensive. Thus, when they found something to buy, many people bought in the largest quantities possible, hoarding supplies; supplies were kept at home, traded and given to others, shared. Many people carried whatever money they had in case they

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10. Although I deal here exclusively with the Russian case, delicacy about dealing with cash is certainly not limited to Russia. In America, a friend and I were asked to do a day of work, "help out," in effect, with the understanding that we would be paid. When, several weeks later we had not been paid, my friend tactfully broached the subject with the person whom we had helped. He innocently replied that he had not paid us because we had seemed to enjoy ourselves. Here, then, we see a related opposition between something one enjoys and thus is related to one's

stumbled upon something to buy. People often held places in two or three lines at
once, and a common joke which depicts an event which actually happened fairly
often describes a person firmly occupying his or her place in line before inquiring
from others in line what exactly they were waiting for. Markets were usually
a source of a range of fruit, vegetables, meats, and dairy products, but too expensive
for most people’s everyday use. What was called the ‘back door’ of restaurants,
stores, and factories was another source of goods, again, usually quite expensive,
but even if not, this depended always on one’s talent and luck in finding such
opportunities. Bribes could get many things done if one knew the right person to
bribe and had the means to do so. Highly placed party members had access to
special stores (cf. Simis). Stealing from one’s workplace or other accessible place
during socialism, as there was no visible owner (“the people” owned it) was often
easily to rationalize. During perestroika and early post-Soviet era this theft
was snidely called privatizatsii (or, as a friend joked, pri-khrotizatsii, punning
between privat- and prikhrot-, to grab). One’s job (and those of others) gave one
access to various commodities and services. In spring, summer, and autumn many
families spent all their “free” time gardening at dacha gardens and potato fields
and harvesting and preserving wild berries, other fruits, nuts, and mushrooms.
At times during the early 1990s, employees at various workplaces would receive
coupons redeemable in food in an on-site cafeteria or buffet, as a subsidy or
partial payment made possible by the directorate’s connections to sources of food
products, to partly compensate for grossly inadequate or delinquent pay. As one
man who received such food coupons explained, “if you spend your entire
monthly salary on a pair of boots, you still have to eat”. In other words, every
person had a repertoire of ways in which he or she could help others, make extra
money, provide for the family, be a good host or hostess, all of which created
desire in others to reciprocate, a “good feeling toward someone”.

What was called the blat system, “credit” or “pull” (blat) with various
friends, relatives and acquaintances was in many ways the most powerful
economic tool of a Soviet person. The system of blat for each person was a
changing repertoire built upon his or her lifetime: one’s job, the jobs of friends,
loved ones and others with whom one had blat and all those people’s social and
kin relations gave one access to commodities and services. That repertoire was an
attribute of oneself for others who might need those things and could possibly
hope to get them through one. A job was more valuable in terms of access to
people, places, supplies, equipment, and services than as a source of a salary. For
example, a man I knew had a job which provided him with free supplies, but he
preferred to use almost all of his own tiny monthly salary (about the price of a
carton of Marlboro) to buy higher quality stolen supplies from a factory where he
had connections for both his use on the job and off, because if done well, his job
brought him work on the side, even with foreigners.

American businessmen were only half right when during the early 1990s
they accused potential Russian business partners of shameless name dropping,
shifty free-association of schemes unrelated to the joint venture being negotiated,
big talk and flighty wishful thinking bordering on lies. Such a Russian would be
presenting his capital, his “possibilities”, creatively scanning the socioeconomic
landscape for possible connections between people, networks, sentiments, debts
and favours. As the Russian couldn’t know what connections and possibilities the
foreigner had, each of the Russian’s own “possibilities” represented a possible
discovery. What seemed to be capricious suggestions and name dropping were
usually only partially that. The Russian was exposing his worth in his culture, his
creativity in bringing things and people together, his resume, evidence of his
capital.

Conversations where favours and blat were involved were often framed and
in a ritual language. Even when favours and debts were perfectly unmixing with
any sense of gratitude or sentiment, there was an etiquette of economic talk
according to which, more often than not, nothing was requested, everything
obliquely referred. One might have prefaced descriptions of a situation in need of
“help” with sentences such as: “we are relying on your good will towards us” and
concluded with ones like “we will not remain in debt before you.”

One Omsk woman, Tania, once concisely critiqued the American economic
system in terms of indebtedness, positions of power, support and help. Her
statement not only provides a solid introductory vocabulary to the discourse of
Soviet economics; it is an elegant gesture toward making the familiar strange:
“Maybe in America you have job problems — high unemployment — because you
can’t make other people indebted to you until you have a high position, and you
can’t get the support to get that high position without help.”

It was said as a half-joke that the powerful, unlike most Soviets, lived to see
communism; during the Soviet era: “money didn’t exist for them,” they could live on
the system, sistiena, without it. I was with a former regional partocrat in a car when
we ran out of fuel. He emptied a plastic bucket of its tomatoes and flagged down
gasopping cars. Soon a government truck let us siphon gas into the bucket. No
money changed hands, nothing did but the partocrat’s business card, which he
took out of his briefcase and handed to the broadly smiling truck driver. Access to
powerful people was a prime commodity in the blat system. During the Soviet era,
the nicer apartments of party functionaries cost no more than others’ and no
amount of money would get such an apartment for someone without the right
connections or position. Money obeyed the ideology of power: if, under state
socialism, party members lived a comfortable, nearly moneyless life, during
perestroyka they were among the only individuals in positions to “restructure”
toward a market system and were soon among the only ones with money. Though
some blowout, such as the blowout the truck driver earned with the partocrat,
was earned by concrete favours, the claim on “help” activated by, in
effect, kinship, by mentioning the name of a powerful relative or acquaintance,
was one of the most potent.

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"Although the elite did have more money than others: another
joke has it that after the Revolution, there was discussion as to whether or
not there would be money under communism. Some said yes, others said no; a
compromise was finally reached: some people would have money and others
wouldn’t."
Transformations and shiftiness

Money avoidance led a double or triple life. An “embarrassed” pause or any pause in accepting money could be opportunistically parleyed into an open situation not unrelated to exchange. Although sometimes the approach of “getting these issues out of the way” before proceeding to more interesting, “higher” topics was chosen, more often such “issues” were put off or saved until “later” or even an indefinite “some other time” if the favour-doer wanted to keep the recipient indebted until a future need arose, or just to delay the awkward subject until drinks had been shared and the mood relaxed, made unofficial, that is, until the issue of exchange had been humanized, socialized by the same sort of ritual consumption of food and drink used to celebrate or “wash off” a new acquisition or deal (cf. Pesmen 1995). A man with a fairly powerful position in the arts in Moscow was talking to a woman who had just procured for him the ability to buy hard-to-get circus tickets for his family. “If you need anything related to sewing, thread, buttons, or electrical supplies . . .” he said. She replied with a wave of her hand, “We’ll talk about that some other time.” I watched another woman try to reimburse a man for a purchase he had made for her: he resisted, saying that the object had been very inexpensive; she took out money; he claimed to have forgotten the price; the issue abruptly died with the sense that she would repay him in the future or already had. Refusing a gift was offensive. Refusing money affirmed one’s commitment to helping of dushi, from the soul or heart, gratuitously, but money was also simply usually worth less than objects.

When money had been involved in a favour, its timely transformation into a form other than direct repayment was usually desirable. Aesthetic reasons for this included that exchange and friendship relations were developed by keeping debts and favours amorphous, uncalculated (if remembered), moving. People sometimes complained, using the word almost as an insult, about a person’s “independence” if he or she insisted on reimbursing them in cash. This use of “independence” is remarkably telling and accurate: deferment of repayment, conversion of both creditor’s and debtor’s positions into a vaguer sense of being involved in a relationship of helping, confirmed exactly people’s dependence on one another. The notion of friendship included dependence on others for goods and support; expecting help didn’t make relationships manipulative, parasitic or exploitative if “using” was not allowed, as if it had a fouling will of its own, to become too visible, obscuring the “spiritual.” If it did, people were labelled cunning and calculating and opposed to a simple, open ideal. As Mauss wrote, “It is a . . . type of commerce characterized by etiquette and generosity . . . when it is carried out in a different spirit, for immediate gain, it is viewed with the greatest disdain” (Mauss 1967:36). What is more, through chains of practical “help,” one could lose track of who owed whom, for what and sometimes friendships were born.

Commodities were worth more than their store price, so that by keeping the exchange relation open, all the impossible-to-calculate “human” values (a combination of use value and, much more importantly, the value of networks of helping, warm, concrete individuals) were included in the “amount” owed in the form of a quality, a feeling of connectedness, debt and perhaps even warmth and sentiment, perhaps it would grow with time and experience with the other person and give birth to more “human” and more economic value rather than stopping dead at a one-for-one return, what Mauss would have called “a refusal of friendship and intercourse” (Ibid. 1967:11), a refusal to play the game. As with all the tendencies I describe, though, there can be lighthearted play. When I gave a friend in the village a pack of Marlboro, he, knowing I didn’t smoke, revelling in the contrast, gave me a newspaper-wrapped packet of the rough tobacco he rolls his cigarettes with.

Mauss writes that “to receive . these gifts . . . means that one is desirous of entering into and remaining in partnership” (Ibid.:25) and quotes Radcliffe-Brown: “the object of the exchange was to produce a friendly feeling between the two persons concerned, and unless it did this it failed of its purpose” (Ibid.:18). This warm, friendly feeling, however, can often be created through very cruel demands in such potlatch-like situations.43 In the village, especially as the Q’s told me, “they offer you [food and drink], they force you . . . ” A man once lectured me severely when I tried to leave a party early, saying that Russians “do not count minutes when they sit together.” A person who refuses communion and sharing, refuses the abundant world created by the host and hostess, refuses to enter into relations with people and exchange warmth was, he said, “not Russian,” which he further translated as having no soul (not the more common bezdushny but net duski, more emphatic and explicit).

Business was transformed into community using formal similarities. “Moral behaviour” and “help” could be transformed to what was treated consciously as opposed to them, “economic” exchange, and vice versa, through sharing meals, tea, talk, drink and by the use of certain highly valued words. Explicit money talk was a short circuit which violated, as it were, the image and the power of community and the continuum of selflessness and interest. The words “friendship,” “help,” “culture,” and others, most important of which is soul itself, were used to purify at best and at worst to mask, and were certainly used to exploit people who took them at face value. As I have shown with drinking, what we have here were not practices in theory disinterested and in fact interested14; or rather, that is Misos’s parallel to Tonneau’s statement above, this time making the strange familiar. Just as, during and continuing after the Soviet era, in different ways, the word khe’shounra, culture, was used to create noble-sounding official auspices for vast and sometimes international moneymaking schemes, “friendship” was also often a false label for other connections established. Two actors discussed how the theatre had signed a statement of friendship with a local factory, “which meant that we did free performances for them and they were at all the openings.” In my Russian material, interest is a similar term. Just as exchange can be of warmth, as a friend once told me, or of potatoes, interest had a similar range of meanings.

13. Cf. Siberian feasting scene in the beginning of Shishkov’s Ugrian-raka (1953)

14. Mauss himself allows a great deal of ambiguity on this point; to enter his discussion in

The Gift, but ultimately returns to restate the primacy of exchange over sentiment.
Interest

If both parties were in one way or another interested, a transaction might be made comfortable on that basis. The topic of interest deserves discussion. Interest has the same range of meanings in Russian as in English (though it can also indicate that a man or woman is "good-looking"). The word interest has its origin in the Latin prefix inter, which meant "between, among, in the midst of, mutually, reciprocally, together, during". In American dictionaries, the first entries under "interest" indicate feelings or attitudes of concern, involvement, or curiosity. Only later entries narrow this down to various sense of benefit, advantage, profit, and ultimately self-interest (as opposed to everything else). In my interviews, the words interest, interes, and interesting, interesno, are often used as emphatically opposed to self-interest; they imply in these cases passionate, life-giving, soulful curiosity of a higher sort, divorced from any notion of personal material gain, though not divorced from the notion of possible spiritual gain. Yet where there is a will, this strict opposition is easily finessed under interest's formal identity. The shift in interest parallels a shift in the criteria (spiritual, physical, etc.) used to define welfare. The word interes, as is used in Russia is tremendously semantically shifty, and, together with the shifting from one to another definition of "welfare," from Russian Orthodox to Enlightenment and Adam Smith, spans a critical range of nuances from "pure" to "impure" and has the ability to associate virtually any object or event or sentiment to soul, overriding a superficial definition of soul as properly the locus of only the purest in a person.

Saying and seeing the unmentionable and invisible

The political economy and ideology which began in the late 1980s, like the Soviet economy and ideology, had a ready cultural meaning, but unlike Soviet systems, suggested the traditionally profane rather than the traditionally sacred. Blat, a word first and foremost associated with a point of view which acknowledges the existence of unfair advantage and corruption, was part of a system of exchange woven through with an ideology condemning exchange of anything except human warmth. This does not mean that talk about getting things was never open, and it was often made explicit when asking a favour that one was using some particular blat. But I several times did hear people intone, before mentioning blat as a possible way of getting a desired result, precautionary words usually used before using profanity in mixed company. Intimacy of the interlocutors (variously constructed) and a "crude" manner were other ways of obtaining or claiming the moral right to speak explicitly of exchange of things other than immaterial warmth. Jokingly attributing a stroke of pure luck to "blat" or "a bribe" implied that the blat was with, or the bribe to, God or some higher power. Such jokes were not rare. The vile and practical exploited the gratuitous and pure and was itself purified in consciousness by time, by the shared desire for it to be so purified, by the unthinkingly ecstatic nature of the exchange and spontaneous, often urgent, way in which needs arose and acquaintances were called on. Or it was not purified completely, thus providing material for endless moral judgements and negotiations.

Restructuring

During 1990-93 the webs of blat were being reorganized and dissolved by a new importance of money. A regional state's attorney said:
For seventy years people were raised in a spirit of collectivism, for the most part. In the idea of communism there is much that resonates with Christianity: collectivism, man being a friend to man, and a comrade, and a brother; "help those close to you," these ideas, they are good ones. People are simply not morally ready for this business thing. Everything is moving farther from kindness. Without a doubt, because market relations inevitably lead, it seems to me, to an opposition of man to man. And family relations are changing. Children are getting less attention. The reason is the same -- the need to make money -- and then, lately an enormous warp [or skew] has happened in our propaganda. Everything is measured by the ruble. The ruble. How to earn it. Much less is being said about the spiritual.

In a 1992 TV interview a man said that he cannot tolerate betrayal in friends, and that, tragically, "all of our present life is tuned to that note." Complaints about perestroika killing the Russian soul, to which I return repeatedly in my work, were a number of varieties, but perhaps the prevalent kind, and a spirit pervading most of such complaints, indicated that such alleged soul-death (or soul-mortal illness) had a great deal to do with economics and in particular with the growing explicitness and conscious importance of exchange and increased talk about it. Money could be treated as a kind of gift, and exchange as exchange of warmth, but only to a certain point.

If the Soviet blat system and associated cronyism, favouritism, stealing, etc. were seen as "corrupt", they were also often seen as necessary, necessarily so, the corruption of the official economic system; this was formally similar to the folk values of helping a relative, neighbour, etc. who is in a difficult position. Requests for "help" obeyed an etiquette by virtue of which they all had very similar forms. In addition, both village and Soviet blat-based, corrupt economies were sometimes said to "work out" all right, not unlike as if an invisible hand (cf. Smith 1976:477-8 and 1982: 184-5) was at work, but an invisible hand moved and bitten by the question "what's it for me?" "Thief," I was told, "became a virtue: bosses stole but everyone had access to some goods and services, so things 'worked out', each family had approximately what it needed. Every family in that sistema somehow got what it needed." Women who made a full table out of economic incoherence were called "sorceresses." Corruption dialectically became more necessary and more acceptable since nearly everyone was doing it -- those who didn't were in

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16. *By pursuing his own interest (every individual) frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it" (Smith 1976:478).
fact penalized. In other words, corruption was also solidarity-forming and definitive of community.

Bottles of vodka were jokingly called “hard currency”, they were so much more economically potent than rubles. Yet the calculated bribery of bottles in Soviet Russia often resulted in hours of sitting and drinking together and a gradual transformation of exchange into an intimacy and a genre of communication felt to be central to the depth of Russianness. Even when the bottle was not actually emptied together, what was given could index a ritual that claimed to deny the ascendancy of calculated exchange and offered another solution than the usual image of a market economy.

Sistema as a concept does have some of the transcendence of a deity, an invisible hand, authoritative coherence of some sort. When parts of “the old system” were supposed to have died, as much as that sistema was hated, we see in discourse that life and soul were explicitly said to begin to disappear as well.

The increasing “moneyness of money” was said to spoil something even the corrupt sistema preserved to an extent: “If you wanted to go to a restaurant,” one young businessman told me, “you knew someone there; to the baths, you knew someone;” from one point of view, this is corruption, but experimentally, his landscape was alive with acquaintances. Increasingly, he complained, “you have to pay. It feels different, less human. Now you look at a thing and that ‘thought’ creeps in, ‘how much is it worth?’” Another man told me:

For now, our souls are cooling off a little; a cold soul, that’s when I stop feeling the pain of others, their misfortunes and joys, in my soul. I start to think more like a consumer, more materially than spiritually . . . it is obvious: we’ve started to visit each other less often. But obschenie (communication, communication), it’s the fundamental factor in the exchange of spiritual warmth! When people exchange not products, not sugar, not oil, not potatoes, when they give each other warmth and kindness, then we can fend off what is happening now . . . “love each other”, the famine people were kind, but with this idea that people have to get rich, relations deteriorate, soul cools off. I stop feeling others’ pain (in my soul).

On the other hand, though, there is the shiftiness that allows for soul or at least according to some, a degraded parody of it: Andrei said:

Friendship, that’s to drink tea, communicate, commune, that is necessary and sufficient. Compatibility. Identical views on life. Or at least closeness. But recently there is a parallel to this real process developing around material difference. These kommersanty, they’re spiritually very impoverished, they look with a sense of superiority on people of the same intellectual level. But they share this interest in money, they have a material basis to their communication, to their friendship.

By the late 1980s power began to change hands more often, so blat influence didn’t “keep” as well. With inflation, money became both more necessary and also developed the tendency to “spoil.” In such circumstances, friends started having to actually repay loans, people couldn’t help gratuitously, and shamefully, became creditors to friends. All this made for increased consciousness of calculable, abstract exchange value rather than engagement in vague, incalculable helping, which kept things “soulful”. And when, as the young businessman said, “that thought creeps in,” everything changes.

People and association with them had the power to purify things: I gave a friend’s child a dollar, which he had never seen, and my friend told me to sign it “so it’s a gift, not money”. I was told, “those people selling there, they have gone crazy about money, they forget that the one who pays is a person too.” I was several times told stories about how people recently lost friends to business. “Now they socialize only with useful people. I no longer represent anything interesting. The more money gets involved, the less friendship can exist. During the famine people were kind, but with this idea that people have to get rich, relations deteriorate, soul cools off. I stop feeling others’ pain.”

Some people long used to surreptitiously overpaying under the table were offended at similar prices charged openly. At the other extreme were businessmen who reacted against the entire old system with ostentatious, obscene nakedness of their cash, redefining as a good thing the Soviet image of the immoral, ruthless capitalist. The Stalinist image of the cruel, calculating “capitalist shark” is exactly the image many new Russian businessmen (and others) adopted as positive and took as a goal, inverting only the judgement. The shadow economy floated to the surface and, like an open black hole, demanded “insane” prices. Money crawled out of hiding and, as a student said, “Dusha, the soul went into hiding to protect herself from our terrible realities. I hope that is what has happened, and not that she has gone away so we can throw ourselves fully into business in the future. People are devoting themselves to making money, right now it’s considered a progressive thing. But I think it’s a delusion”...

What was formerly done in a closed manner, silently, and was not discussed, which implied depth, even if depth of corruption, now should be done openly, leaving, some complain, only “animal” self interest. But a final verdict that someone had lost his or her soul entirely in this way is problematic for the judge as well – everyone considers compassion as part of the ability to be soulful; thus the criminal’s soul would have to be seen as only slumbering or mutely suffering rather than dead.

During the January, 1991 shock currency reform, 50- and 100-ruble bills, which could be exchanged for new currency only immediately and in very limited quantities, surfaced in homes and pockets and were jokingly called mustard plasters, “they burned so badly.” Each person dealt with these bills’ problematic presence as best as he/she could; money could no longer be a secret as it had been the day before, it couldn’t be unmentionable; everyone needed help, advice, information, from anyone at all at that moment, and people spent days sharing information and inventing strategies. Money was suddenly, if only temporarily, the most critical commodity. Even in the midst of that currency crisis, it was clear.

