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HISTORICAL CATEGORIES AND THE PRAXIS OF ETHNICITY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

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Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Preface	V
Abbreviations	vi – vi
Introduction.	
Introduction	2
Ethnicity: The Rise of the Problem	6
Archaeology and Ethnicity	16
Archaeology and the Literary Record	21
Chapter One. Taxonomies of Difference in the Emergence of Human Grou	ıps
The Rise of the Concept of Race	33
Social Evolution and Race	44
Human Evolution and the Concept of Culture(s)	56
Chapter Two. German Archaeology and the Development of the Culture-Historical Paradigm	
Archaeology and Evolution	72
Archaeology and National Identity: G. Cosine	78
Archaeology and Culture: V. Gordon Childe	91
Archaeology and the Identity of Israel	102

Chapter Three. Ethnicity – A Theoretical Review The Meaning of Ethnicity 115 Primordialism in Ethnicity 127 Instrumentalism in Ethnicity 138 Foundation of an Integrated Theoretical Perspective: Pierre Bourdieu 146 A Practice Theory of Ethnicity 162 Chapter Four. Ethnicity and Material Culture Material Culture and Adaptive Change 174 Style as an Index of Social Interaction in New Archaeology 178 Style as Active Communication 185 Beyond Normative and Functional Explanations in Archaeology 194 Culture and Ethnicity 201 Chapter Five. Ethnicity in Ancient Israel: An Overview and Assessment of Recent Approaches 212 Ethnicity and Archaeology Archaeology and the Old Testament 223

233

247

258

Archaeology and Israelite Identity

Archaeology and Ethnic Identity

Israel in the Merneptah Stele

Chapter Six. Ethnicity in Ancient Israel: A Working Model

Israelite Ethnicity and Biblical Archaeology	266
Ethnicity and Identity in the Hebrew Bible	278
Historical Categories and the Praxis of Ethnicity	294
Conclusion.	307
Selected Bibliography.	316

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PREFACE

Within biblical archaeology the interpretation of ethnic groups has traditionally taken place within a narrative framework derived almost entirely from certain highly prized written sources, thereby reflecting the privileged status traditionally accorded to the written word over and above material culture in the study of historical periods. Such 'historical determinism' it is argued, frequently results in the circular, self-referential use of archaeological and documentary evidence, and an all too eager conflation of the material record with monolithic 'ethnic categories' extracted from historical sources. Despite the fact that a number of studies have exposed the pervasive influence of such deterministic reasoning within archaeological scholarship in general, many biblical scholars continue to accept the written sources as an authoritative, and relatively straightforward source of information in the identification of certain ethnic entities, their geographic provenance and the material correlates associated with them.

In this essay I explore some of the difficulties arising from such an approach within the context of recent debates about the value and use of 'historical' versus 'archaeological' evidence in the recovery of that entity known to us as 'Israel'. Rather than merely assert the priority of one kind of evidence over another however, an alternative approach is suggested based on the way in which material and written traditions are involved in the construction, maintenance and transformation of ethnicity. Such an approach seeks to illustrate how attempts to seek out the archaeological correlates of historically attested 'ethnic categories' are flawed, not only because they ignore the situated and subjective nature of the historical sources themselves, but also because they disregard the qualitative differences in the manifestation of ethnicity within written sources and material culture. It is the recognition of these qualitative differences which not only lends this essay its title and subject matter, but which is essential for the development of an analytical framework in which both documentary and archaeological evidence are seen as equal and potentially opposing elements in the dialectical process of knowledge.

Abbreviations

AA Archaeologia Atlantica

AAMT Advances in Archaeological Theory and Method

AAnt American Antiquity

AASOR Annual of the American School of Oriental Research

ABD Anchor Bible Dictionary

AJA American Journal of Archaeology AJS American Journal of Sociology

Ant Antiquity

ANET Ancient Near Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament

AmAnt American Anthropologist

APUM Anthropological Papers of the University of Michigan

ASHL The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land

ARA Annual Review of Anthropology

AP Archaeologia Polona AusA Australian Archaeology BA Biblical Archaeologist BARev Biblical Archaeology Review

BASOR Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research

BAT Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on

Biblical Archaeology. Jerusalem, April 1984.

BIA Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology

BiBInt Biblical Interpretation
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CA Current Anthropology

CR:BS Currents in Research: Biblical Studies
CSSH Comparative Studies in Society and History

EI Eretz Israel

EJSP European Journal of Social Psychology

EME Early Medieval Europe
ERS Ethnic and Racial Studies
HTR Harvard Theological Review
HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
IEJ Israel Exploration Journal

JAA Journal of Anthropological Archaeology

JANES(CU) Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University

JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society JAR Journal of Anthropological Research

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

JBSS Journal of Biosocial Science Supplement

JEA Journal of European Archaeology

JES Journal of Ethnic Studies JFAJournal of Field Archaeology JJS Journal of Jewish Studies JMHJournal of Modern History **JNES** Journal of Near Eastern Studies JPS Journal of Palestine Studies Jewish Quarterly Review JQRJRS Journal of Religious Studies Journal for the Study of Judaism JSJ

JSOTS Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series

JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament

JSS Journal of Semitic Studies

Lev Levant

LM Labour Monthly

MAGW Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien

NAR Norwegian Archaeological Review

NEAEHL The New Encyclopedia of the Archaeological Excavations in the Holy

Land

NMS Nottingham Medieval Studies

PEFA Palestinian Exploration Fund Annual PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly PPS Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society

RB Revue Biblique

RelSRev Religious Studies Revue
SBL Society of Biblical Literature

SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series SBLMS Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series

SciAm Scientific American

SJOT Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament

SOTSMS Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series

SRRA Sage Race Relations Abstracts

SWBAS The Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series SWJA South Western Journal of Anthropology

TA Tel Aviv

TCY The Crisis Years: The Twelfth Century BCE

THES Times Higher Education Supplement

VT Vetus Testamentum WA World Archaeology

ZAW Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION	2
ETHNICITY: THE RISE OF THE PROBLEM	6
ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNICITY	16
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE LITERARY RECORD	21

INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of ethnicity. The transcendence of nationalism. The internationalization of culture. Such have been the dreams and expectations of liberals and rationalists in practically every country – and in practically every country they have been confounded and disappointed. Although in the latter half of the twentieth century the world became dramatically more unified as a result of technological advance, and its states more interdependent than in any previous period in history, the designs of cosmopolitans everywhere seem further than ever from the truth as across the globe we witness, on a daily basis, a series of explosive ethnic revivals. Far from fading away then, as the dreams of modernization have projected, ethnicity and ethnic identity has become a decisive factor in the social and political life of practically every continent. The anticipated 'end of history' it seems has ushered in the 'age of ethnicity'.

World history of the last few decades therefore, has been marked by an inherent contradiction. On the one hand technological change, improved communications and the growing integration of the world market have made our world both smaller and more homogenous, on the other hand there has been a revived emphasis on the politics of difference, whether in terms of individual lifestyles, group cultural identities, or the assertion of national uniqueness. The so called 'ethnic revival' observed around the world embodies this very contradiction: ethnicity, which purports to derive from the common history and traditions of a specific group arises within the context of states which are increasingly all-embracing, both in form and in function. The emergence of indigenous 'Fourth World' movements, the collapse of the Soviet Union and other former 'Eastern Bloc' countries, coupled with the various secessionist movements in other areas of the world are some of the developments which have forced a recognition of the plural, multicultural realities that are contemporary nation-states, whether or not such diversity is acknowledged by state ideology. Indeed, the situation is further complicated by such supra-national entities as the European Union which make an explicit claim to the cultural identity of their members.

¹ Cf. Fukuyama, F. 1992.

In the face of such diverse manifestations of 'communal cultural identity' then, many scholars have renounced the ideal of a world made up of distinct, relatively homogenous nation-states as representative of either a modernist fantasy or an idealized by-gone era. Instead, they have resorted to the image of a 'post-modern' world, one characterized by opposing tendencies towards increasing globalisation on the one hand, and the fracturing of identities resulting in 'hybridity', 'creolization' and 'indigenization' on the other. Within the context of such diverse, unstable and competing configurations of cultural identity, stretching from the local to the global, the issue of whether or not archaeologists can identify ethnic groups and their continuity through time on the basis of a distinctive material culture takes on immense political importance. As Peter Ucko has pointed out, "...the archaeological 'evidence' of cultural continuity as opposed to discontinuity, may make all the difference to an indigenous land claim, the right of access to a particular site/region or the disposal of a human skeleton to a museum as against reburial." The prize of establishing historical legitimacy, it seems, is too great to be ignored.

However, while the intersection of archaeology with contemporary constructions of cultural identity is a complex, extensive and often overtly political act, the issue of what should be done about the myriad potential difficulties arising from this situation continues to be a source of controversy within the discipline. Confronted by competing, and often highly polemical interpretations of the past, the greatest difficulty faced by archaeologists is when, and how, they should arbitrate between multiple, conflicting interpretations of the past. Can one distinguish between balanced, objective interpretations of the past and 'distorted' ones? Or, are different interpretations merely a matter of competing subjectivities, with arbitration between them simply a matter of political expediency? Before we start sticking 'ethnic labels' to archaeological complexes however, we have to understand the phenomenon of ethnicity itself, and particularly we have to develop a theory of relationships between ethnic consciousness and material culture. While the need for such a project is amply illustrated by a number of recent

² Ucko, P.J. 1989:xiii.

works on the topics of nationalism and the politics of archaeology³, they each embody a debilitating theoretical void.

That is, while they have focused their attention on the variety of ways in which archaeological knowledge is used in the construction of contemporary cultural identities, they have resisted any temptation to formulate new theoretical frameworks for the interpretation of ethnicity in the past. Though there are exceptions⁴, it seems that the relationship between material culture and ethnic identity, despite its centrality, is largely ignored. For while there have been a number of important developments within the human sciences on the nature of ethnicity and our understanding of socio-cultural differentiation in general, these developments have largely been ignored by archaeologists, many of whom continue to equate, in a simplistic fashion, distinctive material culture assemblages with past ethnic groups.

