Summaries of articles

Some remarks on symbolic power
Pierre BOURDIEU

This text attempts to identify the theoretical landmarks which are necessary to the elaboration of a theory of symbolic power. First, the neo-Kantian tradition (Humbolt-Cassirer or its American variant, Sapir-Whorf) which treats the various "symbolic forms" (myth, language, art, science) as means of understanding and structuring the world, that is, as "structuring structures" (structures structurantes). Second, structural analysis, which tries to grasp the logic specific to each of these symbolic products. This can be seen, for example, in the conception which Saussure, founder of this tradition, had of language as a "structured structure" (structure structurée). Finally, the last two traditions: the Durkheimian tradition which sees symbolic forms as instruments providing logical and social integration which contribute to the reproduction of the social order, and the Marxist tradition which reveals that systems of symbols function politically as instruments of domination. Symbolic power, which can only be analyzed in terms of the division of labor among the different agencies of domination, is a dominated power. It makes its own contribution to social order by representing the other forms of power (economic and political) in a form which is disguised and therefore seen as legitimate.

Perception and actualization of space in the Merina society (Madagascar)
Jean-Pierre RAISON

The Imerina offer a striking example of a "geographical society" in which individuals and social groups are defined principally by their relation to space. Space is perceived as a differenciated reality, interpreted according to astrological data as well as in terms of sacred place cults. To fix one's gaze upon a space is both the instrument and the sign of domination.

Every Merina situates himself simultaneously in time (generations) and in the space wherein is inscribed his foko, or group of relatives on his mother's side. This group is highly endogamous; its members are defined by residence or at least by their tomb site.

The Merina system of lineage does not necessarily imply this situation which is the result of chosing a mode of functioning (generalized endogamy and the construction of collective tombs). This choice was imposed neither by agricultural necessity (irrigated rice paddies) nor by marriage between Merina immigrants and the original inha-

bitants. It seems linked to political circumstances which brought about the apparently contradictory combination of two strategies: that of a class of bandit-lords concerned with acquiring subjects; and that of groups of peasants who, threatened by raids, reinforced their solidarity. The variations in local situations can be accounted for by the different rapports de force *between the two groups.*

This territorial definition of groups was taken over by a unifying monarchy which federated the foko *and integrated them into a hierarchy defined with respect to the sovereign.*

Geography or history of a frontier:
The Franco-Belgian border
<div align="right">Daniel NORDMAN</div>

Geographers, historians and jurists have in the past proposed different approaches to the notion of border: there have been natural borders, border-lines (political and juridical), border-zones (geographical). A recent study by Firmin Lentacker reaches a synthesis, a point of contact between the last two definitions: borders are principally a historical phenomenon. A case in point: the Franco-Belgian border. Nothing in the landscape made it necessary. On the other hand, certain 18th-century conventions between France and her neighbor established it at the time of the simultaneous negotiations, in France and Europe, of the agreement on delimitation, as though a systematic and unified project associated with the idea of the State and with a global representation of national space were unaware of the differences in the spaces concerned.

Later during the 19th century, the Franco-Belgian border had, in that open country, become increasingly fixed and the line of divergence had become accentuated, as shown by, among other examples, studies of communications networks conceived on behalf of national interests, studies of economic policies and, with respect to circulation, the examination of the unequal effects of these exchanges.

Marriage, alliance
and filiation in Haute Provence
<div align="right">Alain COLLOMP</div>

This work on marriage, alliance and filiation is based on the analysis of 1 256 marriage contracts, drawn up by notaries and concerning the entire population of several villages grouped aroung a bourg. *The first part is a study of the factors which govern the alliance strategies. The choice of a partner is most often dictated by the interests of the parental family group, and is conditioned by a widespread practice: one of the sons, married and chosen heir to the patrimony, lives with his parents, the other members of the phratry being successively eliminated.*

The second part of the work concerns the evolution of the partners in the space occupied by the human group under study. The analysis of "striking" marriages (two brothers marrying two sisters...) and of concatenations of alliances, illustrates the mechanisms involved in the circulation of alliances among individuals and groups.

Finally, by crossing the vertical and horizontal analyses, we can establish a connection between the sons of marriages with those of the decendency: this raises the question of the respect or transgression of religious tabous in regard to consanguin marriages.

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Stem-families in the Pyrénées.
Some reflections on methodology

Agnès FINE-SOURIAC

In the wake of research at the Cambridge school on the structure of the household in traditional communities, a debate arose among historians concerning one of Peter Laslett's principal conclusions: the predominance of the nuclear household in traditional European populations.

But is the debate well put? Would it not be better, rather than contrasting this or that local result with Laslett's conclusions, to question a method that consists in drawing conclusions concerning the dominant type of family organization in a community, based upon a classification of households made for the census.

The author is in agreement with the methodological criticisms that Lutz Berkner made of P. Laslett and tests them by tracing the evolution of eighty households of Bessède (Pays de Sault, Upper Valley of the Aude) using the nominal rolls of the census for the years 1846, 1851, 1856, 1861, and 1866. While each of these censuses comprises no more than 20 to 30 % complex households, a diachronic study confirms that in this case, the stem-family is the dominant type of familial organization.

Moreover, the author analyzes the reasons for which, in upper Aude valley, there is no positive correlation between the size of the household and its complexity.

Literacy in France :
Three centuries of mixed culture

François FURET, Jacques OZOUF

This article is the final chapter of a book which is to appear this year on the rise of literacy in France from the 17th to the 20th centuries. It seeks to show the meaning, in terms of anthropology, of this long process of acculturation which lasted for three centuries. From the time of Louis XIV to Jules Ferry, rural France was divided: there were those who had access to the written word and those who did not. These two Frances did not become a cultural whole until the beginning of the 20th century. In this respect, the authors not only distinguish two types of peasant communities and their spatial distribution, they establish an opposition between what until the middle of the 19th century were the two successive types of learning, reading and writing, and identify them as the two poles in the process of eliminating illiteracy. Reading, which ressembles the memorisation of sacred texts, does not change the traditional mode of oral communication. It is the ability to write that constitutes the modern individual, his private domain, and his relationship with the past and with the State, through which he becomes a part of the national community.

Literacy in early America, 1650-1800

Kenneth A. LOCKRIDGE

This is a report on the conclusions reached in a monograph on Literacy in Colonial New England *(1974), and a commentary on those conclusions in the perspective of recent research on literacy in early modern Europe. This presentation, and some final reflections, lead to the following conclusions.*

In the course of the 16th-18th centuries, millions of men and women in Europe and in America were led to pick up the potentially radical tool of literacy, often for reasons deeper than its ever and ever greater availability. But it could be wrong always to

associate the motivating social forces with progress or with upward mobility. There is evidence for a more skeptical and pessimistic account of the social forces behing this new instrument. Moreover, until the 19th century, not social forces alone but only religion and the availability it brought could push this mass literacy to universality. Both in the presence and in the absence of this push, a measure of attitudes so sensitive that even in a biassed sample it should show some attitudinal impact from literacy, shows virtually none. This is consistent with current skepticism concerning the degree of functional adequacy, and of attitudinal liberation, among the mass of modern literates.

Literacy could be seen, in fact, as an epiphenomenon of a larger and more subtle struggle for individual adequacy in the face of social changes which we hardly understand and which might conform only loosely to the idea of modernization.