17. The writer A., whom I cited in the beginning of this paper, also said soul would hide, waiting for a new ideology to appear that was suited to Russian culture.
that discretion about money did not totally disappear: where this cash had come from, even after people had, under the threat of losing it, admitted its existence, was shockingly irrelevant and rarely asked about except, perhaps, behind a person’s back, with the resulting implication that he or she was somehow a worse person or less soulful for being in possession of such a sum. On the second day of the currency crisis, I heard one young guy ingenuously ask where another got that kind of money (he apparently needed to exchange a large amount). Everyone present laughed and someone said to me “pay no attention to him, he’s crazy.” Discussing where a person had obtained the money he or she was trying to exchange in those days would have, in most contexts, had the quality of being nasty gossip. Only when, for one reason or another, the awareness of economics became cruelly foreclosed did an opposition have to appear, ideologically, between soulful people and self-interested people. Actually that opposition appeared constantly, people waited for it to appear, caused it to appear so as to have opportunities to argue the moral issues one way or another, a discourse which examined and performed the tension, not only of conflicting economic systems, but of human passions as well.

The conclusion to this discussion, as to many things I experienced in Russia, was revealed to me in an intense voice by a very drunk cossack who wanted to explain to me the secret heart of the situation: “Everyone wants to have something, but only through someone.” “The path through people” runs between and confuses the most holy and the most profane. Details of this sistema are hidden out of decency (they partake of the vile practical innards of the world), out of jealousy (to protect information and power), and because of the value of images of ‘magic’ in Russian culture.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, a writer told me: “When perestroika began I condemned sistema, but what we are seeing now is worse, it’s no system at all. With all its problems, that [corrupt Soviet] sistema had more soul.” Young people make money more freely and quickly than older people, they don’t have those complexes, one male college student told me; “on the other hand, it seems to me that our parents are spiritually richer. At their birthday parties they dance, they sing in chorus. We don’t do that, we aren’t used to it.” A friend was voicing a thought in this same genre and voice when he said:

To survive now, you need to have some sort of connections . . . Soul right now is locked up with a key, because a person really has to . . . in these hard conditions you meet people there, have to come to some agreement over here . . . You don’t always remember that there’s a key . . . which you should bring to your close ones, you don’t always remember about your friends . . . about “non-consumer relations”. A person who works honestly, has acquaintances not to fill his needs, but because they interest each other, not useful friends, he loses in this day and age. A person who . . . spends time with people who are close to him spiritually loses on the material end. He pays more for everything, has to buy things at the market.

Yes, that friend said, when I discussed some of my ideas for this chapter with him, you’re right; under the old system people had to deal with each other, had to communicate. His mother claimed that when this friend was a boy he once told her “Mama, it’s even good that you owe someone. Those rich people, they have no interests at all. It’s already uninteresting to live.” “He was still little,” she said, “and that’s how he had it figured out.” The Soviet soul is much like what turned out to be a rag pouche under Mitya Karamazov’s shirt — the sacred and the profane in significant cohabitation, the consciousness of which is necessarily controlled.

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16. Sites (1992:167) mentions popular comedians of the 1960’s and later, such as Zhvanetsky, who “In a brilliant satire . . . tried to persuade the audience how inhumanly boring life would be without bureaucratic obstructionism and theft of state property.”
The Chariot-Rite at Onchestus
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In addition to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* other works were attributed to Homer in antiquity. Of these there survives a collection of hymns addressed to various Greek deities. Composed in the same dactylic hexameter verse as the two epics and in much the same style, the "Homeric" hymns are now believed to be the work of different poets who lived in a period extending from the early seventh down to the fifth century B.C. It seems likely, however, that the identity of the poet and the precise date of composition of each hymn will always remain matters of scholarly dispute. The majority of the hymns are short, and the shortest of them, hymn xiii, three verses addressed to the goddess Demeter, will serve as a representative sample (I take Allen's 1912 text as standard):

I begin to sing of Demeter of the beautiful hair, holy goddess,
of her and of her daughter, the surpassingly fair Persephone.
Hail, goddess, and keep safe this city, and begin the song.

While these poems are most commonly called "hymns" *(hymnai* in Greek), Thucydides' (III. 104) employs the term *prooimion* or "prelude" in relation to the Hymn to Apollo (h. iii), part of which he quotes. The implication of this name, supported by the manner in which many of the hymns end (including the example quoted above), is that these poems each constituted a pious opening to a bard's recitation, and that he would move on from the hymn to a more substantial and probably unrelated piece. Yet four at least of the surviving hymns, numbered ii, iii, iv and v in the collection, addressed to Demeter, Apollo, Hermes and Aphrodite respectively, rival in length and quality an individual book of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, and can stand on their own as monuments of poetic skill (see Allen–Halliday–Sikes 1936:xxxiii–xcv).

The discussion that follows will focus on a fascinating, obscure and much-disputed passage of the Hymn to Apollo. This poem falls into two distinct sections, and it is commonly believed that two originally separate hymns to the god Apollo somehow became joined to form our present text. The first section (vv. 1–178), known as the Hymn to Delian Apollo, describes Leto's search for a place in which she may give birth to her son Apollo, her success in persuading the island of Delos to accept her, and then Apollo's birth. The second and longer section (vv. 179–546), known as the Hymn to Pythian Apollo, relates how Apollo went searching through Greece for a suitable spot at which to build a temple and establish his oracle, at length hits upon Pytho (= Delphi), and finally kidnaps a shipload of Cretans to live at Pytho and serve him in his temple there. The composition of the Delian section has recently been dated to the early or middle seventh century, and that of the Pythian section to the early sixth century B.C. (see Janko 1982:200). It is in the course of this possibly later, Pythian section that a curious rite involving a chariot is described, apparently just in passing (vv. 229–238):

And from there you went further, far-shooter Apollo, and you reached Onchestus, Poseidon's splendid grove: there the newly tamed colt recovers breath, though burdened
from drawing the fair chariot, and to the ground the driver, though
good,
leaps from the car and goes along the road: and they meanwhile
rattle the empty vehicle, sending lordship away.
And if the chariot is broken in the wooded grove,
they tend the horses, but it they lean and let be—
for thus at the very first did the rite come to be—and they to the lord
pray, and fate then guards the god’s car.

Apollo sets out from Mount Olympus (v. 216) on his journey in search of a
location for his oracle, and he moves swiftly southwards until he arrives at the
site, as yet uninhabited, of Thebes in Boeotia (vv. 225–228); his next stop is the
nearby Onchestus, the antiquity of which gains emphasis from the contrast with
the trackless wilderness where Thebes will be later built. The antiquity of the
worship of Poseidon at Onchestus is confirmed by the reference to the place in the
Catalogue of Ships in the second book of the Iliad (v. 506), where it is
distinguished as “sacred” (hieros) and “Poseidon’s splendid grove” (the same
phrase as at v. 230 of the Hymn to Apollo), and evidence has been reported that the
site was occupied in Mycenaean times (Simpson–Lazenby 1970:31). Onchestus
features again in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes (h. iv), in which an old man who
cultivates a vineyard at Onchestus witnesses Hermes’ theft of Apollo’s cattle and
reports what he saw to Apollo when the latter arrives in pursuit of the thief; the
distinguishing characteristics given to it here are that it is “grassy” and that it is
“the exquisite, holy (hagnos) grove of the loud-roaring Earth-holder [Poseidon]”
(vv. 88, 186–187). Why the poet of the Hymn to Hermes should choose to make his
old man a native of Onchestus is a matter of controversy, but it has been
suggested (Dornseiff 1938:82) that he was keeping one eye in the course of his
composition on the Hymn to Apollo, and interesting parallels can be drawn
between the narratives of the two poems (see Crudden 1995:100–101). But it is not
immediately obvious why the Apollo-hymnist should put Onchestus on his god’s
itinerary, and further why he should dwell for eight verses on a rite there which is
unrelated to Apollo.

These verses are quite pleasing poetically, as the poet outlines the rite by
means of a series of brief, almost cinematic images, presenting to us first the colt
getting back its breath, then the driver stepping down, next the rattling of the
empty chariot, and finally the scene after a crash. The description admirably
combines vividness and economy. Yet nowhere else except in this passage of the
Hymn to Apollo is the rite which took place in Poseidon’s grove described, and a
dull, prosaic, but detailed account would be infinitely preferable for the
comprehension of the rite’s significance, for not only is there in the text no definite
statement of its purpose, but even some of its most basic features remain unclear.

At Poseidon’s grove a young horse which is “newly tamed” (neodmes) gets
back its breath although being wearied from drawing the chariot: does this mean
that the grove of Poseidon, who was the god of horses as well as god of the sea,
was thought to have some reinvigorating property for those animals, or does it
simply signify (Roux 1964:11–13) that the grove is on the crest of a hill, where the
going becomes easier? Is the epithet “newly tamed” used merely because a horse
which is young and not yet inured to the yoke will be in most need of catching its

breath after the exertion of drawing the chariot uphill, or does the entire process
involve only those animals which have just been broken in? Does the plural
“horses” at v. 236 indicate that more than one horse is in harness, and if that is the
case, are all the horses “newly tamed colts”, or just one of them? Or is the switch
from the singular at v. 231 to the plural at v. 236 indicative merely of a movement
from the consideration of one exemplary case to the general situation (Roux
1964:14)? Does “they” at v. 233 refer to the horses or to men (hol in the Greek is
masculine), and if the latter, is it the same as the subject of the verb “tend” in v. 236?
And is the subject of this verb the driver and any onlookers who happen to
be at hand, or the drivers of all the chariots who successively undergo this
experience? The singular “car” at v. 238 perhaps indicates that the former is
correct and that only one occurrence is being described, and that therefore the
“newly tamed” horse is joined with one or more others, whether fresh to the yoke
or not. But at v. 234 is the “lordship” (anaktorion) which is being “sent away” that of
men or of “the lord” (anax, v. 237), Poseidon? The ambiguities of the passage
reach a climax at v. 238, for in Greek the genitive “of the god” can depend either
on “tate” (maira) or “the car”, and so a choice must be made between two
alternative translations, either “and fate then guards the god’s car” or “and the
god’s fate [i.e. the fate determined by or sent from the god] guards the car”.

There being nothing against which to check this passage, its interpretation
is necessarily speculative. Yet since Poseidon was god of horses as well as god of
the sea, it is reasonable to suppose that the normal etiquette which applied to
horse-transport in sanctuaries does not apply here (pace Sokolowski 1960:379),
and that the god-inspired behaviour of the horses is the focus of attention in what is
not a casual, everyday incident, but a rite which was performed at regular
intervals and under set conditions. The use of the expression “newly tamed”
(neodmes) can hardly be gratuitous: it offers some motivation for the rite, which
will have been intended to allow the god of horses a controlled opportunity for
the expression of his will concerning the employment of his favourite animals in
human service. The remarks of Deubner (1938:276; my translation) appear
cogent:

Newly broken in and therefore quite young horses are used for the rite: the
word neodmes is anything but unimportant. And that one takes particular
care of the beasts, points also to the fact that they are regarded as the
protégés of the god… If one understands that Poseidon is angered by yoke
and chariot, then the only point that the rite can have, in my opinion, is to
leave to the god’s discretion the destruction of one chariot, in order to
protect the remaining chariots from his anger through this sacrifice.
He follows Ilgin in believing that the rite was linked to the festival in Poseidon’s
honour at Onchestus which Pausanias (9. 37. 1) mentions. This idea is plausible.
Perhaps a fittingly appointed chariot was manufactured especially for use in this
rite, and an excellent driver and a promising colt were selected for the honour of
participation in it, with the colt representing all his peers that were being forced to
serve human needs at the yoke. One wonders what happened to the colt after
the crash which is described. The horses are said to be “tended”, but this does not
necessarily mean that they could be put to human use. Economic considerations
might suggest that the loss of a chariot to the wrath of the god could be more
easily afforded than the loss of horses as well, but the community could probably
have afforded to lose to the god’s control at yearly intervals or longer (the festival may have been held on every second or third year) a single colt as the price of divine acquiescence in the employment of all the other young horses in the service of their mortal masters. It is difficult to believe that the event which is described was an everyday occurrence unconnected with a festival: if all the charioteers who went along this route were obliged to risk a crash and lose their vehicles, the route would have been an unpopular one and alternative paths would have been sought. It is true that horses and chariots would have belonged to the relatively wealthy; yet even they would probably have wished to avoid unnecessary danger to their property. All this, however, is uncertain; the difficulty of the passage lies in its compression, which makes it inevitable that any theory designed to explain it must be largely speculative.

At v. 233 “they” probably refers to the horses (one or more of which is “newly tamed”) that continue to draw the chariot without the driver on board, because once the driver has relinquished control of the vehicle and disembarked, it is natural for the focus to shift back to the ungoverned animals. The chariot begins to rattle because it is now lighter than usual (cf. Iliad 11. 160, 15. 453), and as the rattling is caused by the continued motion of the empty chariot, it is understandable that the poet should attribute this rattling to the horses which are pulling the chariot along. The possibility cannot, however, be ruled out that “they” at v. 233 is applied to men who give the car a shaking in order to unsettle the horses and divert them into a random direction away from the path along which the driver had been guiding them. It seems certain that the purpose of the dismounting of the driver is not to ease the burden on the horses, but rather to free them from human control, the “lordship” (anaktorie) of v. 234. That the “lordship” is that of the driver and, by extension, of humanity in general, rather than that of Poseidon, notwithstanding the reference to him as “the lord” at v. 237, appears probable by reason of the stepping-down of the driver and the location of the scene in the god’s own grove, where his power would be greatest; but if the anaktorie is the god’s, then a crash will signal that the horse has not shaken it off, and so prayers and the offering of the chariot to the god become necessary. If the grove was situated on the top of an eminence, the appropriate place for a considerate charioteer to get off in order to avoid tiring his animals would be at the bottom, and, wherever he disembarked, he would customarily lead his beasts by the bridle instead of leaving them to their own devices (contra Schacht 1976:113; see Xenophon, De re equst. 6. 4-7). That the grove was located on a hilltop seems likely from the testimony of the geographer Strabo, who states (9. 2. 33, C 412; Loeb translation):

Orchæstus is where the Amphictyonic Council used to convene, in the territory of Halilea (in the district of Leikos) near Lake Copais and the Tenean Plain; it is situated on a height, is bare of trees, and has a sacred precinct of Poseidon, which is also bare of trees. But the poets embellish things, calling all sacred precincts “sacred groves”, even if they are bare of trees.

The likelihood, from this description, is that the grove was located with the town on the hill (despite the absence of trees, which Strabo, probably remembering Iliad 2. 506 if not the Hymn to Apollo as well, was expecting), and Schacht (1976:113) reports archaeological evidence which supports this view. (Pausanias, 9. 26. 5, testifies that in his day—he was writing almost two hundred years after Strabo—the temple and image of Poseidon yet remained, though the town was in ruins, “and the grove that Homer praised”: perhaps there was a pious replanting.) However, it is worth bearing in mind that the hymn does not even mention a hill. It is the grove of Poseidon itself where the events of importance take place, and what happens outside it is irrelevant. The test of the horses’ behaviour, and therein of the god’s will, lies in whether the chariot, the man-made construction which the colt is being forced to draw, remains unscathed while the animals are free of their driver’s control within a place which is sacred to their divine master. Presumably, if the chariot is not broken, the god thereby signifies that he is unreservedly happy to allow the “newly tamed” horse (or horses) to be put under the yoke; but the poet describes only the other eventuality, in which breakage of the vehicle does occur. (It is possible, however, that there is a lacuna in the text after v. 234, and that the statement of what happened on the occasions when there was no crash has been lost.) There is a clear contrast between what happens to the horse and the chariot: the former are groomed and tended, while the latter is inclined and let be—“for thus at the very first did the rite come to be”. This phrase probably indicates that there was a story told about the origin of the practice, which had perhaps already been narrated by Hesiod (Merkelbach—West 1967:fr. 219), and presumably either the god himself (and we remember Poseidon’s part in the death of Hippolytus as the latter was riding in his chariot) or his son, the eponymous Orchæstes whom Pausanias (9. 26. 5) mentions, initiated the rite; but the killing in Poseidon’s sanctuary of Clymenus by a stone thrown by a certain Perieres, a charioteer of Menoeceus, might also be connected (Pausanias 9. 37. 1 ff., Apollodorus 2. 4. 11).

After such an accident as the hymn describes it is common sense to look after the horses first, and only subsequently to pay heed to the vehicle and say a prayer, and the word “rite” (hosie) can scarcely apply to this judicious weighing of priorities (contra Roux 1964:17–18, and Schacht 1976:113, who limits the hosie to the prayer alone); the “letting-be” of the chariot is likely therefore to be permanent rather than merely until the horses have been tended, and the broken car will become the god’s property, as though it were a “toll” which he has charged for the passage of his animal into human service (Jeanmaire 1949:83; see too Kahn 1978:69). If he has allowed the chariot to crash, he is indicating that he wants something: he is unlikely to be satisfied with mere prayers. A prayer to the god of horses would be appropriate if one had an accident with one’s horses and chariot anywhere, and the events described in the hymn, since they involve horses and take place within the grove of Poseidon the god of horses, are likely to be peculiar to the grove: the deliberate stepping-down of the driver to free the horses from control (anaktorie) and the subsequent fate of the charioteer seem to form the core of the rite, which the prayer brings to a close. Roux (1964:16–18) contends that at v. 236 the Greek verb eao, translated above as “let be”, does not signify a permanent abandonment, but only a temporary setting-aside, of the charioteer, and while examples of such a usage of the verb can be found in the Homeric corpus, so also are there instances where the abandonment is permanent—e.g. Iliad 1. 276, 17. 13 (from Menelaus’ standpoint)—and the interpretation of v. 238 is what crucially determines whether the charioteer is left
there for ever or not. But, it may be objected, of what use to the god is a broken chariot? In answer it can be said that it is of precisely the same "use" to the god as an operational chariot would be, or as the tripos, cauldrons, gold, silver and garments are to Apollo at Pytho (Hymn to Hermes 179-181): in other words, no "use". It is wealth and honour, physical proof of mortals' respect for him and his desires; though possibly the car, broken and hence useless to men, is thought to pass thereby out of human control, and the god will actually be able to make use of it. The gods were pictured as having chariots of their own: in the Iliad, for example, Hera mounts her magnificent vehicle at 5.720-732; Zeus sets out in his car at 8.41-46; Poseidon himself travels miraculously over the sea in his chariot at 13.23-31; and Athena at 5.835-841 acts as Diomedes' charioteer, and the axle is said to groan beneath their combined weight. At Rhodes a chariot and a team of four horses were hurled annually into the sea for the Sun, Helius (Festus, De verborum significat.queae supersunt, p. 181 Müller). The offering of a chariot might be one that Poseidon would appreciate. He might have objections to the yoking of his favourite animals by mere mortals, but he himself could do as he pleased with them, and they would delight to serve him. Apollonius Rhodius pictures Poseidon driving on a chariot, and the god is said to pass through the grove at Onchestus (Argonautica III.1242; Apollonius styles the town "Hydantian Onchestus", leaving it to the scholia to explain that the Hyantes were the original inhabitants of Boeotia, and this may be another indication of the antiquity of the town).

The difficult final clause of the passage leaves it uncertain exactly what happens to the car at the end of the rite. The word "car" (diphros) is surely being used of the entire vehicle, instead of just the driver's section. As remarked above, if "of the god" is dependent on "car", the meaning is simply "and fate then guards the god's car", whereas if "of the god" is to be taken with "fate", then the sense will be "and then the god's fate [i.e. the fate determined by or sent from the god] guards the car" (so Cassola 1975:ad loc., interpreting the phrase as "la volontà del dio"; cf. Odyssey 3.269, 11.292 and 22.413). In the former interpretation the chariot unequivocally becomes the god's property, but the latter does not rule this idea out, and in either case the poet may be saying that the vehicle will be left in the grove for ever to moulder away exposed to the elements, or that it will remain in the god's control only so long as fate, or the god himself, decrees—perhaps whoever finds it there subsequently can take it away and repair it for his own use, or (more likely) the officiants of the cult will sell it. In the latter case, the phrasing of v. 238 is "rather euphemistic", as Allen-Sikos (1904:ad loc.) put it: the owner of the chariot, however, will have suffered a loss of property to balance the loss to the god of the young horse, to compensate the god for the subjugation of his animal. If the ritual took place in the context of a festival held at yearly intervals or longer, and if one or two earlier chariots were discreetly removed each time, or even repaired and sold, there would not be the spectacle of the god's grove becoming like a junk-yard, full of smashed wrecks; in any case not every performance of the ritual would have resulted in a broken car, so that the accumulation of the vehicles need not have been very great. Roux (1964:20) amusingly ridicules not only the accumulation of broken vehicles, but also the idea that the priests of the sanctuary might repair and sell the wrecks: "voilà done, par un étrange avatar, le sanctuaire du dieu transformé en marché de chars d'occasion!" But it was scarcely unheard of for the priesthood of a cult to make material profit from it in this way. A cult is big business for the locals and its ministants, as the amused Apollo makes clear to the leader of the kidnapped Cretans who wonders how they will live in the infertile land of Crisa where they will be unable to grow vines or pasture animals (vv. 532-537):

Silly men, who put up with woe, you who desire cares and grievous toils and distress in spirit!
I shall speak an easy word to you and put it in your mind.

Let each and every one of you, holding a dagger in his right hand, slaughter flocks for ever: and they all in abundance will be there, as many as the very glorious tribes of men will bring for me.