As its broadest goal then, this study seeks not merely to correct this impasse by providing a critical synthesis of recent theories of ethnicity within the human sciences, but to develop a comparative theoretical approach towards the interpretation of that phenomenon within the archaeological record – particularly as it relates to the interpretation of ethnicity within Ancient Israel. While such a project will, of necessity, encompass a broad range of issues of an abstract theoretical nature, many of which may be unfamiliar to the biblical scholar, such issues are always framed by a constant concern with the issue of Israelite ethnicity and the mechanisms by which such a phenomenon can be both defined, and ultimately, identified. In this respect the introductory chapter provides an important methodological foundation, sensitising one to some of the key issues to be discussed as the study unfolds.

Principal amongst these is the phenomenon of ethnicity itself. Does it constitute an object of analysis, something to be explained? Or, is it an explanatory principle capable of

³ See for example the contributions to P.L. Kohl and C. Fawcett eds 1995. And also those in P.J. Ucko ed. 1995.

⁴ See Dolukhanov, P. 1994. Hodder, I. 1982. Olsen, B. and Z. Kobylinski AP 29 1991:5-27. Shennan, S.J. ed. 1989:1-32.

illuminating significant aspects of human existence? Does it really refer to the 'idols of the tribe', or is it in fact an idol of the scribe? Certainly, as this study makes clear, it has been treated in both ways, sometimes simultaneously. As a result, there exists a notable lack of agreement on even the most fundamental of issues: What is ethnicity? Is it a monothetic or polythetic class of phenomena, one thing or many? Has it the capacity to determine social activity or is it a product of other forces and structures? Do its roots lie in so-called primordial consciousness or in reaction to particular social circumstances?

While such questions are pursued through an historical examination of anthropological theory which runs from the Enlightenment to Structuration, the study also plots a parallel journey through the field of archaeology, examining the various methods by which archaeologists have sought to infer the identity of the social groups who produced the material objects which constitute their primary source of evidence. Indeed it is in pursuit of these historical trajectories that the question of the recovery of an ancient Israelite identity is raised. By what means has the hunt for the Israelites of antiquity been conducted? To what degree have biblical scholars been influenced by developments in other fields? Indeed, given that the very materiality and practice of archaeology in the Middle East is inextricably linked to the political and cultural realities faced by its respective peoples, to what degree have biblical scholars remained immune to the national politics in which their discipline is intertwined? Does biblical archaeology represent a purely intellectual enterprise or are the historical narratives it generates deeply implicated within contemporary socio-political realities?

While this study is driven primarily by an exploration of the methodological difficulties inherent in the identification of an Israelite ethnos as opposed to any theoretical consideration of whether or not it actually existed, it is offered in the hope that it may stimulate others to consider the issues it raises and wherever possible revise, if not correct, our understanding of the emergence and nature of that entity we know as 'Israel'.

ETHNICITY: THE RISE OF THE PROBLEM

Throughout the course of its development, archaeological theory has been characterized by a variety of competing theoretical stances, each of which has laid claim to a privileged status in determining what constitutes valid explanation in archaeological research. Yet, while the discipline's journey from a seemingly complacent culture-historical orthodoxy to an engagement with the theoretical sophistications of post-modernism may illustrate the lack of any theoretical consensus⁵, like a Gordian knot running the gamut of such polemical truth claims has been one of, if not *the* most fundamentally important questions of archaeological enquiry: What can be legitimately inferred about the social groups which produced the material culture objects which constitute the primary evidence of archaeology? More particularly, when can such presumed groups of people legitimately be assumed to have thought themselves to be distinct from other, contemporaneous social groups? In order to use archaeological evidence in such a way however, that is, to determine which aspects of the material world were produced, used and consumed by particular social groups, it is necessary to attribute an identity to it.

While this relationship between objects and identity has been one of the most influential elements in the history of the discipline, with archaeological evidence being attributed to various historically attested peoples, be they Greeks, Romans, Britons, or indeed Israelites, explicit theories of cultural identity have been extremely limited. In sharp contrast however, there has been a rapid increase in both research and theoretical debate in relation to questions of social identity within the human sciences, particularly since the 1960's, which have resulted in a number of important changes in our understanding of socio-cultural differentiation. Developments which, despite their profound implications have been largely ignored by archaeologists.

⁵ Though this historical trajectory constitutes the major focus of chapters two and four within this study, for a full scale history of archaeological theory and practice see, Daniel, G. 1975. 1967. 1981. Sklenar, K. Trigger B.G. 1978. 1989. Lamberg-Karlovsky C.C. 1989.

In the history of the 'western' human sciences the concern with human physical and cultural diversity has been primarily located in the realm of anthropology. Indeed, Stocking has retrospectively characterized the entire history of anthropological thought as "the systematic study of human unity-in-diversity". Despite this enduring concern with the analysis of diversity however, the concepts, which have been used in the classification of difference, have not remained static. Rather, as an effort is made to show in the following chapter, they have, of necessity, been influenced by a variety of competing discourses throughout disparate historical and political contexts. Indeed throughout the history of the human sciences, the emergence, and subsequent transformation of the categories involved in the classification of peoples has been a product of a number of 'internal' and 'external' changes.⁷

While problems of ethnicity have a long tradition within sociological research, Western anthropologists seem to have avoided any central concern with the concept before the 1970s. Indeed, in an examination of thirteen of the leading anthropological textbooks between 1916 and 1971, Leo Despres found no index listing for the terms 'ethnic' or 'ethnic group'. Even in those works which could quite reasonably be classified as studies of 'ethnic processes', as for instance Leach's famous study of highland Burma, the term 'ethnicity' is nowhere to be found. During the last three decades however, there has been a pronounced shift in the analysis of cultural differentiation with terms such as ethnicity, ethnic group, and ethnic conflict becoming ubiquitous within the political vocabulary of our own time, dominating discussion not only within the mass media, but also within academia. Indeed a brief glance at the contents of any social science publication over the last number of years would indicate a steadily increasing acceptance, and application of the terms ethnic and ethnicity to what had previously been subsumed under the banners

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⁶ Stocking G.W., 1988:3

⁷ A full analysis of such transformations as they have occurred within the discipline of anthropology, coupled with their impact upon broader social and political issues will be explored in chapter one.

⁸ Despres, L. 1975:188 ⁹ Cf. Leach, E. 1964.

of 'culture', 'cultural' and 'tribe'. Nevertheless, despite its current vogue, ethnicity is a term which invites endless, often fruitless definitional arguments among those professional intellectuals who think they know, and ought to know, what it means, thus leaving its meaning obscure to a large majority of native English speakers. ¹⁰ As such it is worth reflecting briefly on the reasons behind the current popularity of this taxonomic category - in the process of which one may go some way towards explicating its meaning.

Perhaps as Ronald Cohen has famously suggested, it is merely a case of 'old wine', ('culture' and 'tribe'), in new bottles, that is, nothing more than a mere terminological sleight of hand, a shift in jargon, a new means of achieving old ends¹¹. Perhaps. Yet, as Cohen himself continues, it involves much more than the mere replacement of one word with another. Rather the concept of ethnicity implies a theoretical and empirical reorientation within the discipline of anthropology concerning the nature of the social units under investigation, and in this respect is a development which needs to be comprehended from a number of different perspectives.

While it is neither possible, nor permissible to describe a coherent series of 'discoveries' which culminated in the conceptual and theoretical shifts which the category embodies, one may state that the surge of interest in the phenomenon of ethnicity, initially evident in the increasing number of journal articles and index entries devoted to the subject was¹², in part, a result of attempts to deal with a variety of empirical, theoretical and ideological difficulties with existing anthropological and sociological categories, namely 'culture' and 'tribe'. Within anthropology, methodological difficulties with such concepts were particularly acute since the discipline, largely following the functionalist paradigm, concerned itself with the study of individual social groupings and the processes taking place within what were assumed to be discrete, isolated, homogenous entities. Indeed,

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¹⁰ In a wide- ranging review of the then recent literature on 'ethnicity', Isajiw found only thirteen publications that contained some kind of definition, the remaining fifty two of the sixty five surveyed had *no* explicit definition whatsoever. Cf. Isajiw, W.W. Ethnicity 1 1974:111-124.

¹¹ Cohen Ronald, ARA 7 1978:379

¹² For a bibliographic guide to some of the vast literature on ethnicity see Bentley, G.C. 1981.

¹³ The political as well as theoretical difficulties with such traditional taxonomic categories are fully recounted in chapter one of this study.

virtually all anthropological reasoning rested on the premise that cultural variation was discontinuous, that there were aggregates of people who essentially shared a common culture, and inter-connected differences which distinguished each such culture from all others.¹⁴

As such the critical task of the ethnographer was to distinguish various groups via the enumeration of the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they were the bearers. Importantly, this was something which could be judged objectively by the particular ethnographic observer, regardless of the categories and/or prejudices of the social actors under analysis. Differences between groups were, in essence, reduced to differences in 'trait inventories'. While such a mode of analysis was based upon the apriori assumption that "stability, order and equilibrium characterized traditional societies" and that therefore cultural practices and beliefs were likely to have been uniform throughout a particular society, during the 1950s and 1960s anthropological critiques of such assumptions, which should themselves be the subject of analysis, began to emphasize not only the non-correlation of different boundary phenomena, but in some cases the very existence of discrete socio-cultural phenomena.

Whilst traditional anthropological definitions of 'peoples' or 'tribes' involved the enumeration of various cultural features such as language, material culture, values and beliefs, it was Michael Moermann who, in his study of ethnic relations in Northern Thailand displaced such supposedly objective cultural criteria from the front stage of research by arguing for the priority of 'emic' as opposed to 'etic' categories of ascription. Being unable to define 'the Lue', the group on whom his research was

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¹⁴ Cf. Barth, F. 1969:9-11. As we shall see, a similar picture of discrete, homogenous cultural entities is generated through archaeological theory and practice, particularly in the 'culture-historical' paradigm advocated by Kossinna and Childe. Cf. Chapter Two.

¹⁵ Cf.Barth, F. 1969:11-15

¹⁶ Rosaldo, R. 1993:42.

¹⁷ Cf. Jaspan, M. CA 5(4) 1964:298. Leach, E. 1964:299. Moermann, M. AAnt 67 1965:1215-1230.

¹⁸ Moermann, M. AAnt 67:1215-1230, see also by the same author, 1968:153-169. While it has long been recognized that such a simplistic distinction is problematic, entailing as it does the naïve pre-supposition of a value free, objective viewpoint located with the researcher versus the subjective, culturally mediated perceptions of the people being studied, the situation is more complex since the distinction between

focused, with reference to any objective coterminous discontinuities in language, culture or territory, Moermann was forced to conclude not only that the self- identification of the actors be taken into account in any anthropological definition, but that groups such as the Lue can only properly be understood within a broader social context of interaction with other groups – "the Lue, at least, cannot be viewed in isolation if one is to define their Lueness, identify them as a tribe and understand how they survive in Northern Thailand.....the Lue cannot be identified – cannot in a sense be said to exist – in isolation". ¹⁹

Because the Lue share a wide range of cultural traits with their neighbours in Northern Thailand Moermann was forced to conclude that "someone is Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness." For Moermann then, identification as Lue, and the validation of that identity in social life, is more important than the many aspects of cultural variation which are irrelevant to group organization and the mediation of inter-group relations. As such it is 'socially relevant' factors as opposed to 'objective cultural differences', or indeed similarities, which become decisive factors in the delineation of ethnic groups. Yet, while Moermann's approach to a definition of the Lue, one which was meaningful in terms of the ascription of social identity and the mediation of social relations in Northern Thailand, certainly exposed the inadequacy of the essentially synchronic perspective of human societies as abstract entities which was symptomatic of research up to that point, it is important to realize that such critiques were connected in a plurality of ways with broader social and political trends.

'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' approaches also relates to a difference of opinion on the nature of ethnicity itself. On 'Emics' and 'Etics' see, Harris M. 1980:32.

¹⁹ Moermann, M. AAnt 671965:1216. For a Critique of Moermann's analysis see, Narroll, R. CA 5(4), 1964:283-291, 1968:72-79. Cf. 1974:25

²⁰ Moermann, M. AAnt 67:1219. 'When he asked individual Lue what were their typical characteristics, they would mention cultural traits which they in fact shared with other neighbouring groups. They lived in close interaction with other groups in the area; they had no exclusive livelihood; no exclusive language, no exclusive customs, no exclusive religion. Why then was it appropriate to call them an ethnic group?' Cf. Eriksen, T.H. 1992:11

²¹ Barth, F. 1969:14

For generations the theoretical predictions of liberalism had maintained that the development of advanced complex societies, characterized by large-scale industrialism, democracy, and integrated education would lead to the dissolution of ethnic differences. As A.D. Smith has pointed out "liberals have generally taken the view that, as mankind moved from a primitive, tribal stage of social organization towards large scale industrialized societies, the various primordial ties of religion, language, ethnicity and race would gradually but inexorably lose their hold and disappear."²² Reality however has failed to match the assumption. For although in the latter half of the twentieth century the world had become dramatically more unified as a result of technological advance, and its states more interdependent than in any previous period in history, the designs of cosmopolitans everywhere seem further than ever from realisation. In many parts of the world, whatever the governing ideology of previous regimes, be they democratic, capitalist or communist, all attempts to construct a politics of hegemony have been frustrated by the often violent reassertion of the uniqueness of particular social identities²³.

Indeed, as Connor has demonstrated, nearly half of the world's states have experienced varying degrees of 'ethnically inspired dissonance' as minority groupings have gained increasing power and voice within the context of various civil rights movements and a developing national and international discourse on 'self-determination.²⁴ At the same time the demise of formal colonialism between the 1950's and 1960's provided the background to further critiques of traditional anthropological concepts, particularly that of tribe, which was attacked for its pejorative connotations of primitiveness and backwardness and dismissed as a construct of colonial regimes.²⁵ Within these diverse

²² Smith A.D. 1981:2.

As Glazer and Moynihan have illustrated, despite a degree of acculturation, the image of the United States as the 'world's melting pot', is in essence, flawed, since many generations after their initial arrival, the ethnic differences of various immigrant groups continue to play a major role in their economic, political and social strategies. Cf. Glazer, N. and D.P. Moynihan, 1975

²⁴ Connor, W. ERS 1 (3) 1991.

²⁵ As stated by Cohen the etymology of the old term 'tribe', derived from the Latin *tribus* meaning those on the borders of the empire, reflects and explains the significance of the term in Western culture, its link to imperialist expansionism and the associated dichotomization of the world into the civilized and uncivilized, the 'raw' and the 'cooked' of human historical experience. Cohen, R. AAR 7 1978:384. See also Colson, E. 1968:201-206, Fried, M.H. 1968:3-20. E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger eds. 1983.

contexts then the development of ethnicity as a taxonomic category embodied both a theoretical and terminological shift. Whilst on the one hand the concept of an ethnic group became regarded as an acceptable substitute for the concept of tribe by a number of authors, ²⁶ on the other hand the concept was, for the most part, embedded in a theoretical approach which seemed far more appropriate to the social phenomenon being studied. While traditional definitions of 'peoples' and/or 'tribes' involved the enumeration of various objective traits relating to language, material culture, values and beliefs, a focus on the *subjective* categories employed by the 'peoples' under investigation not only accommodated the increasingly active demands from 'minority groups' for self determination, but helped to facilitate growing demands for the development of theoretical frameworks which would enable the analysis of the interaction of social systems and the relationships between social and cultural boundaries. Though Moermann's work may have anticipated the main direction of subsequent research on ethnic phenomena by focusing attention on the ascriptive categories of the persons involved, ²⁷ the ascendancy of this 'subjectivist' approach was firmly established with the 1969 publication of Fredrik Barth's 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'.

Though it has clear predecessors in the Chicago School²⁸, Edmund Leach²⁹, The Copperbelt studies³⁰ and in some lesser-known contributions by Soviet scholars, Barth's essay was remarkable for both its clarity and consciousness, and has played a pivotal role in delineating the field of enquiry in the anthropological study of ethnicity. The starting point for Barth's theoretical framework is his forceful argument against cultural

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²⁶ Arens, W. 1986:3-63,

²⁷ Like many others however, Moermann was primarily concerned with the detailed ethnographic analysis of a particular group. It was Barth who was the first to incorporate a 'subjective' approach to ethnicity into a programmatic theoretical model.

²⁸ 'The Chicago School' is the eponymous title bestowed upon those urban sociologists and anthropologists, such as Robert Park, who undertook some of the earliest empirical research on complex polyrthnic societies. See Eriksen, T.H. 1993:18
²⁹ Leach, E. 1964.

³⁰ The group of anthropologists who studied processes of urbanization in the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia in the 1930s, an area which came to be known as '*The Copperbelt*' are today referred to as '*The Manchester School*' because of its members' later affiliation with University of Manchester. Amongst them Max Gluckman, Clyde Mitchell and A.L. Epstein are perhaps the most prominent. For examples of their work see, Wilson, G. 1941-2. Mitchell, C. 1956, both of which focus on issues of social change, and the relationship between social and cultural change and continuity. Whereas Wilson described what he saw as a process of detribalization, Mitchell argued that a form of retribalization (what we today might refer to as ethnicity) was taking place in the mining towns of that region.

determinism and his insistence that ethnic distinctions do not depend, as was traditionally assumed, on an absence of mobility, contact or information, but rather, are often the very foundations upon which embracing social systems are built.³¹ If ethnic groups are not the product of geographic and/or social isolation then, there must be some other explanation for the formation and persistence of organizationally relevant ethnic categories. In order to observe these processes then, Barth shifts his focus away from the traditional concern with the internal constitution and history of separate groups to an investigation of ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance. That is a shift away from the cultural content enclosed by the boundary to the boundary itself, and the symbolic border guards of dress, language, custom etc.³² For Barth then, the primary objective in the anthropological study of ethnicity is an investigation of its social dimensions.

Thus because such an approach to ethnicity advocates a focus on what is 'socially effective' in inter-ethnic relations, it follows that ethnic groups must be defined from within, that is, on the basis of the actors' own categorizations of themselves, and others. Though ethnic distinctions may take certain cultural differences into account, they are not the sum of the 'objective' features enumerated by the analyst, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant.³³ From this perspective then one can assume no 'one-to-one relationship' between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences Whilst Barth's approach to the definition of ethnic groups based primarily on the categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves was, of itself not entirely new,³⁴ his reiteration of the subjective aspects of ethnicity within a programmatic theoretical framework is now widely regarded as a real turning point in the analysis of ethnic groups³⁵, with much of the recent literature confirming that ethnicity involves

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³¹ Cf. Barth F. 1969:10

³² Cf. Ibid. 1969:15

³³ Ibid. 1969:14

³⁴ For example, as early as 1947 Francis had argued that the ethnic group constitutes a community based primarily on a shared 'we-feeling' and that one cannot define the ethnic group as a plurality pattern which is characterized by a distinct language, culture, territory, religion and so on. Francis, E.K. AJS 52, 1947:393-400.

³⁵ Taking Barth's seminal collection as marking the beginning of the modern anthropological study of ethnicity, Despres has suggested dividing all other studies into BB and AB, that is, Before Barth and After Barth. Despres, L.A. 1975:189. Cf. Eriksen, T.H. 1993:37.

subjective processes of classification – a consciousness of real or assumed differences vis-a vis others: a 'we'/ 'they' opposition. Indeed the definition of ethnic groups as 'self defining systems' has had an influence beyond the confines of academic research, playing an important role in government policy and legislation since the 1960s.³⁶

This emphasis on the formation and persistence of subjective ethnic categories within the context of embracing social systems has also contributed to a concern with the economic and political dimensions of ethnicity. Ethnic identity, it is argued is 'instrumental' in that it provides a group with the boundary maintenance and organizational dimensions necessary in order to maintain and compete for a particular socio-economic niche.³⁷ Moreover, it is argued that ethnicity is 'manipulated' and 'mobilized' at both an individual and group level in pursuit of these particular economic and political interests. Broadly speaking, this 'instrumental approach', and the wide range of theoretical perspectives it encompasses, has dominated research on ethnicity since the 1970s, with the more recent literature further illustrating the dynamic nature of ethnicity, not only historically, ³⁸ but also in different social contexts according to the interests and positions of the actors concerned. The recognition that ethnic groups are fluid, self-defining systems, which are embedded, in economic and political relations then represents an important contribution to our understanding of the maintenance, and transformation of ethnicity. Most importantly in terms of this study, such an approach reveals a critical break between 'culture' and 'ethnicity'. Whilst it is still assumed that there is some relation between ethnicity and cultural similarities and differences, it is generally accepted that it is rarely a straightforward one. ³⁹ For as Barth argued, 'whilst such ethnic categories may take cultural differences into account, they are only those which the actors

³⁶ For instance, for certain Federal Government purposes during the early 1970s, Australian Aboriginal people were defined on the basis of self identification by an individual and acceptance of that identity by an Aboriginal community. See Ucko, P.J. JBSS 8, 1983:31.