The Cretans will have enough, and more than enough, to eat. And if, for instance, the skins of sacrificial animals could be sold, there seems little reason why chariots would have to be kept in the sanctuary in perpetuum (see Burkert 1984:837, 1985:95-96)—a priest of Poseidon might argue that any cash raised by the sale of a chariot would still belong to the god, though used to feed his human minister. It might possibly be the case that one special chariot was kept exclusively for use in this rite; yet then the god would derive nothing from the event other than prayers. Roux (1964:18-22) believes that the purpose of the entire rite has been to let the god indicate if one of the horses is skittish and unreliable, and to pray for the god to protect the chariot in future, and sees fit to emend the verb "guards" in v. 238 to the infinitive form in order to manufacture the sense, "and then the fate/role of the god [is] to guard the car". In reality this emendation offers little improvement to the situation, for the statement that "the role of the god [is] to guard the car" includes no overt indication that the chariot will leave the grove or participate in races. Moreover, the breaking of the chariot is not said to be due to the unsuitability of any of the horses to chariot-drawing (and how will the god perform his allotted "role" in guarding the chariot in future if the chariot has been smashed beyond repair in the grove?). Instead, the clear picture is one in which the horses are so disposed that it becomes a lottery whether or not the car will pass through the grove in safety. It is emphasised at v. 232 that the driver leads to the ground from the chariot "though good" [sc. at driving], and this implies that normally he would do no such thing, and perhaps (since the colt must get its breath back) that the vehicle is travelling at some speed when it enters the grove. It is the god's attitude which is being tested, not the temperament of the horses.

It has recently been proposed (Miller 1986:74) that the poet has included the passage on Onchestus in order to introduce the theme of tranquillity which shortly afterwards comes to the fore. The spring Telephous manages to persuade Apollo not to build his temple near her by citing the noise of the horses and the mules that come to her for water, and by predicting that visitors will prefer to gaze upon "the well-wrought chariots and the noise of the swift-footed horses" in front of Apollo's temple and the many riches that it will hold; she advises him to go to Crisa beneath Parnassus, where no chariots will rumble or horses make noise about his altar (vv. 262-271). Apollo takes her advice, though later he sees through her trick and exacts his revenge. The importance alleged for the earlier lines on Onchestus in relation to this theme is that "an institution such as Apollo
intends to found requires a circumsambience of tranquillity, undisturbed by the hustle-and-bustle of ordinary daily life", and the passage of chariots through Poseidon’s grove is subject to specific rules and limitations, thereby demarcating the sacred precinct from its profane surroundings; Apollo cannot, however, settle at Oenoeus to enjoy this peace, because his uncle Poseidon was there before him (Müller 1986: loc. cit). This theory is laudable, in that it seeks to link the Ioneschus passage thematically with the rest of the poem, instead of approaching it as an irrelevant digression, as too often happens. But while the noise of a galloping team of horses pulling a chariot is indeed loud, will there be any appreciable diminution of the racket if the team of horses is allowed to pass without a barrier through the grove rattling the empty car behind them and quite probably crash the vehicle with all the tumult that normally accompanies such disasters, the breaking of wood, perhaps the clanging of metal, and the neighing of the frightened steeds? In such a situation Poseidon’s grove would be bereft of tranquillity. If the god had wanted peace and quiet, he would have imposed a total ban on the use of chariots in his grove, or at least an insistence that drivers dismount and safely guide their horses through it by the bridle at a walking pace: the motivation of the rite, however, is more likely to be connected with Poseidon’s status as god of horses than a desire for tranquillity. Possibly the very noise caused by the rite contributes to Apollo’s decision to move on.

At v. 237 the hymnist justifies the actions taken in the event of the breaking of the chariot by explaining, "for thus at the very first did the rite (hosie) come to be". This word hosie is itself quite as troublesome and disputed as the passage as a whole. "Rite" is the commonest translation; Benveniste (1973:465) contends that the word signifies "the act which makes the ‘sacred’ accessible", "an act of deconsecration". This fits the context in the Hymn to Apollo at least, if a "newly tamed" horse is being deconsecrated in order to be put to profane use. The word hosie occurs elsewhere in the Homeric hymns, once in a mutilated passage of the Hymn to Demeter (v. 211), and three times in the Hymn to Hermes (vv. 130, 173, 470), and one of these latter instances may throw some light on our passage. The inattentive Hermes, having stolen the cattle of his half-brother Apollo, has hidden them and returned home to the cave of his mother Maia on Mount Cyllene. Maia is aware that he has been up to mischief, and scolds him. In reply Hermes declares that his preference is to join the company of the other gods possessed of riches, rather than to sit at home in a dusky cave. He concludes (vv. 172–181):

I too shall enter upon that rite (hosie), the very one which Apollo has.
And if my father [Zeus] does not allow me, truly I on my part shall try—I am able—to be a chief of thieves.
And if Leto’s very glorious son searches for me,
I think that something else even greater will befell him.
For I shall go to Pytho to bore through his great house:
from there in abundance surpassingly fair tripod and cauldrons and gold I shall plunder, and gleaming iron in abundance
and many clothes; and you will see it, if you wish.

Just prior to this Hermes has expressed his desire to sit with the other gods in wealth, and at v. 172 he means "honour" in a very material sense. The hosie upon which Apollo has entered before him, and which he covets, is clearly a source of riches. Apollo’s most famous source of revenue was his oracle at Delphi, and it is Apollo’s temple there that Hermes threatens to plunder if his lust for the hosie is not gratified. It is reasonable to conclude that this hosie is prophecy, in which men give offerings to Apollo in return for the desired oracular responses (note further vv. 546–549, where Apollo declares that he is prepared to accept the offerings even of those who approach his oracle improperly and who consequently "will go on a vain journey", i.e. will get no response or a false one). Therefore, at v. 237 of the Hymn to Apollo Poseidon may likewise possess a hosie or rite in which men crave a boon of him—perhaps permission to employ his beasts in serving human needs—and which gives him at least the option of claiming material wealth in return, in addition to the respect shown by the mortals in consulting his wishes. The Ioneschus episode is relevant to the rest of the poem and is not an idle digression, because the rite which Poseidon possesses there is analogous to that which Apollo ultimately establishes at Delphi; and since Poseidon is there before him, Apollo must continue his search elsewhere.

*Note: This article has been adapted from a portion of the fourth chapter of my doctoral dissertation (Cruden 1995:127–132). I wish to thank here for their help and suggestions my examiners, Dr. N.J. Richardson and Dr. J. Mossman, and my supervisor, Prof. J.M. Dillon, and also Dr. M.J. Clarke for his generous assistance in locating elusive background material. Any errors or misconceptions which remain evident are, of course, my exclusive property.

Of the Classical authors cited in this article the following are readily available, with English translation, in the Loeb Classical Library (published by Harvard University Press): Apollodorus, Apollonius Rhodius, Hesiod, Homer, Pausanias, Strabo, Thucydides and Xenophon. Festus can be found in the Textnur series of Greek and Roman authors published at Leipzig.

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Reflections on Discourse
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I would like to take this opportunity to review a project in anthropology that I have been working on for some time. I will not offer a critical defence of this project, since I have done so elsewhere. Instead, I will try to transmit some of my enthusiasm and highlight what I consider to be among the more interesting results. What is this project? I have been investigating what significance the writings of the French social theorist - Michel Foucault - have for the practice of anthropology. The body of this project has been published in my study, *The End of the Anthropological Self*. Foucault in the Trobriand Islands. Before writing about some of the implications of this approach, I would like to digress a little to explain, in the briefest possible way, how my interest in this project came about and why it evolved in the way it did.

It is difficult to read Michel Foucault’s seminal work *The Order of Things* and not be impressed by its intellectual energy, novelty and scope. I have always believed that intellectual activity was the exercise of curiosity and imagination much more than the single-minded pursuit of historical truth. I found that both my imagination and curiosity were stirred by this marvellous book much more than anything else Foucault has written. These are aesthetic rather than rational judgments and, I freely admit, are entirely subjective. I resolved to apply the contents of *The Order of Things* to the field of anthropology in the belief that I could unveil a hitherto hidden episteme. In doing this I was pursuing a personal experiment rather than producing yet another critical work on Foucault.

This was not going to be an easy task and demanded a certain amount of decisions to be made at the very outset. Therefore, I established three definite guidelines within which I was determined to articulate the project. The first guideline related to the temporal place of the episteme I was determined to uncover. I could have attempted to unravel something contemporary and the post-modern immediately presented itself as an obvious candidate. I was disenchanted from this course because I felt that there has already been a great deal of erudition on this theme. Quite frankly, I had a fresh approach so I wanted a fresh episteme to go with it; one that had been neglected. Therefore, instead of carrying the debate forward from the Modern episteme I decided to carry it back to a pre-Renaissance era. It became immediately apparent that a possible epoch would be that of the primitive. I should say immediately what I mean by the term ‘primitive’ before I am accused of any political impropriety.

Foucault’s notion of the episteme involves temporal classification since, in *The Order of Things*, he outlines a linear configuration of epistememes stretching from the Renaissance through the Classical to the Modern. A primitive episteme does not belong to this linear model but to its own space. It is not simply pre-historic since it is not confined to a pre-cultural past. It pertains to my arguments that the notion of the primitive is a feature of contemporary cultural life. This perception of the contemporary-primitive is primitive in terms of the concept of difference, which is central to the archaeological approach, and does not necessarily imply a reduced degree of sophistication. The primitive is not necessarily a preliminary condition to our history. The concept of the primitive in
archaeology is extra-historical rather than pre-historical. It is to be recognised for itself while at the same time it is not isolated from the other archaeological eras since the history of primitive societies is related to our own history by a series of discontinuities.

My second guideline was established by the fact that I prefer Foucault's earlier work to his later writings because, for my analytic tastes, they have more clarity. However, I am impressed by his move away from an exploration of the conditions for the possibility of truth, which is traditional logic, to a concern with the condition for the possibility of knowledge which he gave a relationship of dependency with power in his later writings. Therefore, I selected my own version of Foucault's writings that combined his earlier archaeology and later genealogy. I wanted to make use of Foucault's attempts to replace the role of the subject, which has a central role in modern theories of rationality, with that of power. The subject knowledge link that dominates traditional anthropological analyses is replaced by a power-knowledge link that postulates the two axes of discursive and non-discursive concerns. The discursive axis is concerned with the elements of discourse, which Foucault was at great pains to elaborate more fully in "The Archaeology of Knowledge", while the non-discursive axis is concerned with the systems of power that propagate and sustain those discourses. These two axes constitute the nature of the archaeology employed in this study. These were the aspects of Foucault's entire opus that I was to eventually lay most emphasis on in my own work.

However, sometimes my own critics tell me that I can't do this or that with Foucault's writings by reminding me of what he said or wrote himself about what he was trying to do. I am always amazed when people hold iconoclasts in such high reverence. My justification for what I do with his texts lies in their status as texts and not in any authority Foucault may have over them by virtue of his authorship. Foucault is dead both literally and authoritatively, dead by his own hand in the latter case, so I will do with the texts what I please.

Thirdly, I needed to articulate a primitive episteme in terms of significant discourses. It followed, therefore, that I needed to analyse discourses that had a productive role in terms of producing social effects which gave people's lives coherence. Sexual discourse presented itself as a candidate because it is one in which power has always been involved. Anyone concerned with sexual discourse in primitive societies cannot ignoreMalinowski's work. For that reason, I made extensive use of Malinowski's ethnographic observations for their breath of detail and application without employing his own banal functionalist conclusions. Furthermore, sexual discourse links well with kinship structures which is the stock in trade of anthropology. Magical discourse is of course another obvious candidate for examination because of its ubiquitous appearance in primitive societies. I selected the primitive discourses on sexual experience because it is also a means of gaining access to a group of discourses as this experience is involved with many other primitive discourses and is part of a technique for reconciling the individual desires with the collective and, therefore, is an effect of power. I decided to examine discourses on sex, kinship and marriage in the context of economies and magic to show what Foucault calls, the shared positivity of all these discourses, in the primitive epistemic figures that I set out to articulate.

Therefore, I eventually settled on the discursive realms of wealth, sex and magic. My task was then to answer the following question: what are the conditions that must prevail in primitive societies, such as that of the Trobrianders, to allow primitive discourses of wealth, sex and magic to exist the way they do? This question assumes that these discourses have a certain necessity and are not simply arbitrary manifestations. It also assumes that they have a shared mode of being. I wanted to elaborate that necessity and mode of being, which we might call the episteme.

Having settled on my choice of discourses, I set out to show that the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the elements of primitive knowledge and practices are available through the application of the explanatory concepts of Foucault's archaeological method. That application meant unravelling the elements of a primitive episteme. There are precedents for this kind of project in the work of anthropologists such as Levy-Bruhl and Hallpike. Levy-Bruhl became interested in primitive mentality because by comparing it with modern mentality, which was the furthest removed from it, he could prove his relativistic and pluralistic philosophy [Tambiah 1990, p.84]. Like Durkheim, Levy-Bruhl believed that primitive peoples were involved with collective representations. These representations, which guide and limit experience, we might call 'epistemes'. This is supported by the fact that Levy-Bruhl described primitive forms of 'rationality' as the 'law of participation' [Tambiah 1990, p.86]. Tambiah believes that this concept of participation has been well documented by Foucault as the 'doctrine of signatures' in which the notion of resemblance played a key role [Tambiah 1990, p.87]. This relates Levy-Bruhl's work to the notion of the 'episteme' and, as such to a Foucauldian project. Tambiah also refers us to Wittgenstein's provocative notion of 'form-of-life' as an example of a Levy-Bruhilian-type relativistic project. Such an approach was sponsored by Peter Winch. I am attempting to do for Foucault what Winch did for Wittgenstein in anthropology.

I believed that this project represented a constructive means of placing the whole of our approach to our own culture and that of others into question so that there would be a viable alternative to the traditional interpretative unities that have sustained anthropology and have also sustained debates about the status of primitive knowledge in terms of a Western rationale. My primitive episteme was to be used to characterise the unity of the experiences of the Trobrianders in a way which does not reduce it to a version of our own experience, imaginable or otherwise. This experience is discontinuous with our own and does not involve a role for the individual ego. I believed then and still do now, that this project represents a worthwhile contribution to an understanding of human experience and knowledge in general which does not seek to reduce the natural diversity of humans to just the monotonous experience of modern people.

My main objective in looking at primitive experience in this way was to show what kinds of knowledge could be included or excluded. The episteme would hopefully reveal the regularity of the discourses and show, for example, how sexual discourse, magical discourse and discourse on marriage and economics have the same conditions of possibility in these figures. In The End of the Anthropological Self, I spent a great deal of time and space demonstrating and arguing for my conclusions. Here, however, I will confine myself to an overview of my strategy rather than repeating my critical analysis.

This type of enquiry looks at social structures rather than individual
motives. The individual has no role in this study and, indeed, is regarded as the real enemy of anthropological understanding. I believe that many anthropologists are doing nothing more than translating the experience of an alien society into terms where it becomes intelligible in our own society whereas anthropology should be trying to understand alien societies in their own terms. However, these are not terms that the members of an alien society would themselves understand.

My application of archaeology to anthropology has yielded results in the form of some exciting accounts of native realities that were hitherto explained away or reduced to functional banalities. For example, anthropologists have failed to account for the phenomenon of non-reproductive sex amongst the Trobrianders. My archaeology succeeded in showing the origin of this in the figures of the episteme and its shared positivity with the other native discourses. However, I have only space to deal with just one example here so I will refer to the area of sexual taboos. In the case of the Trobriand ethnography, one of the strongest taboos focuses on a ban on sexual relations between brother and sister. I demonstrated why this ban is at the heart of sexual discourse and how it has a shared positivity with the other native discourses that I examined. I will examine this taboo again here. Furthermore, this is an interesting example because it presents us with a striking case of an alien notion of self: one in which there is more than one participant.

The personal experience of the Trobrianders is also subject to the operation of the episteme in the way in which they come to regard themselves as selves. The notion of self which is appropriate to the experiences of the Trobriand episteme is not the undifferentiated modern individual. Morris refers to Taylor's conception of the primitive self as one where the self spills out into the world beyond the confines of the experiencing body [Morris 1987, p.185]. In the case of the Trobriand conception, the nature of the individual is derived from the place of origin in the world and the nature of that boundary. Using the taboo on sexual relations between a brother and his sister, I hoped to demonstrate how these two have a shared experience of self.

Perhaps the most crucial thing to understand in a project of this kind is the nature and role of the Trobriand episteme. However, I will only briefly sketch the episteme here. This episteme carries all of the explanatory weight since it provides the conditions for the emergence of primitive discourses and orders the experiences of the Trobrianders. An appreciation of these figures is crucial to an understanding of what I am trying to do as they are the genesis of all Trobriand knowledge.

After a lot of experimenting with various possible patterns, I concluded that the Trobriand episteme is a form of divination and has three essential attributes that determine the kind of knowledge available to it. These are the operation of figures of bounded complementary opposition, the immediate connection of this model with a notion of qualitatively differentiated space and a primary theory of occult causation in bounded essences or vitalities. The Trobriand model involves the imposition of asymmetrical boundaries on the world and these impositions give rise to a series of contextually specifiable realms not totally unlike those resemblances that Foucault identifies as operating in the Renaissance. The configuration of these boundaries provide the only form of reason recognised in the Trobriand episteme. I will only briefly elaborate these ideas here but they are examined in detail in The End of the Anthropological Self.

The bounded oppositions are inextricably involved with the essential figures of convenience, continuity, asymmetry and enclosure because of their connection with space. These figures are the means for the allocation of boundaries and the establishment of various realms of things amongst the Trobrianders. Once the realms are available, essences can be attributed to each. The power of the essences is dependent on the clarity of definition of the boundary. The world is divided by boundaries into opposing and rivalling spaces. Relations are established between the things that occupy these spaces on the basis of continuity, asymmetry, enclosure and resemblance by convenience. In this way, men are convenient to wealth, light, strength and virtue while women are convenient to evil, darkness and weakness.

Therefore, amongst the Trobrianders we have a fairly complex and unwieldy system of knowledge that is involved with the apparently simple idea of asymmetrical or complementary opposition. The figure of opposition involved in this study is more complex than those of asymmetrical opposition outlined by Hertz or Dumont when it is combined with the figures of convenience, continuity, asymmetry and enclosure which are all forms of resemblance. They form the collective representations of the Trobrianders.

Complex systems of spatial ordering are built up by the repetition of these basic classificatory notions. These are often based on dualistic opposition. The human body, the dwelling and the village are the focal points of spatial representation in many primitive societies. However, what is sought in a guiding metaphorical code is not an infinitude of relations but a few relations that can be imposed on the infinite world of discourse.

There must be a clear and distinct formulation of a closed world of things available to the hierarchical model. One of my major results, which I don't have space to go into here, was an account of how orality has its possibility because of the absence of this type of closure in the primitive model. I showed that closure is a condition for the possibility of the emergence of writing and is not available in the Trobriand episteme. I drew a distinction between enclosure or encompassment, which is indeed present in the primitive episteme, and closure represented by the notion of a closed whole to establish my thesis on orality.

The Trobriand figures have several consequences for the character of their knowledge. Principally knowledge of the world is gained by divination where the place of the sign in the world is sought. The world is changed in witchcraft where the signs are operated upon and altered by an operation on vital boundaries. The infinite possibility of this knowledge and the possibility of witchcraft accumulates by addition and is maintained by tradition and restrained by a microcosm based in the human body. Therefore, magic is not some additional contingent function accidentally happened upon or some form of faulted reason. It is the fundamental form of knowledge of this system. It would be impossible for the Trobrianders not to think in a magical way.

In the experience of the Trobrianders, the epistemological figures are imposed on the world so that specifiable realms are available that are convenient, asymmetrical, enclosed and continuous. All of these realms are spatial. Essences or vitalities are assigned to each in relation to a corresponding division of the mass of the vital principle which is everywhere operating in the world. Thus, the
primitive world is divided by the application of specifiable figures so that
antinomated spaces can emerge which are at one and the same time the natural
order of the world and the signs of that order. Because knowledge is always concerned
with formulating truths about the order of things, its nature will depend on the
epistemico construct of signs used to formulated truths.

In summary, I concluded that the guiding figures of the episteme are based
in a form of complementary opposition, causation as vitality and a dogma of
topological space that give rise to divinational knowledge. Naturally, a significant
part of my investigation was taken up with an examination of the detail and
limitation of these figures where ideas from Hertz, Levy-Bruhl, Hallpike, Dumont
and others were employed to produce the most appropriate configuration for my
project. A particular form of language as the manipulation of real signs, rather
than ideational signs, has its possibility in this configuration which, of course, has
consequences for the type of knowledge produced. I argued that magic was the
form of knowledge appropriate to the presence of such a model of language.
Furthermore, I showed how writing has no possibility for emerging in this
episteme and, therefore, there are significant consequences for the type of
knowledge that can be maintained and propagated in a context which must utilise
static tradition to the detriment of reflection. All of this may seem a bit vague as
presented here but I would remind you that it is the cornerstone of my
elaboration of the episteme and is outlined in laborious detail in The End of the
Anthropological Self.