The various nuances contained within this 'Instrumentalist' perspective, along with its relationship to the

^{&#}x27;Primordial' approach constitutes a significant portion of chapter three.

³⁸ Cf. Tonkin E., M. McDonald and M. Chapman eds. 1989.

³⁹ The precise nature of this relationship is examined in chapter three through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, and particularly his concept of 'habitus'.

themselves deem significant'. As such, recent instrumentally orientated theories of ethnicity, which seek to define ethnic groups on the basis of the self-categorizations of the people being studied, mark a significant departure from the traditional assumption that ethnic groups are 'culture bearing' units, membership of which can be judged objectively by the observer regardless of the categories and prejudices of the actors concerned. As we will see, it is this notion which has been central to a number of disciplines within the human sciences, most notably archaeology!

Yet, whilst recent theories of ethnicity may represent an important challenge to traditional techniques for identifying ethnic groups within archaeology, two questions are paramount at this stage – can this new theoretical paradigm incorporate archaeological evidence, and if so, how?

⁴⁰ Barth, F. 1969:13-15

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNICITY

According to Bruce Trigger, the subjective nature of ethnicity renders it a concept which archaeologists cannot hope to study to any significant degree without the aid of specifically relevant historical or ethnographic data⁴¹. Although such an assertion may appear somewhat negative, it is an argument that appears to hold sway amongst many archaeologists and is reflected in a number of studies of ethnicity conducted in historical, as opposed to pre-historical archaeology. While there have been few studies within prehistoric archaeology which are explicitly concerned with past ethnic groups since the demise of the 'culture-historical' paradigm⁴², historical archaeologists, that is those who study past societies for which written records are available, spend a great deal of their time establishing the ethnic affiliation of the people who made and used the sites and objects which they are investigating.

Within historical archaeology however, such 'ethnic affiliations' are ultimately procured from written sources which are used to construct a narrative framework concerning the spatial distribution and geographic movements of particular named peoples. Such narrative frameworks are then used to delineate the ethnic status of particular regions and sites within which the archaeologist seeks to unearth artefactual materials relating to that particular group. It is these ethnically designated artefacts, or 'ethnic markers', themselves defined using 'historical documentation' which serve to verify the

⁴¹ Trigger, B.G. 1995:277

⁴² For a detailed discussion of the development of the 'Culture-Historical' within archaeology paradigm and some of its basic tenets the argument developed in chapter two. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:148-207. Sklenar, K. 1983:146-162. Though it had its predecessors, particularly in the work of Gustav Kossinna, it was Gordon Childe's synthesis of European pre-history which made the 'culture concept' the working tool of all European archaeologists. Cf. Chapter Two.

authenticity of those same historical sources, and indeed establish the ethnic status of sites for which there is no surviving historical evidence.

This pattern of research, which is particularly prominent in the colonial and post-colonial archaeology of the United States, but is also highly visible in the archaeology of other periods and regions, particularly the Iron I Age of Palestine, reflects the prevalent assumption that the study of ethnicity requires access to peoples' self conscious reflections on ethnicity and that written sources provide an authorative source of information about such reflections. The circularity of this process however is clearly self evident and relies on a number of implicit assumptions, namely: that historical sources can be taken as straightforward, and valid statements concerning ethnicity; that there exists a fixed and direct relationship between particular styles of material culture, the much celebrated 'ethnic markers', and a particular social identity; and finally, that ethnic groups are essentially bounded, homogeneous entities. It is this somewhat deterministic approach, which all too frequently leads to the conflation of the material record with monolithic ethnic categories extracted from historical sources, which dominates the analysis of ethnicity within historical archaeology and which is integral to the interpretation of a wide range of periods and regions.

As will be shown throughout this study, such a procedure whereby historical sources have played a decisive role in the identification of particular ethnic entities, their geographical and cultural provenance, and the material correlates associated with them is particularly evident within the archaeological tradition of Palestine⁴⁴. Indeed, it is a

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⁴³ As Trigger argues in relation to antiquarian studies, this assumption was based on the belief shared with classical archaeologists, that historical knowledge can be acquired only from written documents or reliable oral traditions and that without these there can be no connected understanding of earlier times. Artifacts and monuments it was believed merely served to illustrate the historically recorded accomplishments of the past. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:27-73. Such views have been perfectly captured in the words of the English essayist Samuel Johnson who argued 'all that is really known of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages. We can know no more than what old writers have told us.' Daniel, G.E. 1963:35.

⁴⁴ While there is of course some degree of controversy as to the historical veracity of the biblical traditions, particularly in relation to the earlier periods of 'conquest' and 'settlement', for many archaeologists and historians, the biblical tradition is, albeit with varying degrees of critical textual analysis, still used to construct a narrative framework for the interpretation of archaeological data. For a useful discussion of the problems arising from the employment of literary sources as a framework in the interpretation of

strategy which clearly informs Mazar's identification of Israelite sites in the Iron Age. Faced with the predicament of isolating a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture complex, Mazar states, "our departure point in this issue should be sites which, according to the biblical tradition were Israelite during the period of the Judges, such as Shiloh, Mizpah, Dan and Beersheba; settlements with similar material culture in the same region can then be defined as Israelite"⁴⁵. Whilst Mazar's project certainly betrays the extent to which analyses of early Israel, and Israelite ethnicity, have been dictated by an agenda which concerns itself with the assumed historical reliability of the biblical sources, as Tessa Rajak has illustrated, a similar rationale underscores the attachment of ethnic labels to sites and objects in later periods also⁴⁶.

For instance, the interpretation of forum-type structures dating to the Second Temple Period within Palestine as 'synagogues' is, for the most part, largely dependent on references in historical sources which refer to Jewish communities living at the same location. For while those structures for which a significant portion of the original building survives – at Masada, Herodium and Gamala – all plausibly represent 'assembly halls', their Jewish character is not self evident in and of itself. Except for the Gamala building where a six-petalled rosette has been carved over the lintel of a doorway, an ornament associated with Jewish religious contexts in the pre-70 CE period, they reveal few diagnostically Jewish architectural features or symbols. Moreover the way in which written sources can dominate archaeological interpretation is further illustrated by the attempts to interpret a first century structure of indeterminate character at Capernaum as a synagogue on the basis of references to such a synagogue in the New Testament. 47 Indeed historical models have also influenced archaeological interpretation in opposite directions, leading to the repeated identification of archaeological sites with arguably Jewish connections as non-Jewish sites, a tendency especially pronounced in the study of

archaeological remains, in this case late antiquity, see R. Vale JJS 18(2) 1987:209-226. See also the discussions undertaken in chapters two and five in relation to the archaeology of ancient Israel.

⁴⁵ Mazar, A. 1990:353.

⁴⁶ Rajak, T. 1994:226-241

⁴⁷ Hachlili, R. 1988:87. For a further discussion of the interpretation of these structures as pre-70 CE synagogues see Flesher, P.V.M. 1995:27-39. The biblical references to the existence of this structure are contained in Mark 1.21 and Luke 7.1 and 7.5.

later Roman archaeological material by Christian scholars as in the case of the Roman catacombs.⁴⁸

Thus in the interpretation of Jewish identity and Jewish life in the Greco-Roman period, as in other periods and areas for which written sources are available, archaeology has served as 'the handmaid of history'. For in spite of their appealing simplicity, such modes of interpretation clearly assume, not only that there exists a fixed one-to-one relationship between particular types of material culture and a particular identity, but that such an identity was essentially homogenous and unchanging across different regions, classes, and social strata.

Such assumptions about ethnicity are also mirrored in the archaeology of other regions and periods. For example, in the study of Medieval Europe, archaeologists have unquestionably pursued ethnic entities such as the Franks, Danes and Anglo-Saxons, labelling archaeological sites and artefacts as Danish, or Anglo-Saxon etc, simply because they are located in the geographic areas which, according to historical sources, such groups settled⁴⁹. Furthermore, as in other periods and regions of archaeological enquiry, types of objects which are not considered to represent the particular sought after culture are frequently ignored or marginalized, interpreted either as evidence for the presence of other ethnic groups, or as evidence for assimilation with an associated loss of distinctive culture and identity.⁵⁰

Thus it would seem that the description and interpretation of material remains within historical archaeology is positively saturated with discourses of identity derived from particular authorative written sources. The problem however is that such discursive categories are rarely themselves the subject of analysis. Rather, they are accepted as a given, and constitute an a priori framework for description, classification and

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the way in which the Jewish catacombs of Rome were consistently ignored or marginalized in historical studies which asserted the Christian character of these burial-sites see Rutgers, L.V. 1995.

⁴⁹ For a recent critical discussion see the contributions in D. Austin and L. Alcock eds. 1997.

⁵⁰Cf. Praetzellis, A., M. Praetzellis and M. Brown 1987:38-47. Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992.

interpretation. As argued by Rajak in relation to studies of Jewish sites in ancient Palestine "to assume in advance what is Jewish, and what is not (or even probably not) is to operate with a preconception of Jewish identity when our task is precisely to seek to define that identity"⁵¹. Once identity itself becomes the subject of analysis however, rather than an essential, taken for granted character, it becomes necessary to consider the nature of the social and cultural processes involved in the construction of ethnic entities.⁵² Unfortunately, as yet, only a handful of historical archaeologists have considered the implications of recent anthropological research which reveals ethnic identity to be a dynamic, contested, and multi-layered phenomenon. Yet even those scholars who have emphasised the complexity of the processes involved in the construction of ethnicity, still for the most part accept the written evidence as an authorative, and relatively straightforward source of information in the identification of ethnic entities, their geographic and chronological provenance, and the material correlates associated with them.⁵³ The relationship between 'written' and 'material' manifestations of ethnicity has not been in question.

Rather than moving forward to address such issues however debates in much of the literature, and at various conferences have raged repetitively over the rather tired issue of archaeological versus textual evidence, and the priority, if any should be accorded to one or the other.

⁵¹ Rajak, T. 1994:240. Indeed, Whitelam has made a similar point in relation to the identification of the Israelites in Iron Age Palestine, arguing that 'the debate in archaeology has not concerned itself with the identity of the inhabitants: this was taken for granted as self evident until recently' Whitelam, K.W. 1996:188.

⁵² It is just such a task which is undertaken in chapter three of this study.

⁵³ Cf. Kelly, M.C.S. and R.E. Kelly, 1980:133-143. Mc Guire, R.H. 1 1982:159-178. Dever, W.G. EI 24 1993;22-33. Finkelstein, I. 1988. 1995. BA 59(4) 1996:198-212.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE LITERARY RECORD

While 'starting points' for Israelite history have shifted well beyond the patriarchal period, where the defences have been well breached, to the point where the battle lines are currently being drawn around the period of the United monarchy, as Keith Whitelam has illustrated, the parameters of the theoretical discussion in relation to the nature of the historical task at hand have not moved at a similar pace⁵⁴. Rather, the fulcrum of the debate continues to turn around the assessment of the historical veracity of the biblical traditions in relation to the ever increasing body of archaeological data. Underpinning such discussions is the enduring question of what kind of history is possible, or indeed, permissible.⁵⁵

The dominant theoretical position within biblical studies has long been one of 'historical particularism', whereby, with varying degrees of critical acumen, archaeological evidence has been slotted into a narrative framework fashioned from the biblical texts, ⁵⁶ thereby confining interpretations of that evidence to the perspectives presented in the documentary sources. As Leone and Potter have argued in a discussion of historical archaeology in general, "the archaeological record and the documentary record are treated as if they are linked, with one a dependent version of the other....it leads the researcher to integrate documentary and archaeological material in a single move, from one line of evidence to another, and to do little more than search for extremely circumscribed information"⁵⁷.

During the first half of the last century, and indeed up until the 1960's, many scholars were highly optimistic that the various archaeological discoveries in the Holy Land had validated many of the historical claims of the biblical tradition, if not the theological

⁵⁴Cf. Whitelam, K.W. '2000:376-378.

⁵⁵ This is a theme which has continued to provide the platform for the many publications of William G. Dever. See for example BASOR 242 1981:14-29. BA 45 1982:103-107. 1985:31-74. 1990. JSOTS 127 1991:103-115

⁵⁶ Critiques and appraisals of the standard histories of Israel can be found in Ramsey, G.E 1982. J. Hayes and J.M. Miller eds. 1977:213-284. Weippert, M. 1971.

⁵⁷ Leone, M.P. and P.B. Potter 1988: 1-22.

interpretation given to that history by the biblical authors themselves. For example, one of the founding fathers of 'biblical archaeology', W.F. Albright, declared triumphantly in the 1930s that "discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details and has brought increased recognition of the bible as a source of history". In a similar vein, the belief of his most celebrated student G.E. Wright in the essential commensurability of the biblical and archaeological evidence is readily apparent in his passionate conclusion that the chief concern of 'biblical archaeology' "is not with strata, or pots or methodology, rather, its central, and absorbing interest is in the understanding and exposition of the scriptures". Whilst the original intuition of Albright and the 'Baltimore school' that nothing except the external evidence of archaeology could shed light on the tradition as received was, in essence, a sound one, their attempt to utilize archaeology as a means of restoring confidence in the essential historicity of the biblical tradition was flawed since they assumed that archaeology would *always* confirm, and *never* challenge, the historical narrative as presented in the Hebrew Bible. 60

As such, Albright's efforts to transform the biblical narrative into an authorized citation of historical fact over and against the radical reconstructions of that tradition by German scholars such as Alt⁶¹ and Noth⁶², was left wanting, undermined, ironically by the very archaeological data which he had placed such faith in⁶³. As Philip Davies has argued, "if the fate of the non-biblical data is to be made to fit into…a framework which they themselves have not sponsored then they are not being properly utilized"⁶⁴. Baldly put, the whole utility of archaeology as an independent perspective on human culture is

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⁵⁸ Albright, W.F. 1974:128

⁵⁹ Quoted in Dever, W.G. 1985:55. Indeed, many Israeli Archaeologists still seem to operate from this perspective. Shortly before his death, Yigeal Yadin wrote concerning the conquest story in the Bible that 'the excavation results over the last 50 years or so support in a most amazing way, except in some cases, the basic historicity of the biblical account.' Yadin, Y. BAR 7(2) 1982.

⁶⁰ Though Albright's approach to archaeological excavation tended towards 'scriptural fundamentalism', that is, the belief that the task of archaeology was to verify the biblical traditions, Albright also sought in the archaeological remains of Palestine confirmation of his 'evolutionary' view of human history and society. See Albright, W.F. 1957. Whitelam, K.W. '1996. Provan, I. JSS 62 1997.

⁶¹ Cf. Alt, A. 1966.

⁶² Cf. Noth, M. 1960. 1981.

⁶³ As Freedman, himself a pupil of Albright has pointed out, '...Albright's great plan and expectation, to set the Bible firmly on the foundation of archaeology, buttressed by verifiable data seems to have foundered, or at least floundered. After all the digging done, and yet to be done, how much has been accomplished?' Freedman, D.N. BArev 11 1983:56.

⁶⁴ Davies, P.R. JSOTS 245 1997:107-108.

vitiated by unfolding it within the ideological matrix of the biblical narrative. Its capacity to generate different frameworks, categories and interpretations is effectively hamstrung.

This criticism, that archaeology has served as the 'handmaiden of history' is well known, and can be applied to a wide range of scholarly endeavours which affirm the superior value of the written document as a source of historical truth. Indeed the frequent 'objectification' of the archaeologist's craft in the form of a spade, and the characterization of the latter as an *instrumentum mutum* has been a persistent theme of many historical works which deal with archaeological material. The implicit assumption however, that the 'written record' constitutes the sovereign route to an understanding of the past has, of late, been effectively challenged, resulting in a number of diverse positions.

At one level, the increasingly late dating of much of the biblical literature, coupled with the recognition that these documents constitute partial, often fractured perceptions on the nature of past societies, as opposed to objective, absolute statements has prompted some scholars to relegate written sources to a subordinate role in historical interpretation⁶⁶. While the efforts of such scholars to liberate themselves from the restrictive assumption that historical knowledge can only be acquired from written documents and/or reliable oral traditions are certainly admirable, their effective exclusion of literary evidence in favour of supposedly more 'objective' archaeological material frequently results in what

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⁶⁵ Indeed, in a relatively recent work on the Roman phases of a monastery at San Vincenzo al Volturno in Molise, Italy, Barnish provides the following statement, 'Evolution from villa to village to church or monastery is a frequent phenomenon of early medieval archaeology. Continuity is often surmised, but inevitably hard to demonstrate. At San Vincenzo, where continuity was broken, stages of change are hard to see, but *the spade's dumb mouth* gives us little help in understanding them.' Barnish, S. 1992:57.

⁶⁶ As Coote and Whitelam have argued strongly in their provocative book, '...continued attempts to reconstruct the history of Israel from the starting point of minute literary study of the traditions of the Hebrew Bible show little signs of real progress. Such studies run the risk of perpetuating the theological inclinations of their sources, whether from the Pentatuch, the Deuteronomistic History or the Prophetic books. As more and more archaeological evidence becomes available, it raises ever more questions about the nature of our literary sources. The time has come to attempt a synthesis of the history of Israel from a different perspective.' Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1986:17.

Beaudry, Cook and Mrozovski refer to as a "fear of the emic". That is, rather than accept, and develop critical perspectives for examining the subjective representations of the past encoded within the written sources, the desire of some scholars to reconstruct a more 'objective' past propels them to disregard what they feel are debilitating, subjective factors. As Braudel so elegantly expressed it, "We must learn to distrust this history with its still burning passions, as it was felt, described and lived by contemporaries whose lives are as short and as short-sighted as our ours...a world of strong passions certainly, but blind like any other living world, our own included, and unconscious of the deeper realities of history..." In effect however, such an approach leads to a reversal of the previously outlined deterministic relationship between documentary and archaeological evidence – now it is archaeological evidence which is accorded priority.

In recognition of the dilemma which results from the pursuit of two apparently contradictory histories, one based largely upon archaeological remains, the other almost exclusively upon the texts of the Bible, some scholars, such as William G. Dever, have sounded a clarion call for a sustained and critical two way dialogue between 'text' and 'spade', While Dever's plea for such an 'inter-textual' exercise provides an important corrective to the 'pervasive mania' cited by Lemche for correlating text with artefact before either has had the opportunity to speak for itself⁷¹, the archaeological partner which Dever envisages is a fully fledged, highly specialized professional discipline with its own aims and methods, independent of (though related to) biblical studies. That is, archaeology should exist as a discipline independent of the bible, alongside other disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy and philology, providing an alternative perspective which allows one to shed light on issues with which the bible does not

⁶⁷ Beaudry, M.C., L.J. Cook and S.A. Mrozowski 1991:161.

⁶⁸ 'The traditions of the Hebrew Bible, with their theological stances and complex and largely hidden history of development, transmission, adaptation, and reformulation spanning a millennium or more provide an immense obstacle to the historian.' Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam '1986:14 ⁶⁹ Braudel, F. Vol. I 1972:21.

⁷⁰ This repetitive, though not inconsistent plea, is echoed in a number of works within Dever's bulging corpus. See in particular BA 45 1982:103-107. 1990. BASOR 297 1995:61-80.

⁷¹ Lemche, N.P. 1985:35.

concern itself. Only then can the 'critical dialogue' which Dever envisages as the central project of biblical studies commence.⁷²

Beyond the particularist perspective of 'biblical archaeology' then⁷³, with its all too common subjugation of archaeology in the service of the biblical tradition, Dever's 'Syro-Palestinian archaeology' advocates a concentration upon comprehensive regional surveys of small, rural sites in their larger environmental and cultural settings in an attempt to shed light on settlement history, demography, and economic relationships. That is, the shifts and strains vital for understanding social change. For many this argument has been associated with a pronounced shift away from the reconstruction of so called 'political history', with its emphasis upon 'description', towards an explanation of long term social and economic processes - an extended chronological perspective which owes much to the influence of the French 'Annales School', and particularly the tripartite temporal divisions outlined by Fernand Braudel⁷⁴. Indeed, the methodological benefits afforded by the adoption of 'la monde Braudellian' have opened up what Coote, amongst others, has referred to as a 'new horizon' in the study of Israelite history⁷⁵.