Having made this diversion to provide you with some of the factors that
shaped my design and some of my general conclusions about the nature of the
primitive episteme, I will now look at how I applied all these theories to the
practical task of accounting for the nature of primitive sexual discourse and
practice. This included accounting for why there existed a strict prohibition on
sexual relations between the Trobriand brother and sister since this is the most
conspicuous form of taboo, amongst the Trobianders. Sexual activity at the level
of the brother/sister relationship is strongly prohibited in native activities and
discourses. The removal of a male child from his family and his placement in a
bachelor hut is due to the supreme taboo prohibiting any erotic dealings between
brother and sister. The taboo is the first rule seriously impressed in the child’s life
[Malinowski 1982a, p.437]. Brother and sister grow up without any personal or
intimate communication between them. The sister is the centre of all that is
sexually forbidden and unnatural for her brother. I argued and demonstrated that
this application of a strict taboo arises out of the native desire to maintain a
vulnerable epistemic boundary in the face of magical manipulation because the
boundary forms the microcosm for the political and economic ordering of the
people where the brother is the powerful possessor of wealth, the head of the
family and the provider for his sister’s children. An inversion at this level would
threaten the entire social order because the taboo arises from the fundamental
epistemic order and its disappearance would invert that order along with the
circumspective orders that it gives rise to. I tried to show how this threat is posed in
such a way that this form of incest has no chance of becoming involved in the
primitive economy of exchange; how the maintenance of the taboo is necessitated
by the primitive economic order and not by an economic functionality. (Since
archaeology is concerned with the conditions of possibility rather than the
conditions of validity, ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are more appropriate to my
design than the ‘what’ questions of the metaphysician).

To understand the nature of the taboo I argued that it is necessary to
understand the operation of the episteme on the human body in general: it is
necessary to understand how the epistemic figures order the organic world. Men
and women are not distinguished on biological grounds, and this means that there
is a strict symmetry between male and female sexuality. The native conception of
the body reveals a series of bounded realms separated by their relative place
within the body rather than by biological function. Each participating organ has a
role determined by its place in the asymmetric order. The human organism forms
the microcosm for the Trobriand configuration and the figures occur within the
space between the body and its reflection onto the world. However, individual
bodies are subjected to the operation of this model. There is an organic
asymmetry between the body of a man and the body of a woman. By this
classification, the male body is assigned a place at the pole of strenth, light,
courage and skill. But while the woman is assigned negative associations she is, as
a result, better suited to the realm of magic where she is particularly suited for the
workings of sorcery. This model is not one of power present on one side and
absent on the other. On the contrary, the power is spread across both sides
functioning in a state of tension: males exercise generally positive power while
females exercise generally negative power. The relation of knowledge to power is
possible by the very deployment of this axis in the space of the primitive world.
This figure has a general manifestation in the primitive world as Hertz reminds us
that evils, misery and death can come from the female element [Hertz 1960, p.97].
In this way, the opposition between the two sexes correspond to oppositions
between the sacred and the profane, to life and to death, to light and darkness.
Women possess the powers that lie on one side of the power deployment.
However, I tried to show that the female is not completely cast out into the world
of darkness and evil, since if that were the case, all relations between the two
sides would be impossible. The female body itself has its right side, or is
convenient to the male body at the macroscopic level. However, at the microscopic
level it represents darkness. The female body acts both as the sign for negative
attributes and as a thing that can occupy various spaces in the world itself. This is
the way in which the female body functions in Trobriander thought. The
primitive sexual act has its possibility in this convenience. Indeed, I argued that the
most natural and spontaneous sexual relationship that the primitive episteme would
allow for is that between brother and sister and that is why this relationship
constantilly occupies the discourses of the Trobrianders. I argued that if this
relationship were allowed, conflicts in the model would be overcome at the cost of
resolving all human relations into one single static point. To avoid this the
episteme allows for the production of mythical discourses focusing on this very
theme of brother and sister relations and resolves it by prohibitions threatening
death and disease. I linked these relations with a more complex economic system
of food exchange which is necessary for the survival of the Trobrianders.

The primitive experience of sex focuses on its own discursive objects: a
taboo on sexual intercourse between brother and sister; non-reproductive sexual
intercourse; and virginity which has no necessary connection with sex. These
objects belong to a discursive formation on kinship which is designed to allow for particular sexual relations which are compatible with marriages that have an economic productivity. In other words, they have a shared condition of possibility with economic objects. The primitive discourses on sex are maintained and regulated by the presence of discourses focusing on origin myths and love magic. In the case of the Trobrianders the origin myths posit an enclosed world of convenient clans that have their own characteristics or essences. Because of the topological conception in the place of a biological conception of the world that I briefly outlined above, the mother has the function of being the place from whence the child emerges. A child shares this place with the mother because of a link with the original birth of the clan since clan identity is maintained through the process of reincarnation. This identity is redoubled since the child gains its clan identity through coming from the mother's womb. A child does not inherit its nature through biological concerns but from the qualities assigned to the location of its birth, that is, the mother. A child comes from the same place as the mother and, therefore, has a shared nature and identity with the mother. There is no knowledge of physiological paternity amongst the Trobrianders. This is not because of an ignorance but because such discourses have no possibility of emerging in this epistemic environment. Therefore, the father occupies a different place to the child and does not share in its nature in the way in which the mother does. The father stands in a different relationship to the child. Sexual relations between father and daughter or between mother and son or relations between husbands and wives are not involved with mythological proscription nor are they the locus of the involvement of sex with real dangers as are brother/sister relations. This is the epistemological significance of the matrilineal system which makes the brother/sister boundary central rather than any other boundary. It is precisely the matrilineal system that makes the particular discourses on incest possible.

In comparing the parts played by the sexes, the brother and sister have to be set side by side as the representatives of male and female. Within the matrilineal order, the brother and sister are the naturally linked representatives of the male and female principle in all customary matters and are a more appropriate focus of sexual discourses than the husband and wife relation. This conception of a shared identity is reinforced in the myths covering the origin of the clans, where the brother and sister emerge together from underground through the original hole in the earth. They come from the same place. In family matters, the brother is the guardian and head of his sister's household. This recurring theme of the shared origin of the brother and sister gives rise to the particular problematization of sexual and domestic relations among the Trobrianders where a boundary must be established between them. This problematization defines the possibility of primitive discourse.

Brother/sister incestuous relations is the subject of one of the natives' sacred stories and the basis of love magic. The myth outlines the origin of the association of death with incestuous activity and maintains and promotes this taboo. This myth is important because it represents a powerful strategy for the maintenance of the separation between brother and sister and is a pertinent example of the relation of power to knowledge.

The power of love magic reaches its climax in this incest case. Love magic focuses on the fundamental opposition between brother and sister, and the threat to the order of things, through the possibility of incest, provides it with its power. Because magic can act accidentally on brothers and sisters it is important for them to avoid each other since all sexual attraction has its origin in magic and not in the will. For this reason the brother must leave the house where his sister lives so that he avoids inadvertently becoming the victim of a magical spell. In this context, the threat of incest does not lie in a latent desire but in its menace to the order that the pattern of oppositions gives rise to. Any order will have these vulnerable boundaries and these will be the focus of anxiety. Primitive anxieties manifest themselves in taboos and where the threat is particularly strong, will relate the taboo to death.

I referred to the love magic myth as an example of a system of power that regulates the primitive discourse on incest and conforms to the second axis of my analysis. This is a rare example of mythical discourse in the native experience that makes a particular sexual activity dangerous by relating it to death. The myth associated with brother/sister incest and the origin of love magic addresses the fundamental paradox concerning sexual activity available in the figures of the episteme. On the one hand, the male is attracted to the female because of a shared nature. Here the brother is doubly attracted to his sister in that they share the same nature and identity by emerging from the same place; the mother. This makes them extremely vulnerable to the operation of magic. On the other hand, the opposition is most acute in the organic asymmetry presented by two persons of different sex with the same natures. One is assigned virtues while the other, the lugutta, is blighted. However, magical desire threatens to bring these two together since desire belongs to love magic which cannot be resisted by the will. Magic, which has its very possibility in these kinds of divisions, has the power to break down this opposition with a resulting inversion of the primitive order of things. Love magic, focused on the boundary of the asymmetry of the sexes, threatens to destroy the order of the world and a great amount of native energy and attention must be given to this ever present threat so that it might be overcome. I argued that energy takes the form of a prohibition which is not so much a repression of freedom as a device to maintain and propagate the order of things.

Native sexual discourse focuses on exogamic and incestuous restrictions operating to limit the choice of sexual partners. However, it also focuses on endogamous restrictions which have a topological nature. Endogamy functions to prevent the native sexual world becoming intolerably large and dispersed. Endogamy and exogamy emerge at the same level and relations occur within the space established by the operation of the two. Their function for the production of relations is similar to the function of sympathy and antipathy, outlined in The Order of Things, for the production of a space for the figures of the Renaissance episteme. Endogamy represents the operation of a form of enclosure while exogamy represents a form of separation within the confines of clan and sub-clan.

The brother/sister emerge asymmetrically from the mother (the original hole) to form the continuous sub-clans which are convenient but separated by exogamy. These sub-clans are enclosed by more specific boundaries than those of clan. Exogamy functions nearer to the original place of emergence and is more suited to operation on native boundaries and, thus, the focus of more native
discourses than endogamy which encloses a viable world of people. These boundaries form the epistemic configuration of the divisions of society.

Kinship is ordered by the figures I sketched above. The four main clans are convenient to each other and are all enclosed by endogamy. The brother and sister need to be invoked again here because they are related asymmetrically and form a microcosm of the sub-clan. Exogamy provides the separation that makes convenience possible. The positivity of clan relations is given in these relations and are identical to the positivities governing sexual discourse and practice. Furthermore, I showed how they were identical to those governing magical and economic discourses and practices.

The incestuous restrictions have a microcosmic function in that they move towards an idealised unit of society available in the mother/brother/sister conception of the family. This microcosm of the native society provides a fundamental model of sexual opposition and relations from which spring the discourses on incest, disease, death and exogamy. Further, it provides the possibility of erotic experiences available in sexual relations amongst people prohibited from marriage by the one-hole-one-line one-sub-clan exogamic rule.

Leaving the jargon aside for a moment, my argument can be summarised in the following way. Brother and sister are assigned the same nature (we might say they are part of the same self) because they are said to have emerged from the same place in the ground. This is acted out at birth where the brother and sister come from the same womb. This shared nature allows for the possibility that all sexual relations focus on this initial convention and a brother need look no further than his sister for sexual satisfaction, and vice versa. This identification of brother and sister makes incest such a real possibility and problematises it in its particularity for the natives. This problem is worked out through mythical and magical discourses. Incest operates at the level of the central metaphorical model of primitive society in the sub-clan composed of brother and sister.

Exogamy functions at this point to prevent the world closing upon the single place of the mother’s womb. Exogamy, in its strongest instance keeps brother and sister apart. The need for this separation arises out of the epistemic demand for a world divided into unequal parts rather than one indivisible space. A brother shares his nature with his sister as a differentiated extension of himself. If these two were to join together in desire it would be completely unproductive. I argued that the productivity of sexual relations does not lie in the children it produces, since primitive intercourse has not reproductive function, but in the economic system that marriage maintains. To make such an argument convincing, I had to show the shared positivity between marriage and wealth.

I also argued that the non-reproductive role of sex and the function of spirits in an explanation of pregnancy provides an account of the possibility of maternity. The process of introducing new life into a community involves only the spirit world and the female organs. There is no possibility in such an account for a role for the male except a mechanical one. This theory of non-sexual reproduction does a circle of relations since it also provided me with an account of the origin of the incest taboo. In this way, these three discursive formations with their own particular statements support and reinforce each other, as they should do.

Foucault tells us that in the Modern episteme, sex is located in the family where it is transformed into a function of reproduction. However, sex is not located in the family in the Trobriand epistememe and, more significantly, it has no association with reproduction. In the society of the Trobrianders, we find no locations for the tolerance of perversion at a price. This is because the nature of primitive sexuality is not to be understood in terms of reproduction, reproduction or an economics based in production. Repression has come to be regarded as the fundamental link between power, knowledge and sexuality since the Classical Age [Foucault 1978, p.5]. The placement of the age of repression in the seventeenth century causes it to coincide with the development of Capitalism, and as such repression becomes an integral part of the bourgeois order of things. Sexuality becomes associated with the modes of production and is linked to a particular economics. However, the primitive taboo on sexual activity between brother and sister has its origin in the figures of the episteme and not in a repression. With this in mind, I examined the incest taboo for its productive nature and not as a possible form of repression.

It is useful to remember that, the archaeological analysis does not question primitive sexual experience for its negative attributes: an ideological analysis that examines experience for its false consciousness. Instead, it questions all experience for its origins in the figures of the episteme and its positive, creative possibilities. After Malinowski’s description of the sexual experience of Trobriand children it would seem that there are no sexual censures in place. For example, there are no native discourses condemning such practices as bestiality, fetishism, exhibitionism and masturbation nor are there believed to be any dangers associated with these practices. A native would never use the term bomala (taboo) with regard to them [Malinowski 1982a, p.395]. Bomala has its possibility only in incest and all of these other practices are of no concern to the natives. They have no possibility for emerging as real problems amongst the Trobrianders. All forms of sexual decorum are problematised in terms of a taboo on incest. My ambition was to explain why this was the case; in other words, I wanted to account for its existence.

The incest taboo does not have its origin in repression but in the native belief that the mother contributes everything to her child because of the absence of a link between sex and reproduction in a theory of physiological maternity. The mother makes the child out of her own flesh [Malinowski 1926, p.10]. Brothers and sisters are of the same flesh since they come from the same mother and, therefore, from the same place. These beliefs describe the native attitude towards their fundamental principle of kinship [Malinowski 1926, p.10]. A mother is able to give her child her own attributes since the child is convenient to the mother at birth. Social position is handed on in the mother line from a man to his sister’s children, since brother and sister have the same nature, the same vital principle, and this matrilineal conception of kinship is of paramount importance in the restrictions and regulations on sexual activity. The mother functions to distribute wealth and office, because she is the one who bears children, while being unable to hold either in her own person herself. She is a mechanism for the deployment of wealth and influence in the primitive world without being herself a locus of power.

The opposition between gender influence among the Trobrianders, represented by the mother’s brother and the father respectively, creates two natural spheres of influence to be exercised over a woman by a man. The one domain is that of sex, from which the brother is absolutely debarred and where the husband’s influence is paramount. The other is that of kinship where the
interests of the blood relationship can only be safeguarded by someone of the same blood. This is the realm of the brother. However, in the area of marriage these two spheres are brought together in a different way where the brother is materially obliged to his sister and her husband’s sexual interest is subsumed by economic factors. Systems of kinship provide the pattern of possible marriages and thus contribute to the particular economic profile of the community. This line of argument necessitates a consideration of marriage and its involvement in wealth. This represents a concern primarily with the axis that propagates and maintains the particular discursive formations.

My archaeological analysis of the Trobriand Islanders, focusing on discourses on sex and marriage, the nature of tabooed sexual acts, economic relations arising out of marriage and the role of the polygamous chief, the nature of love-magic and magic in general, revealed a shared possibility for all of these discursive realms in the figures of the episteme. I concluded that these discourses are regulated by the presence of a fundamental opposition between a brother and his sister. This opposition forms the motif for primitive problematizations and constitutes a vulnerable boundary which is the appropriate focus of taboos relating to sex and food, amongst others.

One of my concerns was to show that the primitive discourses on sex and those focusing on wealth had a shared positivity in the figures of the primitive episteme and that these realms were regulated by the same types of problematizations. I do not have scope to repeat here the details of my demonstrations that the economics of the Trobrianders finds its primary expression in marriage and this institution is organised around the distribution of food in a society under constant threat of war, hunger and disease or how, in the myths on the origins of the tribe, the mother is in the central place of emergence. It is sufficient here to appreciate that the mother has a role as a common place for defining the nature of the brother and sister. The conception of the mother as a locus provides the possibility of the identification of the operation of an asymmetrical axis between the brother and sister. In this way, the figures governing the laws of kinship, which govern permissible sexual relations, give rise to a convenient series of asymmetric brother-sister relations enclosing the stable central place of the emergence of the original mother (brother-sister).

Likewise, I demonstrated that in the realm of primitive economics there is an axis of asymmetry functioning between the chief and his wives. The chief, who occupies the place of wealth is enclosed by a convenient series of yam-houses representing the wealth of the district. Again and again in native discourses we can see the operation of asymmetry, convenience and enclosure.

For example, there is an antagonism between cooking and the accumulation of wealth which is regulated by the same concerns as the fundamental antagonism between the brother and sister. The first arises from the threat to the primitive order because of the dual nature of the yam as both sustenance and the sign of wealth. This is an example of the imposition of the bounded spaces of the episteme on the yam. The second antagonism arises because of the dual nature that arises from the primitive conception of the origin in the mother. Both areas are the focus of publicly observable taboos. Cooking is always done in or around the dwelling. There is a taboo on cooking within the inner ring [Young 1979, p.42]. Eating as the act of the destruction of wealth never takes place in the same place as the accumulation of wealth. Thus there is a topological differentiation between the spaces for the increase and decrease of wealth. In exactly the same way, there is a taboo on the brother and sister coming together and both are assigned different locations in the world.

To summarise my whole enterprise, in my examination of the discourses on sex which formed one axis of my enquiry, I tried to show that the regularity that emerged took the form of an opposition between the brother and sister who inherited a dangerously similar essence from the mother. The dangers of inversion to the order based on this unity are overcome by the imposition of a central sexual taboo. This regularity had implications for the deployment of power through an economics of exchange. Questions focusing on the way in which power deployed itself for the propagation and maintenance of such discourses formed the second axis of my enquiry. I also tried to show that the principal power technique for the distribution of wealth as the sign of power is marriage.

The notion of self appropriate to this model is not the undifferentiated psychological self of the Modern episteme. On the contrary, it is to be found in the set of rules and norms which find support in economic, magical and clan institutions. The experience of sex is characterised, in terms of the discourses on the clan, sub-clan and brother/sister where they refer to tabooed sex and where personal identity is retained in birth and death and is linked to one’s siblings. These forms provide the possibility for the Trobrianders to recognise themselves as the subjects of those discourses. I tried to show how the operation of the Trobriand episteme determines the ways in which native themes are problematized, the limitations of the patterns of knowledge that emerge and the shared positivity of that knowledge in central oppositional figures. This is not just a structural opposition between left and right. I was not, and am not, concerned with simple binary opposition but with the generalised pattern of the opposing spaces of the primitive world and the techniques for the maintenance of their separations, which take the form of myths and taboos. Yet another example is that the native village is divided between the place of wealth and the place of food in the form of cooked yams. The yam is itself divided between food and wealth and, again, there is a strict taboo maintaining this division. The form of knowledge appropriate to these convenient spaces is that of divination available in native magical rites. These examples clearly revealed the three aspects of the Trobriand episteme: the presence of asymmetrical forms of resemblance; the imposition of these divisions on space; and an occult causation.

Basically, I was looking at the application of the archaeological method to the local centre of the Trobriand Islands. That study revealed the inextricable interconnectedness of the realms of sex, wealth and magic in terms of their shared possibility in the figures of the episteme. I investigated this primitive episteme solely in terms of the two axes of knowledge and power which were appropriate to my method.

I was always conscious of the fact that my selection of specific centre reduces the strength of my claims for the occurrence of these epistemic motifs in the more general primitive experience. However, I did offer some suggestions as to how the project could be expanded to include more general features of primitive knowledge. Towards this end, I posited the Trobrianders’ experience as
a microcosm for a broader theory of primitive knowledge. Indeed, Malinowski held that in their general level of culture, the Trobrianders may be taken as representative of the majority of savage races [Malinowski 1921]. He believed that their distinct forms of economic organisation were representative of the forms of the primitive experience in general. However, he was justifiably criticised for making this kind of unsubstantiated generalisation and I tried to avoid such a criticism by engaging in a comparative study.

The primitive Trobriand episteme posits the circular places of complementarity. By generalising the occurrence of this figure, it means that the episteme, without establishing a universal truth, provides a form of reason through which primitive people experience the world and their particular form of differentiated selfhood. The self is subject to the same divisions as the rest of the world. His village embraces a centre of stability for the community rather than an ego which he cannot possess. Magical discourse is the form of knowledge appropriate to the circular figures for the organisation of primitive experience. It does not provide an interpretation of the world or a reflection of a primitive rational. It is simply the form of knowledge that has its necessity in the figures of the primitive episteme.

My concern was not to address traditional problems of a cumulative rationality but to address archaeological-type projects that arise with respect to a primitive era: to show the guiding metaphorical codes of the episteme in the epistemological figures; to show the discursive formations that allow the primitive guiding figures to give rise to bodies of knowledge and practices; and to show the limitations of primitive discursive and nondiscursive realms. This project allows a primitive society to be defined in terms of the degree to which its discursive formations conform to the epistemological figures of a primitive episteme.

I believe that I have clearly demonstrated that the replacement of a model of meaning based in the subject allows for the possibility of an anthropology based on the study of the way in which concepts function with respect to native discourses and the way in which these discourses are related to fundamental metaphorical figures. If my readers object to the figures I have outlined let them investigate the suitability of others. But let them do so within a project for analyzing discourse. The movement from a concern with ‘meaning’, which relies on the role of the subject, towards a concern with ‘discourse’ signifies a move from an intentionalist analysis to a material analysis that finds its explanatory entities in socially and culturally determined epistemic phenomena. This is a movement from the personal to the interpersonal and as such is a move from the merely psychological to the genuinely epistemological [Gutting 1990, p.26]. I strongly believe that such a move must be made in order to make archaeology function at a level more substantial than that of mere subjectivity.

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1. Ritual Ploughings

Ritual ploughings are an ancient tradition known to a large number of ethnic groups throughout Europe and Asia. Along with such wide diffusion, on behalf of these rituals' antiquity also speak the facts that the cult of ploughing devices, ritual ploughing as a component of the fertility cult and preventive ritual ploughings had been recorded as early as the Antiquity. Moreover, certain archaeological finds suggest that the cult of ploughing devices as well as ploughing with the cultic purpose had also been known in pre-historic Europe. <1>

Among the customs in which ploughing devices or their parts play a significant role, the best known in the Balkans and neighbouring areas are those performed on Shrove-Tuesday and Ash-Wednesday <2>. Generically close and equally interpreted are the ploughings performed around New Year or, rarely, around Christmas <3>. The pageants of masks with a plough, performed on Plough Monday in England, are thought to be from the same ritual cycle <4>.

Another wide-spread group are prophylactic ploughings, carried out with the purpose of protecting a village from the breakout of an epidemic (plague, cholera), contagious diseases among the cattle, or hail. Ethnographic literature describing this group of rituals has recorded real ploughings around villages, stables, sheep-folds and the like among numerous linguistically and culturally different ethnic groups <5>. There are also numerous areas in the Balkans where only traditions about such ploughings were recorded <6>. However, somewhere in Serbia and Macedonia this custom became annual and the ploughings around a village were performed every year on St. George's Eve (May 6th) <7>. Similar custom was known in some areas of Slovakia: in order to protect the village from the storm, its villagers were perambulating around the village boundaries with a plough on St. John's Eve (Bednárik, 1943: 99).

Moreover, Serb and Bulgarian traditions also speak about the custom of pre-ploughing the soil around the area where a village was about to be built <8>.

Finally, ploughings, the purpose of which was to invoke rain should also be mentioned. These were performed in periods of lasting drought where either a drained part of the river bed was ploughed up or it was ploughed around the village or the village-cross <9>.

In all the forms of ritual ploughings mentioned above, the use of the ploughing device can be a part of another ritual (pageant) or it exists as an independent, almost separate custom accompanied by a corresponding ritual. During the performance of such customs the actions undertaken by the participants can be: a) the ploughing of a real furrow b) symbolic ploughing when a small plot of the soil is ploughed up c) imitation of ploughing or d) the ploughing device (or a part of it) is merely pulled along (Isgum, 1984: 61).

The interpretation of ritual ploughings emphasizes their agrarian features, their marked magic and apotropaic purpose, revealing and stating at the same time the complexity of notions and ideas behind them. In this way it becomes obvious that in the ploughings meant to bring better crops combined with the fertility magic there is also a powerful apotropaic component. At the same time, when studying the preventive, protective ploughings we also notice various elements stressing fertility (Isgum, 1978: 17). This is the reason why statements about the common origins and generic connections of various forms of ritual ploughings seem to be justified (Gavazzi, 1988: 19). On the basis of such interpretations, folk-beliefs about the magic power of the furrow as well as the cultic relationship to the ploughing device are used in the course of these rites (Isgum, 1984: 61).

2. The Ethno-linguistic Outline of the Researched Areas

The traditions and beliefs mentioned above also form the basis of another form of ritual ploughings that will be dealt with in this paper. It was recorded only in one narrow area of central Croatia, heterogeneous both ethnically and culturally, linguistically and religiously. At the time of the field research (1987-1990) it was still often performed although partly modified. What I have in mind here is the ritual ploughing of the bridegroom's (i.e. newly-weds') yard in the course of or towards the end of the nuptials. In those villages where it was possible to identify it or where the informants were not too ashamed to talk about it, the purpose of this form of ploughing was interpreted as assistance to the sexual intercourse of the newly-weds during their first night together.

The custom of the wedding ploughings was recorded in a few smaller neighbouring ethnographic areas in a total of 35 villages, some specific characteristics having been noticed in each of them.

The first of these areas is four parishes in the Sava River basin in the vicinity of the town of Sisak. The population of the area consists of the Kajkavian-speaking Croats only, and is the only one among the researched areas that did not suffer from changes in its ethnic composition during the 1991-1995 Civil War in the former Yugoslavia. The next area covered by the research is situated further to the north-east: it is the eastern part of the Mošlavina region, in the vicinity of the towns of Gareonica, Kutina, Cazma and Grubišno Polje. This area was populated by the Kajkavian and Stokavian-ijkavian speaking Croats, the Stokavian-ijkavian speaking Serbs and by Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians. The third area in which wedding ploughings were recorded are the villages surrounding the townlet of Novska, in the south-west of the Slavonia region. The inhabitants of this area were Stokavian-speaking Serbs and Croats, and Hungarians. Finally, an isolated variant of the custom was recorded among the Stokavian/Kajkavian-speaking Croats and Serbs in the village of Sas, situated south of the Sava River, between the towns of Sisak and Novska. With regard to their religious affiliations, all the Croats, Czechs and Slovaks in these areas are Roman Catholics, the Serbs members of the Serb Orthodox Church, whereas the Hungarians are either Roman Catholics or...
3. 

3.1. The Sava River Basin

In the Sava River basin, the custom was for newly-weds to be brought into their bedroom in the groom’s house during the night of the second day of the wedding feast, where the wedding party moved after the feast in the bride’s house because “...until that time the groom could claim no right to the bride!” (the village of Hrastenica). Their withdrawal was accompanied by vulgarities that were cried out, by singing lascivious songs, banging, noise and shouting by the door, while logs, tree-stumps, cart wheels were brought to the bedroom door. In some villages straw used to be burnt in front of their door in order to “...disinfect everything with smoke!” (the village of Tisna Ljeva). In other villages a cock was tied up to the logs in front of the door (the village of Zircica). That done, a group of wedding-guests, in most cases married men, would harness themselves into the plough and plough through the groom’s yard. The number of participants in such cases was never a definite one, there were usually three to four, sometimes more than ten. Besides the ones put to the plough and the one ploughing, in several villages there was also one who sowed maize seeds or a mixture of various sorts of corn into the furrows. In some of those villages, after they finished ploughing the groom’s yard along its length and breadth, they would then go to their own yards to plough a bit there too. In some localities they would continue ploughing in the yards of other fellow-villagers, those that were not invited to the nuptial feast. After the yards were ploughed in this way the plough itself was taken up to the roof of the groom’s house or left on a tree. It is also important to point out for further analysis, that the plough-men were usually in no way masked or disguised, their faces were not even blackened with soot. Only in two localities they would turn their sheepskin coats inside-out during the ploughing.

In the villages of the area where the custom was still being performed in the late 1980s, in those cases where it was possible, that is to say where the yard was not asphalted, one of the participants would plough the groom’s yard with his tractor, and the custom of sowing maize in the furrows made this way was also preserved.

3.2. The Moslavina Region

The eastern part of the Moslavina region offered a somewhat different picture of this custom. Here, the custom was known to the Croats, Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians, although it was not known to the Hungarians in all the villages under research.

The wedding-feast lasted for a different length of time here, depending on the ethnic group. In the case of the Croats and the Serbs, the same as in the Sava River basin and in the period between the two World Wars, it lasted for a day and a night in the house of the bride and another day and night in the groom’s house. In the case of other ethnic groups the whole nuptials would last one day and one night. Among the Serbs and Croats the young couple would withdraw to the bedroom in the night while the wedding-party were still in the bridegroom’s house, as distinct from the Slovaks, and some Hungarians where the young couple did not go to bed at all while the wedding-feast was in progress. However, in this area, and only in comparatively small number of villages the wedding-guests ploughed the groom’s yard after he had gone to the bedroom with his bride (Serbs, Croats, Hungarians and all the Czechs). In the majority of cases the ritual ploughing was done on the morning of the last day of the wedding-feast, at the time the wedding-guests were preparing to leave. In the village of Sartovac (Serbs) the groom’s yard was ploughed through after the wedding-guests had had their lunch and after the bride had changed into a married woman’s folk-costume. In the village of Lipovljani (Hungarians, Slovaks) where the young couple did not go to bed at all while the wedding-feast was still in progress, the groom’s yard was nonetheless ploughed through in the course of the night.

In all the villages and in the cases of all the groups, only the yard of the groom’s house was ploughed through. However, in a comparison with the area along the Sava, in this part of the Moslavina mostly young, unmarried men put themselves to the plough. Only in some localities were there young married men among them, and only in rare cases they were joined by middle-age men. In two villages (Serbs), it was the young men who harnessed themselves to the plough, but the ploughing had to be done by a young, newly-married man “...who only recently learned how to "plough" (that is to say to sleep with a woman). Finally, in the case of some Hungarians and some of the Serbs the ploughing had to be done by the groom’s brothers or cousins whereas among the Slovaks it was the groom’s companions that were put to the plough and the best-man did the ploughing.

In the Moslavina the number of the participants tended to vary, from a minimum number of three up to more than ten. The division of roles was also more obvious. Among all the ethnic groups in the area it was customary that, besides the men harnessed to the plough and the one or two doing the ploughing, there was also one urging them on with a whip, unless it was done by the men ploughing. Behind them there was a man throwing maize or grains of various kinds of corn mixed together into the furrows. In the village of Stupovaca (Serbs) it was the bride herself who went behind all of them, sowing. Only in the village of Vidrenjak (Croats) straw was “sowed” into the furrows, and in three localities (Croats and Czechs) it was done with tailings. There is a relatively small number of villages, mostly inhabited by Serbs and Croats, in which no such “sowing” was done at all. In the village of Susjara (Croats) the last in the group was a young unmarried man who pulled a harrow.

In a great majority of the villages the wedding-guests that performed this ritual were only dressed in festive apparel. Only sporadically and only among the Serbs and Croats were the participants for this occasion dressed in old, worn out and torn clothes, sheepskin coats turned inside-out and their faces blackened with
soot. At the same time it was very common among the Serbs, Croats and Hungarians that those harnessed to the plough had horse-bells tied around their necks or waists or they carried such bells in their hands.

In the late 1980s the wedding-feasts were no longer held in the homes of the newly-weds but in the community building. In such cases the soil in front of the village community building was ploughed.

3.3. The Slavonia Region

To the south-east of the Moslavina, in the villages in the vicinity of Novska, there were no significant differences in the way the custom was performed in comparison to the ways it was performed in eastern Moslavina. One detail is seen as an exception, known in only one of the Moslavina villages, and completely unknown in the Sava River basin. In this area it was the bride herself who had to go behind the young unmarried men put to the plough, sowing maize into the furrows. At the time this research was conducted the custom was still preserved but the bride no longer participated in it.

3.4. The Village of Sas

Finally, as the fourth variant I mentioned that this custom, although with some differences, was known to both Serbs and Croats in the village of Sas near Sisak. In both cases the ritual was performed by young unmarried men harnessed to the plough. One among them did the ploughing and another one drove them on using a whip. Among the Croats one of them was sowing some sort of seeds into the furrows. Among the Serbs the sowing was supposed to be done by the bride if those young men managed to catch and kidnap her from the groom’s best-man, one of whose duties was to guard her during the wedding-feast. If caught she was obliged to sow maize, beans, stones or anything else into the furrow. It is characteristic for this village that the ploughing was done just before the bride’s arrival to the groom’s yard (Croats) or when she was already there, as was the case in the Moslavina village of Sartovac (Serbs).

3.5. Folk Interpretations of the Ritual

The interpretations given by the informants about the purpose of the wedding ploughings were very rare so that sometimes, as for example in the vicinity of Novska, it was not at all possible to record them. Furthermore, the Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians could offer no explanations for the custom. However, the ones recorded in other localities could be divided into three groups:

a) The first group contained explanations explicitly connected with the sexual potential of the groom, that is to say his physical ability to make love to the bride on the first night of their marriage. The Serbs of Sas thus said that the ploughing was done in order ‘‘...that the groom (i.e. his penis) should be “hard” that night!’’ A similar explanation was given by the Croats in the village of Vagovina in the vicinity of Garesnica said that the ploughing was performed in order to “help” the groom in deflowering because: ‘‘...he is ploughing at the woman while (they) the ploughmen’ are holding her “by the leg” (meaning by this the handles of the plough).

b) The second group of explanations contains the ones connected with the fertility of the bride or the young couple. The explanations of this group were the only ones known in the Sava River basin, where the informants stated that the ploughing was done in order to get the bride pregnant (the village of Hrstelnice), for the newly-weds to have a lot of children (Lukavec Posvski), or a son (Tebarjevo Lijevo). Still, such explanations were not unknown in the Moslavina either. In the villages of Brinjani (Serbs) and Susnjar (Croats) the ploughing and the “sowing” were done in order to have off-spring in the house, and in the village of Vagovina in order for young couple to have healthy, mostly male children.

c) The third group of explanations contains the wishes for the well-being of the young couple’s house. Such explanations are better known in connection with other forms of ritual ploughings. In the village of Vagovina (Croats), besides other explanations, they said the wedding ploughing was also done so that the “ploughmen” could plough away everything that was not right (i.e. all the Evil), so that the young couple’s home should be a happy one and in order for the young couple to have enough bread in the house. Wedding ploughings were also done with the same aim in the village of Veliki Prokop in eastern Moslavina (Serbs), so that there could be more bread in the young couple’s house.

4. Wedding Ploughings in Relation to Other Forms of Ritual Ploughings

The material given here concerning wedding ploughings reveals a great number of similar, analogous elements but also reveals prominent differences between the wedding and other, annually performed, ritual ploughings. The presence of elements characteristic for Carnival or other forms of ritual ploughings is not surprising for the areas in which the wedding ploughings were recorded are neighbouring to those that practised Shrove-Tuesday ploughings (The Sava River basin) as well as those that practised Ash-Wednesday ploughings (western Moslavina) <11>. It is interesting, however, that on those points of contact it was only in three villages that both forms of ritual ploughing were known: the wedding ones as well as the ones performed either on Shrove-Tuesday or Ash-Wednesday. In other localities the existence and knowledge of one of them excluded the knowledge of the other of these rituals.

Paying attention at this moment to certain differences between the wedding and other forms of ritual ploughing, it is possible to notice the lack of a name for either the ritual itself or its participants or for the separate roles the participants in this ritual may assume <12>. The wedding ploughings were also not accompanied by either the pronouncing of any wishes or blessings loudly or by the collection of presents. Differences are furthermore manifested in the way in which the wedding ploughing was done: the groom’s yard was ploughed through
and the ploughing was not done around something (for instance, a stable or village). Moreover, there are differences regarding the place where the ploughing was done since, in most cases, it was carried out at random in the groom’s yard only. A visit to and ploughing of other yards in the village seemly do not manifest any similarities with Carnival ploughings. Wedding ploughings seem to be characterized by their selectiveness for it was only the yards of those who were already participants in another ritual - the nuptials- that were ploughed. At Shrove-tide, the pageant with a plough would normally visit all the yards in a village. However, the ploughing of the yards of the wedding-guests may have originated as a secondary phenomenon, which confirms the explanations of the ritual's purpose from the third group mentioned above. In this manner it is possible to assume that such similar endeavours, aimed at well-being and known to have the purpose of performance of other forms of ritual ploughings, could have influenced the wedding ploughings to be performed in the yards of the house where there was no wedding-feast and where the performance of wedding ploughings at first glance seems senseless.

As has been said above, the number of participants at wedding ploughings was very uncertain. The same is often the case with Shrove-tide on New Year ploughings. However, what is characteristic for Carnival ploughings is a certain, constant number of specific figures (roles) who were at the same time distinguishable by their, very often female, clothes and their special equipment. Such division among the ploughmen at weddings was not so explicit, although their ritual status was made obvious by the wearing of festive clothes for the nuptials. Furthermore, except for some disguise or faces blackened with soot, wedding ploughings did not include the use of masks in the true sense of the word, as characteristic for Carnival ploughings in Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria or England. The small number of data about the sheepskin coats turned inside-out could but need not necessarily point to the links between the wedding and Shrove-tide ploughings. For the purpose of disguise in these is identical to the purpose of disguise in other South Slavic rituals: the disguise protects participants in a ritual from demons and evil forces, imagined to be present and particularly perilous at transitional periods, such as Shrove-tide or the nuptials themselves. The more obvious links between different forms of ritual ploughings are represented by horse-bells, carried by the participants in wedding ploughings in eastern Moslavina, as well as by participants in Ash-Wednesday ploughings in western Moslavina. However, the purpose of the noise produced by those bells was not only to drive demons and evil forces off. The Balkan peoples believed that the bell-ringing had an impact on the fertility of their fields. The bells have been used in this manner in many magic and religious rituals since very early in history, particularly in the pageants of masks (Bosić, 1985:124).

Participants in the wedding ploughings were always men. Only in the Shrove-tide ploughings was this more often the case: there are examples from the Slavonia where the ploughing device was handled either by women only or they participated alongside men. Other data from north-western Croatia refer to one woman participant (the "sowing Woman") <13>. In western Slavonia this woman was clad as a bride, a very well known fertility symbol and a figure that very often appears in South Slavic Shrove-tide pageants of masks, although it was usually a man disguised as bride. Finally, as recorded in the village of Otok in the Slavonia, during Shrove-tide the plough was pulled through the village by young, newly-wed women themselves (Lovret, 1990: 313). In this way these analogies can serve as guides to explain the custom from western Slavonia (Novska) where it was the bride herself who, as an embodiment of Fertility, participated in the ritual ploughings during her nuptials and who walked behind the harnessed men, sowing grains into the furrows. Such a role of the bride in the nuptials was in conformity with the folk interpretations of the purpose of wedding ploughings from the second and the third groups and which relate to wishes for fertility and prosperity of the newly-weds.

"Sowing" is one of the characteristic components of almost all the forms of ritual ploughings. In wedding ploughings the sowing of real grains prevails. M. Isgum (1978: 5-19) cites numerous examples of sowing grain, but also ashes, tailings, straw, and sand in the course of ritual ploughings. During the Shrove-tide ploughings different sorts of grain were sown among the Bulgarians, Croats and Slovenians. During the New Year ploughings it was sown among the Ukrainians in Galicia, Moldavians and Romanians. Russians sowed grains for the sake of protective ploughing around the village in order to ward off an epidemic or cattle infection. The fertility magic is discernible through all these rites. Such role of grains in wedding ploughings is particularly obvious in the folk interpretations of this act: the sowing was done in order to get the bride pregnant, in order that the young couple should have a lot of children. Undoubtedly, the use of grain in this ritual could have been facilitated by the fact that the Serbo-Croat word for grain - sjeme- means both "seed" as well as "samen". However, the use of corn in nuptial customs is of considerable age. This is also demonstrated by another wide-spread Indo-European custom, the custom of throwing corn, fruit, walnuts and other produce after the young couple - either at the bride, the bridegroom or at the wedding-guests. In most of the cases this is done when the young couple arrive at the groom's house. The purpose of this act is interpreted in the same manner as it was done by the informants when explaining the purpose of ritual sowing (Cf. Djordjevic, 1990: 34-38). However, the use of corn in wedding customs is also interpreted as having the magic-sacrificial character, that is to say as the mystical binding of the young couple to the agrarian fertility symbols <14>.

Finally, if we go further in the analysis from the folk interpretations of wedding ploughings that have been given, it will be possible to point out similarities with ritual ploughings performed at Shrove-tide. This is primarily the case with those interpretations which identify the purpose of wedding ploughings as the wish to plough away everything bad or evil, or with the wish of having more bread in the house.

However, although each of the groups mentioned above emphasizes some special purpose of this ritual, it is evident that each of them contains the whole complex of subconscious meanings and unspoken motifs, existing alongside the principles of magic that the ritual itself relies on. So it is already the first group of these explanations that reveal the peculiar relationship to the plough and the furrows.
made with it. We also notice, though not always, the conscious notion that wedding ploughing symbolizes the sexual act, that is to say, a more or less pronounced identification of the plough as the male, and the furrow made with it as the female sexual organ.\cite{15}

5. The South Slavic Context

In the available ethnographic literature about South Slavic wedding rituals there was only one data about the knowledge of wedding ploughings. On the other hand, there are much more data about some analogous customs and phenomena, actions and beliefs which point to the fact that the presence of the plough, or some of its parts, in the course of nuptials is given a special magic significance. These data will be presented here according to the degree of similarity with the above-described rituals from central Croatia.