Although the most commonly agreed datum to mark the emergence of early Israel has been the extension of small, un-walled villages and agricultural settlements into the central highlands of Palestine during the thirteenth to eleventh centuries B.C.E., an

⁷⁷ Cf. Coote, R.B. 1990.

⁷² On the current epistemological and historiographical difficulties which Dever feels have inhibited the materialization of this dialogue see Dever, W.G. CIR 8 2000:91-116.

⁷³ While for years archaeological research in Palestine and the adjacent countries was called 'Biblical Archaeology', scholars such as Dever have argued long and hard for its replacement with 'Near Eastern' or more commonly 'Syro-Palestinian' archaeology on the grounds that in its previous incarnation, research in that region was primarily an American phenomenon linked to Protestant professors of religion. It was in an effort to establish archaeology in the Levant as an independent, secular and 'professional' discipline that he has argued for the name change. Reaction to Dever's position however is varied with amongst others, Volkmar Fritz, resisting the name change on the grounds that 'From a scholarly point of view there is no reason to abandon the term 'Biblical Archaeology' since a relationship between the two disciplines is justified. At any rate the term, when used, can refer only to the archaeology of the whole region throughout all periods and not to a study of antiquities that is exclusively related to biblical texts.' Fritz, V. 1994:12.

See also Lance, H.D. 1981:95.

74 Cf. Braudel, F. Vols. I, II, III, 1972. On the application of Braudel's historical methodology to the specific question of Ancient Israel see Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1987. Levy, T.E. ed. ASHL 1995. Finkelstein, I. and N. Na'aman eds. 1994.

increasing body of literature has emerged whose focus has moved beyond the appearance of 'powerful individuals with sharp swords' towards an analysis of the processes which led to such settlement shifts, and their implications for understanding later periods⁷⁶. Whilst there may exist numerous disagreements amongst various scholars in relation to the relative degree of significance to be attributed to the numerous factors and processes which contributed to the re-alignment and transformation of Palestinian society in the Late Bronze Age – Iron Age transition⁷⁷, one of the most important points of consensus to emerge has been the recognition of considerable cultural continuity, coupled with the largely indigenous nature of such settlement shifts. Indeed as Whitelam points out, the "almost nonchalant way in which scholars now accept that the settlement shifts in the highlands and margins of Palestine... are the result of largely indigenous processes stands in stark contrast to the catalogue of complaints which accompanied the first attempts of Mendenhall, Gottwald and Chaney to challenge the prevailing assumption that socio-political changes in the region were the result of external invasion or infiltration".⁷⁸

While this revolution in understanding and approach has laid the basis for alternative conceptions of the region, allowing for the investigation of long term trends in Palestinian history, and the processes which shaped such trends, the essential weakness of the archaeological application of Annales, or to be more precise, that aspect of Annales outlined by Braudel, is its emphasis on 'la longue duree', Indeed, this archaeological fascination with 'Braudellian Annalisme', and the belief that archaeological data are particularly appropriate to the study of the long term, probably stems from the fact that 'la monde Braudellian' emphasizes the same structural variables which were regarded as

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⁷⁶ Cf. Ahlström, G.A. 1986. Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1987. Lemche, N.P. 1985. 1988. Finkelstein, I. 1988.

⁷⁷ Such disagreements usually turn on the relative importance to be attached to such factors as the nature and importance of regional and inter-regional economic decline and stagnation, climatic features, or the socio-economic background of the inhabitants of the various highland sites.

⁷⁸ Whitelam, K.W. 2000:382.

⁷⁹ While as a theory of how the world works, and how one may in a single methodology, reconcile the event and the millennial trend, Braudel's structural history is a landmark study with inexhaustible potential, one must immediately add that for all of it's encyclopedic brilliance, the work falls short in one major respect – it does not solve the historiographic problem which it posed, namely, how to effectively link the durable phenomena of history with those that involve rapid change. On the limitations of Braudel's masterpiece see Hexter, J.H. JMH 49 1972:480-537.

pre-eminent in previous incarnations of archaeology, not least the 'New Archaeology' initiated by Lewis Binford in 1958.80

In their desire to make archaeology a 'nomothetic science', one which excluded consideration of all situations but those of the most notable regularity in the explanation of culture change, proponents of the 'New Archaeology' took Braudel's emphasis upon 'la longue duree' to support their plea for a status independent of history - since only they had access to the material remains which are testament to the potency of such long term, deep processes.81 Indeed, such feelings were expressed in an extremely forceful, if not polemical manner by one of the great theorists of modern archaeology, David Clarke, who in an attempt to articulate the need for archaeology to develop as an independent discipline argued, "archaeological data are not historical data and consequently archaeology is not history...archaeology is archaeology is archaeology."82 While the claim that archaeological and historical evidence are not to be readily conflated is an important one, the capacity to integrate the two, even as complementary sources of information relating to distinct aspects of social life as Braudel intended, is denied to those who adopt a strictly 'Braudellian' perspective.

The central problem with the archaeological use of the Annales methodology, or to be more precise, that aspect of Annales outlined by Braudel is that it largely ignores the constructed nature of the past, and the archaeologist's position as constructor in the present. Though it is now something of a commonplace to argue that all history has the character of contemporary history due to its construction in the present⁸³, Braudellian history seeks to recreate the past through the accumulation of as many facts about that past as possible. Similarly, the 'New Archaeology' sought to use the methods of the natural sciences to generate facts, and ultimately, laws, about the past which would allow its re-creation, 'as it really was'. Though there were certainly disagreements amongst the

⁸⁰ Cf. Binford, L.R. AA 28 1962:217:225. 1972.

⁸¹ On the epistemology of the 'New Archaeology' in its various incarnations see Trigger, B.G. 1989: 289-

⁸² Clarke, D. L. 1978:11.

⁸³ Cf. Collingwood, R.G. 1946 Carr, E.H. 1967.

New Archaeologists, some of them acrimonious, in general the New Archaeology can be characterized as a unitary phenomenon since its practitioners believed that there was a single truth about the past that could be accessed as long as one had the right approach, that is, did the right kind of science. In both cases these 'facts' were established within an epistemological framework which subordinated the role of individual thought and action. The individual, both in the *monde Braudellian* and the new world of scientific rationalism created by the New Archaeology, simply behaved in response to the dictates of the environment's deep structures.⁸⁴

Similarly within the various guises in which the 'New Archaeology' has been adopted not only are archaeological data viewed as a 'given resource', through which an 'objective' past may be reconstructed, but written sources, 'with their still burning passions,' are either neglected or marginalized in the pursuit of the past 'as it really was'. As such, the increasingly evident reliance of biblical scholars on New Archaeology/Braudellian Annalisme does little to resolve the archaeological/documentary dilemma which continues to beset biblical scholarship. Rather they have simply presented an anachronistic ideographic conception of history as a straw man against which they have pit their 'new science'. 86 Furthermore, whilst such

⁸⁴ Hexter has attempted to link such a fatalistic philosophy to Braudel's prolonged imprisonment by the German occupation during World War II, during which time he wrote the main draft of his masterpiece. Condemned to inaction, his reflections may have turned to the more durable features of human existence which extend beyond the short and often violent lives of individuals – 'confronted by man I am always tempted to see him as enclosed in a destiny which he scarcely made, in a landscape which shows before and after him, the infinite perspective of the *longue duree*. In historical explanation as I see it, at my own risk and peril, it is always the *temps longue* that wins out in the end.' Hexter, J.H. JMH 49 1972:504-510

⁸⁵ Trigger has attempted to identify the anti-historical bias of the New Archaeology as an ideological reflection of the increasing economic and political interventionism of the United States after World War II. Its emphasis on nomothetic generalizations was accompanied by the obvious implication that the study of any national tradition as an end in itself was of trivial importance. By denying the worth of such studies, New Archaeology suggested the unimportance of national traditions themselves and hence, of anything that stood in the way of American economic activity and political influence. Trigger, B.G. 1989:312-319. See also. Grant, G. 1965.

⁸⁶ An attack which Le Roy Ladurie has chastised as follows – 'The social sciences, wishing to preserve a reputation for hardness and purity, began to operate a closed shop against history which was accused of being a 'soft' science. The attack was characterized by a great deal of ignorance and not a little gall on the part of the attackers who had affected to forget that since Bloch, Braudel and Larousse, history too had undergone a scientific transformation. Clio had stolen the clothes of the social sciences and they had never noticed their nakedness...while the death of history was being proclaimed in certain quarters, it had simply gone through the looking glass in search, not of its own reflection, but of a new world.' Le Roy Ladurie, E. 1979:26-27.

studies that do acknowledge the subjective nature of the literary sources, the conditions of production and structures of power within which they both derive, and bestow meaning in their representation of Israel's past remains a matter of conjecture and debate.⁸⁷

In an effort to affect this desired synthesis however, a number of studies have recently argued that both archaeological, and written sources provide subjective perspectives on the past. While such arguments are representative of a fundamental shift in the conceptualisation of material culture, away from some of the grosser assumptions and postures of the 'New Archaeology', towards a view of material culture as an active, symbolic element in social relations⁸⁸, at a deeper level they are symptomatic of the inexorable penetration of new philosophical and intellectual trends into the mainstream of archaeological thought. Because material culture is viewed as an *active*, *symbolic* element of social practice, being produced, maintained and manipulated in the process of communication and social relationships as opposed to a mere passive reflection of ecological adaptation or socio-political organization, the analysis of material culture, in effect, becomes 'a reading' of that material discourse. Within this 'post-processualist' position then, archaeological material and deposits are, in essence, 'textual evidence' to be read by the archaeologist.

This comparison of material culture with text has, in one veiled form or another, been around for many years as Parker Pearson noted when he referred to Childe's insistence that material culture be treated "always and exclusively as concrete expressions and embodiments of human thoughts and ideas." While the notion that material culture could express or contain ideas similar to language did open the discipline of archaeology to the insights of structuralist and semiotic analysis 90, it was not until the early 1980s that the

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⁸⁷ Whitelam, K.W. 2000:382.

⁸⁸ See in particular, Hodder, I. 1982a. 1982b. 1986.

⁸⁹ Childe. V.G. 1956:1. Quoted in Parker-Pearson, M. 1982:100.