The Backa region in the Vojvodina (Serbia) is the only South Slavic region in which the wedding ploughings were recorded in almost identical form to the variant of the ritual performed among the Croats and Serbs in south-western Slavonia. In the Backa the ritual was recorded among the Serbs. In some villages of the northern Backa (in the vicinity of the town of Sombor), as well as in some villages in the south of the region it was a custom that the ploughing was done in the yard or around the house on the second day of the nuptials. Usually some of the wedding-guests or the bride’s parents-in-law would harness themselves to the plough, whereas the bride walked behind them throwing wheat or maize grains into the furrows. In the town of Backa Palanka the ploughing was also done on the second day of the nuptials, so that hemp would grow (Bosic, 1992: 155). It is evident that wedding ploughings in this region contain elements that are elsewhere found in Slavonic-type ploughings: the ploughing around the house and ploughing for the purpose of enhancing the growth of hemp (in Croatia the growth of flax or cabbage).

On the north-west from the region in Croatia where wedding ploughings were recorded, this ritual existed in a more mitigated form. It was recorded among the Roman Catholics in Mt Zumberak. As distinct from other groups in the region, that is to say the Orthodox and Croatianised Greek-Catholic Serbs, these Croats represent the indigenous population layer. Among these Croats the custom was on the second day of the nuptials, that the wedding-guests gather in front of the house, pile up straw and light a bonfire. Each wedding-guest, apart from the newly-weds, had to leap over the fire. The men would then harness themselves to the yoke and imitate ploughing, trying to create as much litter as possible (Muraj, 1978: 125).

The next analogy comes from Bosnia, from the vicinity of the townlet of Kotor-Varos, south of Banja Luka. It was a custom among the Croats there that when the time came for a young couple to be brought to the bedroom, young unmarried men would find seats around the hearth and start poking the fire quarrelling like they were two neighbours doing their ploughing and as if one of them was trying to plough over the other one’s boundary. When they calmed down, they were given to food and drink, and while eating and drinking, they kept speaking lasciviously to the newly-weds (Kulier, 1901: 612). The custom, nonetheless, clearly points to the existence of notions in which the ploughing and the sexual act were identified.

A somewhat different role of the ploughing devices was recorded in connection with wedding customs in Serbia. However, the identification of a man with a ploughing device is very pronounced. In the Vranjsko Pomoravlje region in south-eastern Serbia there was a custom of marrying minor boys to older girls. In order to ensure bride-groom’s virility on the eve of the first night he was supposed to spend with the bride, one of the men from the house would dismantle one of the agricultural tools (the single-handled plough, the cart, the yoke, etc.) and after the end of nuptials he would put it together again (Nikolic-Stojanecvic, 1974: 412). This, in appearance distinct, example will be explained by the following one, also from southern Serbia, from the area around the Ibar River. A sexually impotent bridegroom there believed that his impotence was due to a spell cast by some woman. He would then go to someone else’s tilled field where somebody’s single-handled plough was stuck into the ground after the ploughing and he would take it to pieces to the very last wedge. After this the spell was “arrested” and he became capable of making love (Milosevic, 1936: 50). Finally, in the townlet of Kratovo in northern Macedonia, a man who became impotent would stand before a single-handled plough while his companion would then take it to pieces, repeating with each piece the following: “As this single-handled plough is being untied, may N. unite too!” (Simic, 1964: 403).

In the wedding customs of some South Slavic peoples more importance was attached to certain parts of ploughing devices. Thus in the Vranjsko Pomoravlje region, when a new bride was being taken into her new home the custom was that getting off her horse, the first thing she had to do was to step onto the plough-share (Nikolic-Stojanecvic, 1974: 105)\cite{16}. In south-western Bulgaria, in the vicinity of the town of Kyustendil, she went over a rag carpet that was spread out for her and on which there was a plough-share she had to step over (Vakarelski, 1965: 273). These examples, compared to everything said so far, offer the possibility of double explanation. On one hand, the plough-share, due to its shape and function could be regarded as magic means by the use of which it was desired to influence the bride’s fertility. Such purpose seems to be dominant in the above mentioned example from Serbia. However, due to the fact that the plough-share is made of iron, one can assume that what lies at the basis of these customs is the belief in the apotropaic power of this metal, which is more pronounced in the Bulgarian example.

Two more examples describing the use of parts of the plough for magic purposes could be added to the above. The first one is from the townlet of Ljubinje in Hercegovina, and the second one from the townlet of Becina in north-western Croatia. In Ljubinje, if the groom’s parents wanted their daughter-in-law to have sons, they would give orders to a man to make a bed for the newly-weds. Then they place the iureol, the wedge from the plough-beam, in the bed. It was believed that in this way the bride was going to bring sons into the world.
in the old Mediterranean religion. The finds of miniature ploughshares and coulers of the votive nature from the late Early Bronze Age from Slovenia, led to conclusions that the plough had also had symbolical significance among the Illyrians, the ancient pre-Slavic population of the Balkans and the East-Alpine cultural zone (Stipcevic, 1981: 87,112). Slovenian Ethnologist R. Lozar thought that wedding ploughings originated from ritual ploughings performed in early spring. With the passage of time, the early spring-time ritual ploughings were carried over to other seasons and occasions. This opinion was based on the fact that the ancient Greeks knew of wedding ploughings aimed at foretelling the bride’s fertility in future life (Lozar, 1944: 317-318) <18>.

However, there have been no records about the existence of wedding ploughings among the Illyrians or Slovenians so far. The deficiency of confirmation of existence of this ritual on the territory between the Pannonian Valley (central Croatia, the Backa) and southern Balkans (Greece), as well as the time distance between the contemporary South Slavic and ancient Greek rituals, do not allow the deduction of more precise conclusions at this stage. It is impossible to assume the emergence and autonomous development of this ritual among the Pannonian Slavs for such assumption is obviously contradicted by the existence of this ritual among the ancient Greeks. Moreover, it is not possible to assert that the ancient Slavs were the bearers of this ritual in their new homeland in the Balkans, for it has not been recorded either in the wider South Slavic areas or among the Eastern or Western Slavs. Also, it is hard to assume that the ritual was carried over from the Balkans to the Pannonian Valley. Different cultural and migratory waves that occurred before, during and after the Turkish expansion to the Balkans contradict such assumptions, just as they are contradicted by the fact that wedding ploughings have not been recorded in any other cultural zones affected by these migrations (the Macedonian, Dynaric or Morava cultural zones). The most probable seems to be the hypothesis regarding the existence of this ritual among the indigenous, pre-Slavic agricultural populations of the Pannonian Valley (and Greece), which was then taken by the Slavs who migrated to the region. This process is much easier to assume for the Slavs of that period (the 6th and the 7th centuries AD), who already had been engaged in agriculture and had had different rituals connected with ploughing devices in their cultural heritage, and who migrated to a region in which agriculture had already been a dominant component of the rural economy.

If the hypothesis about the taking of the ritual in the Pannonian Valley is accepted, then it seems justifiable to assume that it was originally known to the Slavs in the wider area of this cultural zone, to assume the continuity of its existence among them, as well as the later development of its separate variants. Therefore, the fact that this ritual was until recently preserved in two mutually distant southern areas of the Pannonian Valley and among two distinct ethnic groups (Croats and Serbs) represents a problem only at first sight. For although these two groups developed different ethnic consciousness, they have lived in the same cultural zone and due to that fact their traditional cultures show much more similarities than mutual differences. With regards to the researched Pannonian and Peri-Pannonian areas of Croatia, this ritual seems to had been in the first
place known among the Kajkavian-speaking Croats. These Croats make up an older and, in the east, a much more compact and wide-spread group of the population, that used to inhabit vast parts of Slavonia. Due to different historical events the ethno-linguistic composition of the regions populated by the Kajkavian-speaking Croats changed. Simultaneously, numerous acculturation processes between different population groups started to occur. The new settlers in particular were taking cultural elements from the indigenous population, partly due to necessary adaptations to new geographical and cultural conditions <19>. With regards to the Backa, the question of links between the old and contemporary Slavic population in the Vojvodina has not been resolved yet. However, some Ethnologists are of opinion that there has been a historical and cultural continuity that links the old Slavic to the contemporary Serb populations in the province (Bosic, 1985: 12).

Cultural continuity in the southern Pannonian regions was frequently interrupted in the past by migrations of the Stokavian-speaking Serbs and Croats to the region. This led to the narrowing down of the territory in which the Kajkavian dialect was spoken, to changes in the cultural picture of the region and could have led to the disappearance of wedding ploughings in central areas of southern parts of the Valley (e.g. in Slavonia). The new settlers were originally from Serbia proper and the Dynaric areas. As it has been pointed out by M. Isgum (1978: 18), there was no ritual ploughing with characteristics of agrarian customs in the regions from which the Stokavian-speaking groups migrated to the north. They, therefore, could not bring wedding ploughings as part of their cultural heritage. The fact that they relatively swiftly adopted numerous cultural elements from the neighbouring groups in the Pannonian Valley does not necessarily imply that they also accepted the wedding ploughings. Just as the Shrove-tide ploughings were not recorded in most of Slavonia. It is quite possible, as it happened with other cultural elements, that the new settlers adopted the wedding ploughings only in those areas where the Kajkavian-speaking population was dominant in number and cultural characteristics. The wedding ploughings which were performed by the Stokavian-speaking Serbs (and Croats) in south-western Slavonia manifest marked similarities to those performed in the Backa, and the Backa is in the immediate neighbourhood of Slavonia, the latter being a region from which the Serbs migrated to Moslavina in the 17th and the 18th centuries. Therefore, it is not out of the question that in Slavonia the Serbs had an opportunity to meet certain kinds of ritual ploughings if they had not already had them in their cultural heritage. The taking of this ritual by the Stokavian-speaking Croats in the vicinity of Novska could have been facilitated by the fact that they speak the same sub-dialect as these Serbs, by the fact that they are culturally similar and by the fact that in the vicinity of Novska they lived in the villages alongside the Serbs, both of the groups at the same time neighbouring the Kajkavian-speaking villages <20>. The wedding ploughings as performed by the Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians, the mostly 19th century settlers in the region, were noticeably simplified, with a tendency to perform the ritual the same way the dominant South Slavic group they lived alongside in the village did. The fact that these ethnic groups could offer no interpretations of the ritual, as well as the fact that they did not perform it in all the researched villages point to the fact that the ritual had been taken over from the people that had inhabited these parts previously. However, regardless of the way the process of taking over the ritual occurred, its maintenance among all the groups was probably made easier by the fact that these groups belonged to the rural groups among whom the plough, the soil and the furrow made by the plough had an important place and role in their customs and beliefs, gained, in the first place, through their magic and cultic meaning.

7. Foot Notes


2. These were recorded among the Germans as early as the 16th century. They were known to Austrians in the vicinity of the towns of Hall and Innsbruck. Such customs were also known to Czechs, Slovenians (in eastern Slovenia), Bulgarians and to the Croats of the Isle of Krk, the Istrian Peninsula, in north-eastern Croatia, the Slavonia and Baranja regions and to the Croats in Hungary. 


3. In central Poland ritual ploughings were performed on Christmas Eve. Around New Year they were performed in Denmark, Romania, Moldavia, the Bukovina, among the Galician Ukrainians and, on January 1st among the Romans (auspicandi causa). 


5. Ploughings around villages or outbuildings were, for example, known to the Romans, Russians, Ukrainians, Wends (Sorbs), Poles, Slovenians, Croats, Bulgarians, the Cheremises, Votyaks, and in Dagestan. 


6. For instance in the Slavonia region (Croatia) and, more frequently, in Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria. 


9. The custom was known to the Ukrainians and Byelorussians of the Polesye region. Similar custom was known to some Caucasian peoples, for instance, Georgians, Armenians and the Akhbaz. Some are of the opinion that this custom was of Iranian origin or that it was mediated to the Ukrainians by them. In periods of lasting drought Slovenians in Styria and the Prekmurje used to throw a plough into the river (Tolstye, 1978: 121-124).
10. Besides the above mentioned regions in which the custom was recorded, the research was also conducted in 135 more villages in the following regions: the Kupa River basin, from Vrbosko to Sisak (Croat), the Kordun and Banija regions (Serbs, Croats, Czechs), north-western Bosnia (Serbs, Muslims), the Turopolje region (Croats), western Moslavina (Croats, Serbs, Poles, Lemkos, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Czechs, Hungarians, Italians), part of the Hrvatsko Zagorje region in the vicinity of the towns of Varazdin, Ljudbreg, Novi Marof (Croats, Serbs), but the custom was not confirmed in any of those villages. However, ritual ploughings used to be known in some of these regions and were carried out on Shrove-Tuesday (the Sava River basin) or on Ash-Wednesday (western Moslavina). Protective ploughings against the plague were known through traditions in a small number of villages. Only in one village the informants knew of an ethiological story concerning the origins of the preventive ploughing around the village.
11. As recorded during this research.
12. Unlike in other South Slavic regions where the Shrove-tide ploughmen were called pustni oraci or pustnik (Slovenia), plovari, oraci, premicari, kobil (Croatia), kukeri, kukovi (Bulgaria) etc.
15. Cf. Chevalier - Cheebrant (1983) where it is said: "The plough is a symbol of fertilization, the ploughshare is like the phallus penetrating the furrow, analogous to the female sexual organ. To go across the land by means of a plough means to unite a man and a woman, the earth and the heaven: birth is like harvest...The plough and the spade symbolize, like most kinds of sharp implements, an action of the male principle on the passive female matter...The plough is also a phallic symbol. In primitive understanding its symbolism signifies at the same time to plough and to fertilize. Carus novilis (a carnival of spring festivals) used to be depicted in the form of the plough back in the Middle Ages (o.c., s.v. plug).

"Ploughing is a sacred act everywhere, especially as an act of fertilizing the soil. Sociologists state that the first furrow is even today celebrated as in ancient China, India, in Siam as well as in Kambodia, and that even today it is considered to be an act of the desacralisation of the soil. Maybe it should be said deflowering? Because the transcendental Man, the mediator between the Heaven and the Earth, takes and fecundates the soil that has not been worked before. It is significant that the first thing a Chinese ruler had to ask for was rain, the seeds from Heaven, that the first ploughing probably had to be done by couples, and that sometimes it was accompanied by a sexual act". (o.c., s.v. orange)
16. Analogous to this was the custom in the Gruza region in Serbia where the bride, getting off the horse in front of the house entrance door had to step onto the single-handled plough first and then enter the house from the plough, avoiding touching the threshold (Petrovic, 1948: 281).
17. Apart from their obvious shape and the fact that the kurej and kuraz are parts of the plough, these wedges were probably (subconsciously) used because their names are both in linguistics as well as in folk-etymology connected with the Serbo-Croat word kurac (Macedonian: kur = penis. All these names have in common the ancient Slavic root kur = the cock (rooster), an animal that has been the symbol of fertility in many cultures and pronouncedly so in the South Slavic wedding rituals (Skok, 1972, s.v. kur, kurdel). It is also worth mentioning that all, today indecent, Serbo-Croat terms for human sexual organs originated from the terms for the poultry (hens, cocks, chickens).
18. It should be added here that conversion to Christianity and the establishment of the Church calendar did not interfere with the existence and maintenance of ritual ploughings among the South Slavs, although no wedding-feasts are allowed during Lent. Ritual ploughings were still performed in early spring, in this case on Shrove-tide.
20. Although both Roman Catholics and sharing the same ethnic consciousness, the Kajkavian- and Stokavian-speaking Croats are, in certain regions, markedly endogamous in relation to each other. As distinct from the Moslavina, in the Banija and the vicinity of Novska there are numerous antagonisms between these two groups, which reflect themselves, among other things, in the existence of a large number of derogatory ethnic nick-names: these groups have for each other. The Stokavian-speaking Croats in the Banija and surroundings Novska live in compact groupings of villages, have formed their own parishes and do not inter-marry with the Kajkavian-speaking Croats.

8. Abbreviations

EP = Etnoloski prilozi, Zagreb
GEM = Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja, Beograd
GZE = Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja, Sarajevo
SEZ = Srpski etnografski zbornik, Beograd
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Joe Heaney Meets the Academy
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Joe Heaney as interpreter of a tradition
Seosamh Ó hEinnéidh, known in Connemara as Joe Ó hEinnéidh, and in the English-speaking world as Joe Heaney, was born on October first, 1919 in An Aird Thoir, Carna, in the Connemara Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking district) in County Galway. The people of Carna and the surrounding Inisheer peninsula were and are renowned for their verbal art; large numbers of songs and stories have been collected there since before the turn of the century. Joe won a scholarship at age 15 to attend college in Dublin, although he only completed four years of a six-year program of teacher training. By his own account, he was very shy about singing in front of other people until he entered and won first prize in a singing competition in the Oireachtas in Dublin in 1940. Not long after this he emigrated to Scotland, then England and eventually to America. It was abroad and on brief visits home to Ireland that he made the recordings and performances that consolidated his fame as the leading traditional Irish singer of his generation.

He was a mainstay of the London folk scene during the 1960s and became well known as a singer in New York in the 1970s. His last years were spent in American universities – Wesleyan University at first, and then at the University of Washington in Seattle, as a visiting artist in the Department of Ethnomusicology. He died in Seattle on May first 1984.

When one listens to the many other fine singers and storytellers from Carna, of his generation and the ones that followed, it becomes clear that Joe was not by any means unique in his talents; he was the product of a close-knit supportive community which took (and takes) the art seriously, with high critical standards. What made Joe Heaney unique was his position as both insider and outsider, spending most of his life interpreting this tradition to others in other communities. By the time he became a visiting artist among musicologists he had already passed through at least two other interpretive communities—the Irish-language movement in Dublin and the folk revival scene in England and America. The influence was mutual. Joe Heaney was an exceptionally articulate, opinionated, insightful and forceful spokesman for the culture, language and artistic tradition of Connemara as he saw it. Participation in the tradition was an open-ended process of discovery for him as he sought to deepen his feeling for and ability to perform the songs. To this end he did not hesitate to look for insights from the various other communities, he passed through along the way. Thus one finds him quoting, to support his views, the likes of Alan Lomax, Máirtín O Cadhain, Ewan Macoll, Séamas Ennis and Pádraig Pearse as well as his father, grandmother, and neighbors in Carna.

I was a student of Joe Heaney’s at the University of Washington in Seattle, making the weekly trek to his lessons, which took place in an instrument storage room in the basement of U.W.’s music building. At an absurdly early hour of the day Joe would teach me songs, along with giving detailed descriptions of life in Connemara, his philosophy of singing, and other “lessons” about life and love. Joe’s understanding of love songs impressed me the most—his explanation of why they were “lamentable,” and the darkness and depth of emotion in the songs themselves. Then he would sing the songs for the tape recorder as various large
gongs resonated quietly in the corners of the room. Unfortunately I recorded only the songs, and it took me quite a while to realize the value and interest of the talk. My decision to rectify the situation came, alas, too late, leaving me only with memories, some notes, and the archived tapes of those who had the presence of mind not to turn off the recorder when the song was finished, and who generously contributed copies of their tapes to the U.W.'s archives.

In this paper I am interested in Joe’s university career, in which he was required to explain and interpret his singing style to audiences of professional musicologists. Since his death in Seattle in 1984 the Music Department of the University of Washington has maintained a public archive of his songs and interviews. The interviews are most instructive. Asked formalist questions (such as “How do you know where to put grace notes in a song?”), Joe argued passionately and consistently for a radically different understanding of his tradition, in which musical form is only one aspect of a much wider act of orientation. He mobilized all available resources to articulate and defend this vision, including technical musicalological terms, non-sequiturs, and a few otherwise dubious recollections and interpretations. In doing so he wasn’t being scientific, but was, arguably, articulating his insights as best he could to people who came with quite different presuppositions about music, song, and much more. I intend in this paper to try to show what Joe was saying to us, how he built his argument, and why such an argument is theoretically interesting.

'Sean-nós' as a genre

The use of the term sean-nós (‘old-style’) as a name for both a style of singing and a repertoire of songs seems to have developed in the milieu of the Irish language revival movement, which sponsors singing competitions, most notably, as part of An t-Óireachtas, the annual Irish-language festival. The term itself is, thus, of fairly recent vintage (Mac an Iomaire 1994, Ó Loairt in press), and it is a matter of considerable ongoing debate what is and is not ‘true’ sean-nós song. However, this does not compromise its validity either as a term or as a genre if one follows Bakhtin (1986) in maintaining that genres develop as a process in social discourse and embody an aesthetics and worldview as well. The reflexivity of the term sean-nós, as defined both from ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the tradition, is also characteristic of the phenomenon of genre in general. The semantics of the term, meaning something ‘old’ as distinct from the new, is in keeping with this reflexivity (cf., the term ‘novel’ for another famous speech genre). Joe’s career as a singer and exponent of Irish singing both developed out of and greatly influenced the development of sean-nós as a genre. Lillis Ó Loairt (in press) argues that sean-nós singing has been “transformed from a form of folk-song little known and understood and practiced by Irish-speakers in rural areas, to a powerful national identity symbol, representing a different cultural and political agenda to that which was accepted as the contemporary norm”—effecting its ‘exaltation to a mystified high-art discourse.”

Given all this, it is interesting to discover that in his interviews, Joe rarely used the term, focusing instead on what he called (in English) ‘laments’ as an exemplary subset of songs which he felt embodied the essence of the tradition. His main examples of ‘laments’ were religious songs such as Caoineadh na dtír Muire, (The Lament of the Three Marys) which he recorded and made famous, but which were considered, both locally in Carna and more generally throughout Ireland as being women’s songs. In fact these sacred songs were felt to function as both as prayers and as direct substitutes for the caoineadh (‘keening’, women’s funeral lament) which was suppressed by the Church (Partridge 1985). ‘Lament’ was the term Joe used in English for the caoineadh. Thus we find one of the major exponents of sean-nós as a genre basing his understanding of its aesthetics on forms which echo, replace or imitate other forms which are completely outside of that genre.19 I would like to argue that we should understand Joe Heaney’s statements about singing as, in part, a strong dialogic response to the ongoing discourses about singing, in Ireland and elsewhere, including the attempts (largely by those born outside of the Gaeltacht) to define and regiment ‘sean-nós’ as a genre.

'Sean-nós' as direct discourse

In Ireland, reported speech is a very important part of both conversation and verbal art. The repetition of apt and witty sayings may include description of the original 'scene'—what Tannen (1988:101) calls "reported context." Poetry and conversation have a particularly close relationship in the Gaeltacht regions, above and beyond the features universally shared between the two, as Dervir (1989:96) points out:

...the good speaker and his hard sayings are held in high esteem in Ireland, particularly in the Gaelic tradition. Speech can be almost a creative art-form in itself, and many saying, lines, or indeed verses of the poets are mentioned in ordinary conversation.

Likewise, the popular oral poetry of the Gaeltacht draws its inspiration and many of its forms from conversation. Narrative storytelling has always relied heavily on the portrayal of the speeches and conversations of characters in stories. Often, the dialogue in these stories is in verse.20 James Carney suggests that much of the epic tradition in Ireland took the form of poetic dialogues in a prose context: A very common literary form in Irish is the tale which is a mixture of prose and verse, the prose being used for narrative, the verse for emotional statements by the characters involved (Carney 1963:22)

It has been maintained (Dillon 1947:10-11) that this is the original form of the epic in Indo-European society, which was preserved until modern times in the Irish and Scots Gaelic Fenian tales. There is a strong tendency in many Irish genres to identify “poetry” with directly reported speech. This should be considered in the light of indigenous ideologies and practices with regard to poetry. The oral tradition tends to represent poetry as having been composed extemporaneously.  

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20. For example, a number of the stories collected in the 1940s from Peig Sayers (Wagner and Mac Congall 1983) feature verse-dialogue.
There are a great many stories about poets, usually consisting of a narrative description of the scene which acts to frame the poetic utterances of the protagonist(s). These stories offer outsiders an insight into ‘folk’ conceptions of poets and poetry, but also function to maintain traditional attitudes about poetry and language, and help preserve the power of the poets. In many stories, however, the protagonists are not named as ‘poets’ but appear as ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. Ó Madagáin (1985) argues that extemporaneously composed poetry, usually in the form of song, including “arguments in verse,” was commonplace in Ireland in the last century. These utterances were often passed on orally, along with narrative description, i.e., ‘reported context.’ Much of the song tradition, especially the Irish-language tradition, takes this form, which could just as easily be used by poets to project a narrative scene for their works, casting them in dramatic form. Rather than seeing this frequent practice as mendacious, we should see it as reflecting a pervasive sense, in the folk tradition, of poetry as being fundamentally dialogic and dramatic, as a powerful response to a situation in medias res. The song tradition as a form of discourse is an important site for the social construction of the subject and subjectivity in general. Direct poetic discourse with its potential for masking and projection offers a surprising range of possibilities for the subject (cf., Ó Annracháin 1994). Songs very frequently support multiple interpretations—in effect different ‘stories’ or construals of their originating personae. This is a feature of the manuscript tradition as well. Discussion and argument about the true narrative background to lyric poems is thus part of the tradition. Multiple interpretations do not necessarily cancel each other out—a case in point being the so-called aislingi or allegorical ‘vision’ poems which serve, among other things, as both love songs and as political allegories. The affective power of these songs depends on their being multiply narratable. Gibbons (1996) argues for the pervasiveness of allegorical representations in colonial Ireland, representations which Irish nationalism sought to reduce to unitary symbols of identity.

The song and the story in performance

Irish-language song is arguably another example of Carney’s “tale which is a mixture of prose and verse”—where the ‘verse’ is sung and the ‘prose’ not necessarily recited. It might seem strange to regard the singing of lyric poetry as a kind of storytelling, but in doing so I am following Joe’s own advice, in insisting that “singing a song is like telling a story.” Other singers of his generation are of like mind in maintaining that songs have or tell or go along with stories. The songs generally take the form of the speech of the main character(s), who are identified only by accompanying narratives. Sometimes referred to as údar an amhráin (“The authority for the song”), these narratives may be told by the singer or by someone else, and range from a few words of introduction to complete stories; sometimes the sung verses are interspersed with spoken narrative. The use of the term údar seems to encompass several of its senses as defined by Ó Dónaill (Ó Dónaill 1977:1296):

1. Author, originator; source, origin.
3. Cause, reason.

The ‘story’ of a song, as údar is first of all an account of the person who composed it, the dramatic situation in which the song originated, and the reasons for and effects of the author’s poetic response to that situation. But it is also the authentication of the song, which makes it real for an audience by tying the poetic utterance to a definite origin in history and by locating the song in a specific place in the landscape. As Hugh Shields has observed, the simple identity of the poet is often a matter of special interest to a Gaelic audience. [...] Since the first-person mode predominates, the same identity is shared by the poet and the main personage [...] so that authorship need not be considered an extrinsic, non-narrative aspect. A poet may be a local person whose circumstances local people may guess at, if not actually know (Shields 1993:77).

The ‘story’ in sean-nós singing is what could be called a ‘potential’ as opposed to a ‘performed’ narrative. As narratives they seem to range from quite formal, artistic, and performable stories all the way to simple background knowledge or indeed mere hunches or intuitions about the meaning or origin of a song. In my fieldwork in Rath Cairn I rarely heard stories to songs narrated as part of song performance, but I frequently heard them discussed in conversation, often not connected with actual song performance. Older people who are not singers nonetheless know both the words and the ‘stories’ to songs; I have heard one man in particular complain that younger singers he hears on Radio na Gaeltachta obviously do not know the stories, even altering the gender of a song’s characters. That the ‘story’ functions as shared background information rather than performed narrative does not diminish its importance. Without its shared narrative background, much of a song’s meaning is lost. This is true especially since sean-nós songs often consist entirely of the protagonists’ speech, and thus are lyric and dramatic, rather than narrative, in nature. Songs refer to their stories, just as ordinary conversation is enriched by references or allusions to songs—e.g., a young man, while cleaning out an ancient decrepit pipe for an older man, laughingly compares it to Fíopa Anúd Mór. In my own fieldwork, I have frequently been struck by how smooth and continuous the transition from conversation to song can be, a phenomenon also well documented by Glassie

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22. Ruairí Ó hÚiginn, personal communication.

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23. It is interesting to compare sean-nós song with Austarian "deepsong" (Fernandez 1988); both are currently undergoing popular revivals based on their qualities of personalism, celebration of place, and spontaneity as a kind of heroic utterance.
Ordinary conversation provides the occasion for reference to, then narration of, a story, which peaks with reported poetic conversation between the story’s protagonists, followed by a few sung verses or an entire song.

When a song’s ‘story’ is narrated in performance it portrays the lines of the song as the actual direct utterance of the protagonist(s). An example of this is Joe Heaney’s spoken introduction to Amhrán Shéamas Uí Conchúir.24 I include the first two sung verses to give a feel for the kind of transition involved, between spoken narrative and the sung poetry which this narrative frames as direct quotation:


(Well, the song I’m going to sing now, they call it “Séamas Ó Conchúir’s song.” Or, some people call it “The Arainn song.” Because Séamas Ó Conchúir was born and raised in Arainn.25 He was a poor, pious man. And this was the time when the ministers, or, as some people would call them, the Soupers, were going around. A Minister

who was in Arainn promised him a ‘cnagaire dúthaigh’ [a measure of land], that is to say, a ‘gabháltais talún’ [a land holding], what we [in Connemara] would call a ‘gabháltais’, they call it a ‘cnagaire’ in Arainn. That’s about 28 acres of land [16 acres according to O Dónaill p. 254]. That was promised to Séamas in return for making a song, praising the foreign faith and running down his own faith, the Catholic faith. And Séamas was poor as I said, and he didn’t know what he would do. He went home and lay on his bed. And in the night, he had a dream [aising, a vision]. And in the dream, an angel came to him, and took his hand. And he showed him the soul being judged [lit., ‘being weighed’, after death]. Séamas got up in the morning and he went to the parish priest. And he told him about the dream he had. “I saw,” he said, “the soul being judged last night.” “And Séamas, dear” said the priest, “did the good judge the bad?” “Oh it did” said Séamas, “a thousand thanks and blessing to God.” “Well Séamas” he said, “Have you decided what you’ll do?” “Oh I have” said Séamas. “I’m going home now” he said. “And the world will still hear [i.e., hear forever] the song that I’m going to make.” And I’ll sing the song now as Séamas Ó Conchúir made it.)

Dhá bhfáthfhinnse culaithe d’fhág a mbeadh óir a sileadh leó Ar chuntart dán a dhéanamh, ag moladh an chreideamh gall,

(If I would get a suit of clothes streaming with gold in return for making a song praising the foreign faith)

Ní bfháthfhinnse ó mo chróith istigh, sliocht Liútaír a mholadh ar an chor, A d’iompaigh ar larn chuile, ’s ar threig Mac na ghrást.

(Couldn’t bring myself from my heart inside, to praise Luther’s descendants, who turned towards evil and abandoned the Son of graces.)

[10 more verses...]

The didactic beginning to Joe’s narrative reflects the occasion—a performance in Dublin for an urban audience—although the discussion of terms and dialectal differences would be common ‘at home’ also. Joe was quite adept at telling these introductory stories to English-speaking audiences, followed by Irish-language songs, while maintaining that the songs themselves were untranslatable. The main function of the ‘story’ when narrated is to orient the listeners, setting the stage for the song and equipping them for the change in footing26 when the

24 Broadcast 3/9/86 on Raidió na Gaeltachta. Recorded by Raidió Telefís Éireann in the Dame Theatre, Dublin, in 1957. The song itself, without the spoken introduction, can be found on the C.D. Amhráin ar an Seanós.

25 Inis Mór, the largest of the Aran Islands.

26 Goffman (1981); see also Urban (1989) on the use of the first person in South American ritual discourse. On the importance of reported speech for understanding the sociocultural functions of language, see Voloshinov (1973).
song inserts them directly into this constructed scene. What was past in the story becomes present in the song, and the third person becomes first person. The central act of singing and listening to séan-nóis song was for Joe this projection back in time, and he often used the word 'story' to refer, not to any kind of narrative, but to this past scene itself. This past scene is the secret of the song, a shared history that is ritually enacted in performance:

...This is why they go anticlockwise when they're singing, they hold hands and go anticlockwise. Because they're turning back the clock, to when this time was—and each song tells a story. Because when most of the songs were composed, the people couldn't speak about their feelings; they had to put it over in song so people wouldn't understand what they were saying. The common enemy, wouldn't understand what they were talking (Heaney 78-15.5).

Ornamentation in traditional song

The most often remarked feature of the séan-nóis singing style is the highly ornamented solo melodic line. Pitch, duration, tone-quality, and dynamics all appear to be organized so as to allow the singer the greatest flexibility in ornamentation (Bodley 1973). Melodic ornamentation consists of adding small grace notes; melismatic ornamentation is "a group of adjacent auxiliary notes decorating or replacing a main note of the melody." Intervallic ornamentation is the replacement of intervals between main notes, and the filling in of intervals with "a series of stepwise notes" (Ó Cannain 1978:71). Ornamentation results in a kind of rubato:

The number of accents or beats per bar is constant, and falls mostly into patterns of 2, 3, or 4. The duration of each of these beats is variable—indeed it has to be in order to accommodate the ornaments. Thus one gets a form of rubato that is to some extent structural—a rubato that has a specific part to play in the musical structure (Bodley 1973:52).

The practice of ornamentation is but one aspect of the musical variation (between measures, verses, performances, and performers) which is valued as the hallmark of "true" traditional style:

Not only is the ornamentation changed from verse to verse, but what might be considered the basic musical material of the song may be varied as well (Bodley 1973:72).

Ornamentation, along with melodic and rhythmical variation take the same forms in both song and instrumental music, which also share the same basic melodies. However, the exact nature and role of ornamentation in traditional singing is a matter of some debate. Lillis Ó Laioire has suggested that the Gaelic Revival movement and other aficionados have made a "fetish" of melodic ornamentation, taking it as the unique measure of 'true' séan-nóis style and distorting the tradition in the process, whereas many singers and some regional styles use very little ornamentation (Ó Laioire in press, and personal communication). Clearly, melodic ornamentation is but one of many ways of structuring a performed text. Relevant to this discussion is Glassie's (1982:40) observation that storytelling in County Fermanagh had two "modes":

One is full and flat in sound, complex in grammar; it is used to digress informationally, to orient the listener, and it approximates prose. The other is melodic, rhythmically broken, grammatically simple; it is used to advance the narrative, to excite the listener, and it approximates poetry. Neither prose nor poetry, though nor action, stories are both.

Perhaps song performance lies on a similar continuum between relatively 'narrative' and relatively 'lyric' poles; different regional traditions as well as different singers and indeed songs in a given region would then occupy different positions on this continuum. As we shall see, Joe Heaney understood melodic ornamentation in this way, as one aspect of narrative performance—as part of telling a story.

A performer's account of ornamentation

Joe was often asked about ornamentation: where does it go, does it go in the same place every time, how did you learn to do it, and so on, questions which assumed that ornamentation was first and foremost a matter of musical form. He did not see it that way, refusing to consider any aspect of performance or form in isolation from what he saw as an essential unity of the song and the story. The verb most often used in Connemara Irish for singing is abair, the basic meaning of which is 'say', also the verb used in quotation (Dúirt sé [go]... – He said [that]...). Joe regarded this as proof of the connection between song and story:

Well you see, nobody ever asked you to sing a song, 'Aibh gniomhar'.

Say a song. You know what I mean? Therefore, you're telling the story in a nice way.

This "nice way" of telling a story also makes it cryptic to outsiders:

Because, when most of these songs were composed, the people couldn't express their views orally so they had to put it in verse. And that told the tragic tale, what was it an emigration song, or a boat song— a boat tragedy like Anach Chuaín, or something like that, these conveyed the message and without telling the story the song was lost. That's why it's always advisable to say a little bit about the song before you start doing it you know.

See Williams (1985) for a formal analysis of Joe Heaney's style of ornamentation. Williams argues that Heaney tends to ornament unstressed syllables; she emphasizes the importance of the interaction between rubato and ornamentation in creating poetic tension (stress and release) within the lines of a song. 27

27. See also Ó Cruaascaláig (1969); Líinée (1984) analyzes ornamentation in Joe Heaney's storytelling.
When he was asked 'How did you know, when you were singing something, if it wasn't good?' He replied.

Sure, I judge it by the way I feel. Now, 'do I feel this, or don't I?' That's the question I ask myself all the time. Do I feel this song, do I put myself in the man's name that this particular song was written about. Am I suffering the labors he did, can I go through that or have that picture before me; if I can't follow that man, the journey he took, whether he was in bondage or in slavery, I don't follow the song and I don't do it justice ... (Heaney 78-15.2)

For Joe the central act in singing was putting oneself "in the name" of the song's protagonist. In "saying" (that is, singing) another person's words, empathy--"suffering the labors that he did"--is an act of orientation, a coordination of vision. For Joe Heaney, everything else about the song tradition follows from this central act. But this act first requires "knowing the story:" one must first know who the person was, and what he or she was facing. Each line must be properly sung according to its place in the "story:

...the first important thing about a song: know the story. What the story is all about. And that's very important. And then, you're doing the song the same as if you were telling the story. Each line varies, but you've got to put them all together so they'll make sense. I mean it's no use in trying to get one line, because one line follows the other, and it's before another line. So they've got to knit into one another. ...That's the way it's got to be (Heaney 78-15.2).

The singer's understanding of and feeling for the song comes out in the ornamentation of the melodic lines:

...that's "nature's accompaniment" they called that. I don't try to do it, it just happens through the song when I try to draw out a line, ...hold onto that particular line because there's something special about that line. Don't throw it away, just hold onto it as long as you can (Heaney 78-15.10). ...the ornamentation came from ...that the people wanted to hold onto this particular line. They didn't want to let it go. They wanted to hold onto it as long as they could (Heaney 78-15.1).

Through ornamentation a singer gives dramatic structure to a song, and this requires an understanding of the 'story':

Different lines in a song are different, sung differently to other lines in a song, some verses says you of the tragedy and other verses tells, why did it happen and they vary, like that the same way you sing any version of a song. There's an old saying that you start a song slowly, you build up a climax and come down gently. And in folk music, there is no beat, it's just a pulse (Heaney 78-15.1).

Ornamentation 'just happens' as a result of the emotional attachment the singer forms with the lines, according to their place in the 'story'. The singer 'holds on to' lines, drawing them out, slowing down time. I found it fascinating that Joe talked in a very similar way about the emotional attachment to the dead in wakings:

...people are not waked anymore like they used to be waked you know, it took you three nights and three days you know. They hated to part with the person at all you know. So they really kept him till the last minute you know (Heaney 78-15.3).

As for the ornaments themselves, "there's nobody living who can tell anybody where to put grace notes in a song." Ornamentation is an aspect of what Joe called "style," which is an inherently individual matter; "you develop your own style," which "takes years" (Heaney 78-15.1). Ornamentation is "doing justice to a song." It is a moral act that comes out of a proper relationship between the singer and that other "I" -- the one in whose "name" the singer sings. Emotion is the force behind this reason for "drawing out" a line, but Joe is careful to show that emotion is not a direct response to the words, but comes out of "pictures" which are "followed" as the song emerges. Learning to sing is learning to see. The same goes for listening. Joe said that visitors would come to hear a song, Caoineadh na dTri Muire,29 sung in his family's house every Friday during Lent; it was the old people especially who responded to it:

(Would the people taking part become emotional?) Oh, they would, most of them would... especially if the older people would become emotional they'd cry, because this is something they could see, as the person carried on. They could see what was happening, the event taking place which was the real meaning of the song anyway; to follow a story, to follow a path, until you come to the turn (Heaney 78-15.3)

Both singers and listeners must learn to "follow a story," and this means relating the events and feelings of one's own life to those experienced by the songs characters. A sad song such as Caoineadh na dTri Muire

...sometimes took a long time to sing because whoever was singing the lament put everything they had into it, and it was usually a woman [who would sing this song]. They left nothing out. Everything. And the sadness and sorrow of their own lives helped them to make it even better (Heaney 78-15.3)

At a concert in 1978 Joe was asked to sing a verse of a song without, and then with, ornamentation. He chose to sing The Rocks of Bawn, a song in English which consists of a conversation between a "big" farmer and his recalcitrant hired hand, Sweeney (a Connemara man). Joe attempted to do this,30 and then explained the

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29. Joe was the first to commercially record this song, which is now widely associated with his name. Cf. Partridge (1983:30-31), which also casts doubt on his account of how he got this song.

30. Without much success—the 'unornamented' version is perhaps the better version, while the 'ornamented' version sounds forced.
difference, making a comparison between the drawn out, melodically ornamented lines of the song and the toils and troubles of the hero's own life:

There's a big difference in them two versions of that. In one of them you're in a hurry to go somewhere and the other one, you're playing the act, you're working exactly what Sweeney was doing. You're going through the same thing that he was going through, before the song was ever made. You have the picture before you of the man going through this agony, and if he would have stopped for one minute, somebody else would get the job. And that's exactly the picture you must follow when you're singing an old song. Especially if it's a sad one...you've got to have the picture before you. And always have that picture and then you'll do the song properly then (Heaney 78-15.10).

Thus, via ornamentation, sound becomes the medium which fuses images, emotions, and the life histories of the singer, protagonist, and listeners.

Embodiment: 'pulse' and 'drone'

Joe used two terms to talk about how a singer keeps continuity in a song while singing it, the 'pulse' and the 'drone' or 'nyah'. These are quasi-physical entities that a singer 'has', and Joe often mentioned them at the same time. Well you see it's like a bee, when it's going into the hive. In sean-nós singing, which is old style singing, there's supposed to be the drone of the ancient pipes in the voice, accompanying the song. Some people have it, and some don't. I've been accused of having it, it's a great honor to be accused of having it Ewan Macoll told me I had it. Peggy Seeger told me I had it... I don't put there it's just there. [Does that help you sing better?] Well it helps me balance my voice better. Well I can hold on to the next line better by having this following y.k., following the words I'm saying. Or preceding the words I'm saying. I keep a link with the lines y.k., by doing that. The lines are linked to one another. It's like telling a story. You've got to put grace notes in a story even to tell it, with a bit of exaggeration. I mean it's no use telling a story the way it was—you've got to put something on to it. And help it along. [So even when you stop singing to take a breath or something you still hear the drones?] I still have it...even when I stop to talk, it still helps me to carry on with the same, almost the same note as I stopped on you know (Heaney 78-15.3).