⁹⁰ Ian Hodder has observed how the failure of a purely stucturalist approach as evidenced in the work of Leroi-Gourhan results from the tendency of such approaches to be subsumed, rather flirtatiously within the New Archaeology due to its emphasis on the role of general systems to explain all aspects of human behaviour. Though it was later rejected from the New Archaeology canon because of its inability to conform to the positivist requirements of hypothesis testing and falsifiability, the love affair with structuralism survived in one form or another in the works of a variety of authors throughout the 1970s and

comparison of material culture with text resurged with increased force. In the preceding years with the publication of Bourdieu's 'Outline of a Theory of Practice' and Anthony Giddens' 'New Rules of Sociological Method' and 'Central Problems in Social Theory' a more satisfactory critique of structuralist interpretations arose in the pursuit of understanding systems of meaning: shifting the emphasis from static structures of meaning subordinating all individual actions to the dictates of underlying structures, to actively manipulated generative principles exploited by individuals pursuing various independent social goals. This approach inspired those archaeologists dissatisfied with the New Archaeology's treatment of meaning to pursue their interests with renewed vigour and establish a generation of practitioners critical of the New Archaeology more forcefully than ever before.91

While this notion of the archaeological record as 'text' is certainly an attractive analogy, overcoming any suggestion of a strict separation between written and material sources, and the tendency to prioritise one over the other in historical interpretation, Barrett has developed some important criticisms of this position⁹². While his doubt that "such texts are capable of adequate translation"⁹³ is perhaps only relevant where one contends that an originary and unitary meaning can be 'read out' of material culture, more crucial perhaps is his observation that the very term 'record' is an imperfect metaphor since it implies that one is concerned with the static outcome of past dynamics⁹⁴. Inevitably, such a mode of analysis leads one again, to relegate material culture evidence to a passive role, and concomitantly, to a view of societies as metaphysical entities which leave the lifeless

early 1980s. Cf. Hodder, I. 1986: 33-36. See also Leroi-Gourhan, A. 1968 for an example of structuralist

interpretation in prehistoric archaeology.

⁹¹ While the works of individuals such as Daniel Miller (1982:89-98), Henrietta Moore (1986), Michael Parker-Pearson (1982), Shanks and Tilley (1987), Mark Leone (AA 47 1982:742-760) and Ian Hodder (1982a, 1986) have attempted to reassess comparisons with text with the infusion of the post-structuralist critiques of structuralism by Bourdieu and Giddens as well as the critiques of structuralism by Roland Barthes, Jacque Derrida, Michel Foucault, Paul Ricoeur, and the Marxist tradition of Critical Theory, Thomas Patterson sorts out this unruly variety of responses and influences into three reasonably distinct but inevitably forced strains of thought that manage, more or less to capture the dominant tone of the works involved. Cf. Patterson, T. Man 24 1989:556

⁹² Barrett, J.C. 1988.

⁹³ Ibid. 1988:6

⁹⁴ Ibid. 1988:9 On the nature of the 'archaeological record' see Patrik, L.E. 2000:118-144.

record of their actions behind them as an animal leaves its droppings⁹⁵. As Barrett, and others point out, social practice is in no way separate from the material world, rather, material items are media, drawn upon, and deployed in social action. As such, because the material world is continuously reworked, and reconceptualized in the unending performance that is social life, it follows that the materials to which we refer as the 'archaeological record' are, like words, ambiguous and polysemic. Their meaning, both in the past, and in the present, is dependent upon both social context, and historical situation.96

While this is not an exhaustive, or particularly novel analysis of the somewhat troublesome relationship between literary and material evidence and the relative value of either in historical reconstruction, it does provide one with a useful basis for reconsidering the use of, and relationship between, literary and material remains in the analysis of past ethnicities. While advances in literary criticism, particularly within the context of post-modernism, have helped to erode confidence in the status of the written record as an authorative source of information about past identities, arguing instead for an in-depth analysis of the active involvement of texts in the construction and negotiation of such ethnic categories, the recognition of their situated and subjective nature does raise further questions about the relationship between literary and material manifestations of ethnicity. Of particular concern to this paper is the question of whether or not one can expect to find the same kind of representation of ethnic identity in the archaeological record as we do in the literary sources. In order to obtain a better understanding of the ways in which literary and archaeological evidence may be used in the analysis of such past ethnicities however, it is suggested that one take into account the processes involved in the construction of ethnicity. It is to this task which we now turn our attention.

⁹⁵ Thomas, J. '1996:60. Others who have found the textual analogy strictly problematic include Mike Parker Pearson, Maurice Bloch, Colin Richards, Felipe Criado and Victor Buchli. For a convenient presentation of their central disagreements see Buchli, V. A. 2000:363-376. See also Hodder, I. 1982a.

CHAPTER ONE

TAXONOMIES OF DIFFERENCE IN THE EMERGENCE OF HUMAN GROUPS

THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT OF RACE	33
SOCIAL EVOLUTION AND RACE HUMAN EVOLUTION AND THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE(S)	44
	56

THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT OF RACE

While the concept of ethnicity emerged as a major taxonomic category within the human sciences during the 1960s, throughout much of the nineteenth century, and beyond, it was the concept of 'race', albeit in diverse forms, which constituted the dominant mode of conceptualizing human diversity¹. Prior to this period however, all interest in diversity had been largely deflected by the Enlightenment concern with the 'universal development' of civilization.²

Primarily this 'concern' involved the comparative study of various living peoples whose 'cultures' were deemed to be at different levels of complexity and arranging these cultures to form a logical, usually unilinear sequence from 'simple' to 'complex'. Despite disagreement about details, such as whether agricultural, or pastoral economies had evolved first, it was widely believed that such sequences, based largely upon ethnographic data derived from missionaries and explorers working in far flung, exotic parts of the world, could be regarded as historical ones, and used to examine the development of all kinds of social institutions. In the reactionary years which followed the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 however, the ideals of the Enlightenment went into decline throughout Europe, surviving mainly in the form of radical protest movements

¹ There was no clear-cut nineteenth century concept of race, but rather many classifications, and theories, and concomitantly, much controversy. However, in so far as one simple conception caught the popular imagination it was the doctrine of *permanent human types* as reflected in Abraham Lincoln's presidential address to a group of black Americans on their future status within the United States, 'You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between any two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffers very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffers from your presence...' Banton, M. 1977:1.

² 'Prior to about 1900, 'culture' and 'civilization', both in the German and Anglo-American traditions, still had not acquired their characteristic modern anthropological definitions. Whether in the humanist or the evolutionist sense, both were associated with the progressive accumulation of the characteristic manifestations of human creativity: art, science, knowledge, refinement – those things that freed man from control by nature, by environment, by reflex, by instinct, by habit, or by custom.' Stocking, G.W. 1968:201. See also 1987:19.

³ The Scottish philosopher Dugald Stewart labelled the methodology used by Enlightenment philosophers to trace the development of human institutions 'theoretic' or 'conjectural' history. Slotkin, J.S. 1965:465.

⁴ In the writings of the historian William Robertson, the apparently similar sequences of development in the Eastern Hemisphere and the Americas were interpreted as proof of the general principle of psychic unity and the belief that human beings at the same stage of development would inevitably respond to the same problems in the same way. Harris, M. 1968:34-35.

among the lower classes. Contrary to the universalism advocated by the Enlightenment philosophers, which treated all humans as equally perfectable, ⁵ the early nineteenth century marked a significant shift in the study of humanity with the emergence of the idea that human groups, rather than possessing the same *kind* and *level* of intelligence, and the same basic emotions, were, in essence, distinct, primordial entities, characterized by specific physical qualities – a transformation primarily embodied in the concept of 'race'. In place of the rationalism of the Enlightenment then, and its promotion of the essential intellectual and emotional similarities of different cultural groups, scholars began to promote the alternative view that the alleged differences in cultural temperament and behaviour were rooted in biological factors which were impervious to change. It was a claim which directly contradicted the earlier belief that the most significant differences between groups were related to their respective levels of development which, nevertheless, would inevitably be erased as the exercise of rational thought progressively eliminated ignorance, passion, and superstition. ⁶

Despite the increasing popularity and prestige such ideas acquired during the latter half of the nineteenth century, a fact readily apparent in the eager consumption of Count de Gobineau's four volume 'Essai sur l'inegalité des races humaines', there existed no clear cut nineteenth century conception of race, but rather many classifications and theories – and much controversy. To a certain extent these different conceptions happened to coincide with the development of the concept of 'race' within two relatively distinct

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⁵ This was based on the belief that all human groups possessed essentially the same kind and level of intelligence, and the same basic emotions (although individuals within groups may differ from one another in these features.) As such there was no biological barrier to the degree to which any race or nationality could benefit from new knowledge, or contribute to its advancement. Though in its most ethnocentric form this constituted a belief that all humans were capable of benefiting from European civilization, it also implied that an advanced, technological civilization was not destined to remain the exclusive possession of Europeans.

⁶ In this fashion human beings gradually acquired greater ability to control their environment, which in turn generated the wealth and leisure needed to support the creation of more complex societies and the development of a more profound and objective understanding of humanity and the universe. Indeed many Enlightenment philosophers viewed this 'progress' teleologically, as humanity's realization of the plans of a benevolent deity.

⁷ De Gobineau, J.A. 'Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races.' 1853-1855. Though his writings were to influence such prominent European racists as Richard Wagner and Adolf Hitler, to present De Gobineau as the poisoned well of all later racialist theorizing is to discount the significance of his antecedents in nineteenth century Romantic literature. Cf. Banton, M. 1977:40-47.

epistemological traditions which persisted, albeit in several forms throughout the nineteenth century – a physical anthropological tradition which sought to explain *both* physique and culture in a unified theory, finding the causes of such differentiation in biological laws, and an 'ethnological approach', which drew a sharp distinction between man's physical nature and his culture, holding that the latter demanded explanations of a different kind. Whilst strictly speaking this was not the way in which most nineteenth century writers would have viewed the distinction, it is because the major factors explored in relation to human diversity were physical-biological, and 'moral', by which was meant the factors of history, geography, and 'ways of life', that it is convenient to label the two approaches as 'anthropological', and 'ethnological'.