There is, we suspect, 'a bit of exaggeration' in this account itself! But it accurately describes the role of nasalization in sean-nós, and makes sense as a phenomenological account from the singer's perspective. Likewise with Joe's description of the 'pulse':

My father told me, "when you're singing a song, start softly, build up a climax, and come down—slowly, easily toward the end—because remember, in folk music there is no beat; it's just got a pulse; and the minute you lose that pulse you're dead, the song is dead. You can lose a beat," he said, and survive—but the pulse, no." That's the advice he gave me.

A pulse, you know, it's something that goes evenly more or less, you know, with no sort of loudness all the time, or no sort of down all the time. It's a thing that keeps going, and when it stops that's dead, whatever they're doing is dead. It keeps the same moment, you know; going the same way all the time. You don't run away with something. You don't beat (Quoted in Cowdery 1990:35).

It is hard to imagine Joe's father using the term 'folk music', and indeed in an interview in Irish,²¹ we hear Joe say:

...Mar a duit an Béarlór fidó, "In folk music there's no beat—there's only a pulse." (..As the English-speaker said long ago, "In folk music there's no beat—there's only a pulse.")

My suspicion is that this 'pulse' is a musicological term that made sense to Joe, both as a description of what singing felt like and rhetorically as ammunition in his ongoing war against the Irish ballad boom, Liam Clancy, and the tendency to put a regular beat and guitar accompaniment on every possible song. Joe seemed to identify the pulse of a song with its poetic meter,²² and in this respect it is interesting to compare his idea with one found in Irish folklore about poetry and poets, féith na filíochta (the vein of poetry). As O hOgáin (1979, 1982) has shown, folk stories often portrayed this literally as a physical vein which poets had; when the poet was seized by an emotional poetic frenzy, the pulsing of this vein would produce poetry, its pulse corresponding to the poetic meter. Thus, poetry is portrayed in the tradition as being a direct physical artifact of the poet's body and emotions. And since this poetry was sung, (Ó Madagáin 1985), we have evidence for a folk understanding in which song creates a direct connection over time between singer and poet, via the pulse.

Songs as commodities?

...I still love the songs and I wanted to do them better and better and better and better. Do justice to the songs and that's the only way of presenting them is to keep them in the form that they were. If you can't add anything on, don't take anything away that's my policy I would never compromise with groups, or people who's running before they can walk. They run away with great songs, destroy them and then leave them down and take another one and do the same with them... Only for the old people who kept the songs alive, only where they were so preserved, in one area of Ireland, especially the

²¹ Interviewed by Mike P. Ó Conghaile, Feidhí na Gaeltachta. Archived as tape R 779, An Teanglann, Roinn na Nua-Ghaeilge, Coláiste na hOllscolaíochta, Baile Atha Cliath.

²² cf. Williams 1985
poor areas, they wouldn't be alive today because they'd be destroyed and distorted and cut up to smithereens (Heaney 78-15.2).

...There's no way I can do them as good as I want to do them. Even to myself, I want to do them justice over justice. ...Because I love the spirit of the songs and I understand why the songs were composed in the first place. And nobody knows who composed the half of them you see. Although collectors came around with tape recorders and what have you, and they collected the songs, the people who gave them the songs never got a penny out of them. And the collectors sold books, you know, because the craze was on since 1966. ...Everybody wanted songs, to get these guitars and all that, groups over groups, and finally they're running out of names for groups in Ireland. There are three hundred ninety groups. They're all doing the same thing (Heaney 78-15.2).

Joe Heaney might seem an unlikely crusader against the commodification of traditional song. More than any other singer, he was responsible for creating a market for recordings of sean-nós song. He was a major participant in the folksong revival of the 1960's and proudly claimed to have given songs such as The Seven Drunken Nights to Liam Clancy. But he was strongly critical of certain musical alterations, most notably the addition of accompaniment to sean-nós songs, especially to the songs he called 'laments'. Joe saw accompaniment as "killing" a song, eliminating the possibility of 'holding on' to lines and ornamenting them. Any accompaniment which imposed a regular 'beat' would reduce the possibilities for rubato, the ornamental drawing out of lines of a song. Joe saw this as exploitation, reducing a song to a commodity and severing the essential connection between singer, song, listeners, and story. I find it fascinating that Joe Heaney criticized the commercialization of songs in these terms, which link formal changes in musical structure, a severing of social relationships, and a new conception of time. Mauss (1967:34-5) characterized the transition from gift exchange to barter and market systems in terms of the elimination of the element of time from exchange. In Ireland, Glassie (1982) has shown the importance of several genres of talk, storytelling, and song as elements in a system of exchange which also included food, music, and labor. Elsewhere in Europe, on the Greek periphery, Seremetakis (1991) argued for a 'women's imaginary' based on memory, shared substance, death ritual and laments, in opposition to discourses of modernization. I believe that Joe Heaney's comments are best understood against this background, and that what he was arguing for was a specific reality, of the nature of songs as texts and of practices of singing and listening, which is at odds with the forms that texts, singing and listening take under relations of market-governed production and consumption.

Conclusions

I hope I have shown the value of taking Joe Heaney's statements seriously as theory. They could point us towards a radically different way of understanding musical form, language, emotion, and performance. It would be interesting to see how useful his insights could be for research in other musical traditions. To that end, I present, in a more abstract form, a few of these points:

- Musical form (in this case, ornamentation in sean-nós song) is not independent of but rather wholly constituted by local traditions and understandings.
- Musical form communicates, and is able to do so because it is subsumed under and constituted by language; in other words, it is a kind of speech.
- Speech itself is subsumed under and constituted by social relations. In sean-nós singing, these relations are complex, involving those of the original protagonists or characters in the song, those of the present day performer and his audience, and the relationships between these two sets of people.
- Social relations themselves are mediated by bodily practices, specifically by emotions and sentiments which are shared by persons who share a common experience as they make their way through life.
- Musical form thus understood becomes a medium which brings together speech, social relations, and sentiments, gaining a moral force—the ability to constitute us as moral subjects.
- Joe's 'theory' works as a generalized theory of Irish traditional music, showing how poetic forms are linked to narratives, the meaning of which they condense in sound symbolism.

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BOOK REVIEWS:
Borec, Revija za zgodovino, literaturo in antropologijo, Nr. 544-545, Ljubljana, 1995

This issue of the magazine Borec is entirely dedicated to the history of the secret Slovenian organisation TIGR which, in the 1992-1943 period fought against Fascism and for the national survival of Slovenians in the Primorsko region which was divided between Italy and Slovenia. The author of the monograph is Borut Kutar and his work is prefaced by the paper by Milica Kacin-Wohinz, which is entitled Primorska med dvama vojnama (The Primorsko in the Intervar Period).

In spite of its ethnic composition (Slovenian, Croats, Italians, Furlanians) the Primorsko in 1918 did not become a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia but was occupied by the Italian Army instead. The Primorsko and Istria were awarded to Italy for its participation in WWI. Slovenians and Croats were not recognised as ethnic minorities due to the border disputes between Italy and Yugoslavia. In 1972 when Mussolini took power in the country, the systematic spiritual and cultural genocide against Slavs began: Slovenian language was prohibited in schools and public life and the names of regions, rivers, mountains etc. were Italianised. The new-born had to be given names from the legal register of Italian personal names.

The presence of Slovenians and Croats in Venezia-Giulia generated faster and stronger establishment of Fascism in this province compared to other parts of Italy. The Fascist ideology placed the State above everything else. An individual or a group - either ethnic or political - could exist only if identified with the State. The ultimate aim of the Fascist State was its unification - national, political, ideological, with the intention of creating a strong State, capable of imperialist expansion. Ethnic minorities were an obstacle which led to the replacement of this term by the term "nuclei allogeni" which defined an amorphous mass lacking national consciousness and which was to be eradicated. The aim of Fascism was imperialist expansion to the Balkans, based on a conviction about national and class superiority or on the opinion that the Slavs were of the lesser value.

Slovenian and Croatian efforts were aimed at the improvement of their position through co-operation with the Government, but were soon abandoned. In this manner Fascism caused the emergence of anti-Fascism with two concepts for the solution of the question of the eradicated minority: the class-Communist concept and the populist-revolutionary concept. The Italian Communist Party (CPI), during the first few years after its foundation in 1921, did not pay much attention to ethnic issues. In 1926, the CPI accepted the principle of self-determination, giving the non-Italian ethnic groups the right to control their destinies and to decide on the State they wanted to live in. In the 1930s the Communist Parties of Italy, Yugoslavia and later on Austria, proclaimed a joint declaration in which they formulated the principle of the right of ethnic groups in Italy and Yugoslavia to self-determination and secession from the then existing States. Simultaneously, the Slovenian question in this way became a matter concerning the international proletariat.

In the meantime, the populist-revolutionary organisations Barba and TIGR were formed (the latter was named after the names of towns and areas: Triest, Istria, Gorica, Rijeka). Opinions about the real significance and orientation of the TIGR have been divided: official Italian politics denies its anti-Fascism and considers it to be irredentist. Slovenian politics in WW2, and after 1945, denied its anti-Fascism due to its connections with the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's politics. However, TIGR was an organisation of populist, radical and left-wing youth that realised that traditional democratic methods were not sufficient to fight the deprivation of national identity within the Fascist regime. They thought that any means were justified in the struggle for survival. Therefore, violence was an answer to violence, a view also held by the Irish of the time. In conclusion, Slovenian historians are of the opinion that Istria and the Primorje would have never been united with the rest of the former Yugoslavia if there was no such long-time resistance. Therefore, one can easily talk about the national and social self-liberation of the Slovenians and Croats in the Primorje and Istria.

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Borec, Revija za zgodovino, literaturo in antropologijo, XLVIII, Nr. 546-547, Ljubljana, 1996

The papers in this issue of the magazine Borec in different ways approach the events in south-eastern Europe of this century. Tragic events in the former Yugoslavia once again motivated all the ethnic groups and their intelligentsia to (critically?) reconsider their past, history, values system and world views and finally their role and responsibilities before and during the latter events. Three papers published in this issue are products of deliberations of Slovenian authors about Slovenian and Yugoslav reality.

The first paper, Language Under Arms, is an anthology of Serbian war poetry, prose and essays compiled by Slovenian writer Franci Zagorčnik. The anthology has been published under the title of Serbian War Writing and is a twin publication of Croatian War Writing 1991/1992 (Borec, 1994, Nr. 533-537). Franci Zagorčnik is of the conviction that relevant written art can also appear in times of war, without being subordinated to the ruling ideology and propaganda. In this manner, written art is on the side of the individual disident poet who finds himself/herself in a position forced upon him/her under fire or between political and cultural polemics, using language as his/her weapon. War writing, furthermore, is devoted to the concrete phenomenon of war by researching specific archetypes that have an influence on popular behaviour and the leadership of nations, from their seeming ability to be solved and the solution to their actual re-solution and discarding" (p. 301). However, F. Zagorčnik's approach to the theme raises a few questions. It is obvious that his intention was to take a position of someone who is entirely objective and detached in his/her approach. This is probably the reason why he makes no mention of the sarcasm and irony, sadness and pain, guilt and shame expressed in each of the enclosed
texts in the anthology. The fact that these Serbian writers' positions are those of dissidents, their texts anti-war also undermines the issue of objectivity. In order to achieve objectivity and the "cold" scientific approach and objectively research specific archetypes, the texts written by the pro-regime authors should have been enclosed too, for they, in their own way, also seem to fit into archetypal forms of literature.

The second paper, compiled and prefaced by Milan Vogel is entitled Signs and Remnants between Peca and Pohorje. Signs and remnants are stone or wooden monuments, mostly crosses and chapels, that people erected to mark the places where an accident occurred, where someone died, where something important happened, how far the plague spread out or in token of gratitude for survived misfortunes and fulfilled hopes. Milan Vogel's attention was drawn to those monuments that were in one way or another connected with wars. Some of these monuments were erected after WWI, but most of them were erected after WWII, when people returned home from concentration camps, partisans, the German Army or captivity. The fact that such monuments were being erected during and after WWII instigated Borec to publish Igor Mandić's photographs of signs and remnants in Carinthia. Milan Vogel does not, however, offer any explanations about the origin of these traditions, such as their pagan-Christian symcretism, although some of the traditions have been described (e.g. the votive making of clothes for the Virgin Mary's statues in the chapels). Interest in the monuments also fits into trends of contemporary political debates in Slovenia: the reconciliation and historical evaluation of the role of the winners and the defeated in WWII, of the Slovenian partisans and the Slovenians who fought in the German Army.

The third paper, From the Straits or the Liberation of Religion by Jurij Zalokar is an anthology of records from 1970 on, which are concerned with the differences in the lives of religions as illustrated by events in Slovenia. These records commence in the period when it seemed that the life of Faith, within Religion, that is to say the religious establishment, was opposing something new and free. The author's criticism is based on the point of view of a person who is a true believer, who is not poisoned by politics, money or ownership, and the Catholic hierarchy in Slovenia appears to have been. The Church in Slovenia has been repeatedly accused of fundamentalism and clericalism, spiritual decadence, hypocrisy, political manipulations and treason. These accusations are illustrated by the events before WWII, when the Church participated in and supported the Germanisation and Italianisation of Slovenians in Austria and Italy and by the events in WWII when the Church in Slovenia and Croatia collaborated with the occupiers. Jurij Zalokar also considers the Pope and the Catholic Church to be responsible for the recent war in the former Yugoslavia through double standards of the Pope, the Church and the UN in this war, or through the negation of the dangers that have always threatened the Slavs from the North, that is to say German geo-politics. These records, says the author, enable us to get to know the "pathology" of religious establishments. In response, he offers a completely different view of the role of religion to the one we are used to up till now: he pleads for the maintenance of universal human values, for they do not have any

ideo logical preconditions, he pleads for the good-willed Man as described by Pope John XIII and argues against divisions between idealists and materialists, theists and atheists etc. He is of the conviction that it is essential for each individual to find knowledge and strength in himself/herself, to free the Faith from all the Confessions, and to separate the Faith from doctrines and ideologies and bring it back to life. The author pleads for Faith without anthropomorphism, dogmas, ritual and advocates the Faith in fundamental truth, in ontological essence. This is where Marxism failed also. What is really needed according to the author is an increase of an individuality. The Church should be separated from the State, politics, economy and education, and left to provide the means to run its own educational institutions, without any help from the State. In this way Confessions will become just one form of the social life which is, therefore, constantly open to social criticism. That done, the Church will not be able to claim any special privileges. Freedom to profess a religion must accept the freedom of its negation. Societies should be shaped in such a way that they enable the free quest for answers about all the essential questions about life and existence. People do not need the tutelage of any institution for that.

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The Anthropology of Pregnancy Loss.
Comparative studies in miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death. Rosanne Cecil (editor)

The chapters in this edited volume deal with involuntary pregnancy loss in culturally and historically diverse situations and with the impact of socio-cultural factors on how miscarriages are conceptualised, experienced, managed and expressed. Though the specific focus of this collection is on miscarriage, a wide range of pregnancy losses are discussed in recognition of the difficulty encountered in distinguishing between different types of pregnancy loss.

At the outset the editor introduces a number of salient points. The significance of knowledge on pregnancy loss through miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion or the birth of a non-viable child. The relationship between pregnancy loss and issues of fundamental concern to every society e.g. reproduction, birth, and the questions of what is human and what it means to live. The challenge this topic presents to issues of anthropological concern e.g. funerary rites and rituals. The need to examine the experiences and impact of pregnancy loss in the context of existing knowledge about gender in any given society. She goes on to highlight the value of comparative studies of pregnancy loss. Comparative work can demonstrate whether or not a pregnancy loss has the social impact of either a birth or death and establish whether there are societies where members can share a perspective on the nature of pregnancy and of pregnancy loss. Furthermore, comparative studies enable us to examine the diverse beliefs surrounding all aspects of pregnancy, which may be held by different sectors of a society. In a brief review
of the treatment of miscarriage and pregnancy loss within the literature of mostly British writers, the editor demonstrates the marginal position accorded to pregnancy loss in such works. Finally, her review of anthropological work notes that, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Schapera, 1940), pregnancy loss while not ignored by anthropologists has rarely been addressed directly.

The chapters in this volume bring together work on pregnancy loss, in a diverse range of cultures, by nine social anthropologists, a psychologist and a historian. Each chapter is based on fieldwork with the exception of the historical study of English 18th century court records. The book is divided into two parts. Part one consists of five ethnographic accounts of pregnancy loss in different societies. Part two includes perspectives which diverge from "mainstream" ethnographic accounts.

The chapter by Patricia Jeffery and Roger Jeffery on pregnancy loss in rural north India demonstrates the need to go beyond ethno-physiological knowledge for a thorough understanding of how pregnancy loss, as locally defined, is dealt with. The authors highlight the issues of domestic organisation and gender politics which are crucial factors in the way pregnancy is perceived and handled. The authors conclude that, a thorough understanding of pregnancy necessitates consideration of the relative powerlessness of women in their husbands' homes and hence the degree of autonomy in women's lives.

Elisa Sobu's article on Jamaica deals with the use of local knowledge on "false belly" to explain miscarriages and the birth of deformed babies; and to justify the termination of unwanted pregnancies re-cast as "false bellies" where the abortion of natural pregnancy lacks social legitimacy. Explanations for the "false belly" concept are found in the realm of gender relations and the socio-cultural tensions which it is used to express.

Anna Winkvist's chapter on the Abelam of Papua New Guinea describes how Abelam men control women's reproduction. She contrasts the active role of men to the passive role accorded to women in Abelam theories of illness and misfortune. The local theory of conception combines spiritual beliefs and physiological facts. The Wala or natural spirit is needed for conception while repeated intercourse is needed for the woman to bear the child. Miscarriage and stillbirth have social and spiritual explanations e.g. family conflicts and offended spirits rather than physical causes.

J.A.R. Wembah-Rashid considers how among the matrilineal societies of south-eastern Tanzania the stillbirth or baby with congenital defects was not (in past times) recognised as human. The case of the child amputee is effectively used to highlight the ambiguity what is considered biologically and socially human. Pregnancy is not considered a disease while a distinction is made between miscarriage and natural pregnancy loss through the ill health of the mother. Of the four local explanations, three attribute pregnancy loss to external forces and the fourth to forces which emanate from the woman herself. This article also highlights the impact of Christianity on local practices.

Olayinka Nijikam Savage looks at pregnancy loss in Cameroon where the responsibility of ensuring successful reproduction lies largely with women. Pregnancy loss is attributed to natural and supernatural forces. The contrast between the status of the childless man and childless women is used to show how pregnancy loss impacts upon a woman's personal identity and social status.

Michael De Luca and Paul Leslie present data on inter-population variation on pregnancy loss drawing on their work among the nomadic and settled Turkana of Kenya. They consider different estimates of the risk of pregnancy loss. Variable results can be attributed to the different techniques used to detect both pregnancy and loss and to measurement error. Their work highlights the need for cautious use of pregnancy loss estimates. Their work indicates the existence of inter-population variation in the risk of pregnancy loss and the manner in which the variation remains poorly characterised.

Linda Layne's work is based on a study of newsletters and publications from pregnancy loss support groups in the USA. In considering the use of irony in the expression of parental bereavement and grief she draws some interesting parallels with the irony used by soldiers, in the Great War, to express their feelings. She also considers the expectations which modern medical technology create with regard to successful pregnancy.

Beverley Chalmers, a psychologist, presents comparative material on the experiences of pregnancy loss among women from different cultural groups within South Africa. Cultural differences influence women's experiences of and reactions to pregnancy loss. She considers issues in the management of spontaneous abortion which appear to have implications for women's adjustment to pregnancy loss e.g. who helps, what kind of support is valued and when should it be given. This chapter also explores the influence of cultural expectations on the management of miscarriage. Finally she raises the issues of the terminology surrounding pregnancy loss and the need to train medical personnel to deal with women's experiences of pregnancy loss.

Rosanne Cecil's chapter on Northern Ireland is based on women's recollections of miscarriage and infant death. She highlights the significance attached by some women themselves and by others to the lost pregnancy. Comparisons of past and present medical services and other difficult aspects of their lives were part of the context in which women viewed their experiences and reactions to miscarriage and infant death.

The final chapter by Mark Jackson considers the strategies used by women to dispel suspicious murder in 18th century England. His work considers the host of meanings attached to blood loss and pregnancy loss by different sectors of society and in so doing provides a valuable historical perspective.

The chapters in this book cover a wide range of important and significant issues in relation to pregnancy loss. The comparative perspective highlights recurring themes e.g. shame and pollution together with the wide range of beliefs and explanations of pregnancy loss found in different societies. The material and data
are clearly and effectively presented. Both parts of the book complement each other well. Each chapter raises important questions and issues for further research in this area. This book fulfills its stated objectives and in so doing makes a valuable contribution to an area previously underrepresented in Anthropology.

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