In so far as any single conception caught the popular imagination it was the doctrine of 'permanent racial types' as promoted by the emergent anthropological paradigm. While this was a doctrine slowly constructed during the first half of the nineteenth century, attaining perhaps its most systematic statement in Nott and Gliddon's 1854 'Types of Mankind' 11, it can be traced back to the work of early anatomists such as Cuvier 12 and Prichard 13 who formulated racial classifications on the basis of systematic physiological and anatomical studies. While the works of this pair, which provided a strong scientific basis for the theory of 'monogenism', are symptomatic of attempts to organize new knowledge about human diversity within a framework consistent with the Old Testament, from the beginning they struggled with the problem of explaining how the very different characters of the various races had developed within the few thousand years allowed by

⁸ On the emergence of these two paradigms in the early study of human diversity see Stocking, G.W in J.C. Prichard ed. 1973:ix-cx.

⁹ For example Latham saw anthropology as studying the relations of man to other mammals, whilst ethnology should concern itself with the relations of the different varieties of mankind to each other. Others drew the dividing line in different places still. See, Banton, M. 1977: 33ff.

¹⁰ The chief features of this doctrine, seized upon in Lincoln's address state that there are a finite number of races or types (blacks and whites being the most distant); that the differences are permanent; and that these differences have a decisive influence upon the kinds of relationship possible between members of different races.

¹¹ Nott, J.C. and G.R. Gliddon, 1854.

¹² Cuvier, G. 1813. 1825. For a critical perspective on the work of Cuvier see, Coleman, W. 1964.

¹³ Prichard, J.C. 1813, 1843.

the biblical chronology.¹⁴ Indeed, in no small way, the course of the nineteenth century debate on the issue of race was affected by the assumptions different writers felt able to make about the age of the earth.

Whilst Cuvier and Prichard's adherence to the orthodox biblical chronology, coupled with the biblical doctrine of the descent of all mankind from Adam, impelled them to maintain that if man had become so differentiated in the course of some six thousand years, then his physical structure could not be a stable determinant of his 'way of life', other writers, who felt free to assume a deeper antiquity for the world, were ready to argue that physical structure did indeed determine the 'cultures' of people – that the races of men do differ from each other, and have done so from the earliest historical period – a theory known as 'polygenism'. Quite naturally, any straightforward endorsement of this position was liable to attract the hostility of those who considered it an affront to revealed religion since it maintained that Adam and Eve had been the progenitors of only *one* branch of humanity, the others having independent origins of which the Bible is ignorant.¹⁵

¹⁴ In his first work Prichard is concerned to defend the Mosaic account of creation by criticizing accounts which suggested that human diversities had been constant from the very beginning of time, and to argue that there is no good evidence to indicate that acquired characteristics can be transmitted by heredity to the next generation. However, given the current state of knowledge, Prichard could not explain the appearance of racial differences within the 6,000 year timeframe dictated by the Bible by any other hypothesis than that which he had rejected, that of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Though he too accepted the biblical story of man's common descent, Cuvier is perhaps better known for his geological theory that there had been a series of natural catastrophies, such as floods, which had killed off large numbers of species and divided natural history into some eight separate epochs. As Banton points out however, Cuvier did not as is often very understandably understood, believe that each successive epoch began with a new creation. Rather, certain individuals were seen to survive, with migration and the mutual exchange of species between territories accounting for subsequent diversity. In this way he could accept that whilst all men were descended from Adam, the three major races he had delineated had escaped the last 'catastrophe' in different directions and had developed in isolation. For a contemporary critical review see, de Salles 1849. Also, Banton, M. 1977:31-34.

¹⁵ While the theory of 'polygenesis' can be traced back to the beginning of the twelfth century, it was first raised as a major issue in modern times by the French Calvinist librarian Isaac de La Peyrère in 1655. He argued that while the biblical Adam had been the progenitor of the Jews, the ancestors of the other human groups had been created separately and earlier. Though church authorities compelled La Peyrère to retract his thesis, his ideas continued to be others such as Edward Long who argued that the Europeans and the Negroes were separate species. Cf. Slotkin, J.S. 1965: 5-6. For earlier explications of this thesis see Long, E. 1774. White, C. 1799.

While the middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the appearance of a number of works which expounded the innate differences between the human races, if one seeks an event to mark this development, then perhaps the best would be the publication in 1850 of Robert Knox's 'The Races of Men' 16. As the anatomist who purchased corpses from the infamous body snatchers Burke and Hare, Knox has achieved a certain degree of notoriety, his treatise does nevertheless occupy a prominent position in the history of race consciousness. Though one of the most distinctive components of Knox's racial typology was based upon a system he referred to as 'transcendental anatomy' 17, which held that variations in the external character of individuals were to be explained as the expression of underlying biological types of a relatively permanent nature, Knox also held strong views on the internal characters of the various races, that is, on their morale, temperament and ability to build a way of life. 18 While Knox's insistent emphasis on the permanent nature of such racial types led him to declare that a mixed breed could never establish itself, as witnessed by the failure of integration between the Anglo-Saxons and the native Irish, 19 such determinism was closely related to a clear belief in the inequality of the races. Because of the fixed, and direct correlation which Knox, and other academics postulated between the physical form and structure of the various races and their respective mental and cultural capabilities, "human history cannot be a mere chapter of accidents"²⁰. Rather, as a consequence of the physical, and concomitant psychological inferiority of the dark races which, in general prohibited their capacity for 'civilization',

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²⁰ Quoted in Nott, J.C. and G.R. Gliddon, 1854:67.

¹⁶ Knox, R. 1850. Though earlier books had advanced racial similar classifications, and some of Knox's contemporaries had made significant contributions to the theory of race relations, Knox was the first to come forward with an exposition that was fully comprehensive, if not a little jumbled and confusing.

¹⁷ Though the expression had been used previously by Geoffroy, Knox claimed it was coined by his esteemed friend and teacher (and Cuvier's successor) H.M.D. de Blainville. The object of this system was, according to Knox, 'to explain in a connected chain the phenomena of the living material world...that all animals are formed upon one great plan.' Knox, R. 1850:171.

¹⁸ Knox, R. 1850: 36,18,175,477,503.

¹⁹A sharp passage on this topic, which includes an edge of Knox's political radicalism occurs in a later passage about racial antagonism in South Africa where the Anglo-Saxon and Dutch-Saxon 'so debase the coloured races as to deprive than forever of all chance of recovering that inestimable treasure beyond all price or value, freedom of speech, thought and action: in a word, the rights of man. How has this antagonism arisen? The truth is, it has always existed, but it never appeared in its terrible form until the Saxon race began to migrate over the earth, to establish free colonies as they were called – free to the white man and their own race – dens of horror and cruelty to the coloured.' Knox, R. 1860:121.

it is Caucasians who in all ages have been the rulers.²¹ Furthermore, while Knox had no hesitation in proclaiming that 'might is right' was the only philosophy governing the relationship between the races, his racial theory also taught that colonization was not only useless, but evil. That is, while he stressed the powerful physical and intellectual qualities of the European race in general, and the Aryan race in particular, he doubted whether in the long run the 'white race' could maintain itself in either Australia or North America without constant immigration.²²

Although Knox remarked in his thesis that in 1846 he had the great question of race wholly to himself, such testimony betrays a restricted circle of acquaintance, for in the United States, J.C. Nott, an Alabama physician, and George R. Gliddon, a popular lecturer in ancient Egyptian culture, were campaigning vigorously for the doctrine of the original distinctiveness of the human races. While the first American formulations of racial typology were advanced rather tentatively by Samuel George Morton in his 'Crania Americana', published in 1839²⁴, in many respects it was Nott and Gliddon's substantial publication of 1854 which constituted the most significant statement on the subject, elaborating on many of the conclusions drawn by their predecessors. Assisted by the influential Swiss-American naturalist, Louis Agassiz, Nott and Gliddon advocated a theory of 'divine polygenesis' in which God had originally created the diversity of human species which was all too obvious in the United States. As Nott, the author of the anthropological chapters pointed out, "because no reason has yet been assigned why, if

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²² It could however exterminate the native races in those countries whilst in Africa and India exploit the labour of its allegedly inferior types.

²⁵ Nott, J.C. and G.R. Gliddon. 1854.

²¹ This focus upon the assumed superiority of the Caucasian race was to find its most violent expression in the archaeological treatises which emerged under the sponsorship of the National Socialist regime in Germany during the inter-war years. Cf. Chapter Two.

²³ Though the diverse population of the United States, with its Indians, Negroes and varied assortment of Europeans tended, as William Stanton observes 'to make every citizen, if not an ethnologist, at least a speculator on matters of race', the new doctrine was opposed from the outset by the conviction that the book of Genesis proved the original unity of mankind. Any suggestion that racial differences might be permanent was attacked as betraying the infidelity of the author.

²⁴ In this book which, in its racial classification, relies on the fivefold division of humankind established by

²⁴ In this book which, in its racial classification, relies on the fivefold division of humankind established by Blumenbach, Morton begins with the claim, 'From remote ages the inhabitants of every extended locality have been marked by certain physical and moral peculiarities, common among themselves, and serving to distinguish them from all other people.' Morton, S.G. 1839:1.

two original pairs of human beings be admitted, we should not accept an infinite number."²⁶ Though their thesis concludes with a series of twelve propositions, many of which echo and confirm the growing assumptions of their audience, one important proposition is missing from that list, for like Knox, the authors make very clear their belief in the inequality of the races.²⁷ Nevertheless, while to the "higher castes of what are termed Caucasian races" has been assigned the "mission of extending and perfecting climes, regardless of difficulties"²⁸ in a later publication Nott was to take up the issue of whether or not a 'race' could become habituated to a climate which "nature had never intended for him."²⁹ While this was obviously a matter of considerable importance for Europeans settling in 'The New World', Nott's conclusions, though similar in many respects, were far more restrained than those of Knox.

In contrast to the anthropological approach, the ethnological tradition, within which the concept of race was also important, placed its emphasis on comparative linguistics (philology) and national genealogy, an approach which was reinforced by the Romantic movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³⁰ Adopting a far less virulent attitude towards the question of race, if not race relations, ethnologists considered linguistic, as opposed to physical-biological characteristics to be a more predictable, and reliable indicator of man's diversity – a view which was echoed some years later by the archaeologist Gordon Childe.³¹ While in support of this view advocates of the ethnological tradition emphasized the essential fluidity of racial categories over

²⁶ Ibid. 1854:80.

²⁷ Despite their alleged proof that Negroes were inferior to Whites, Nott and Gliddon's ideas were not popular in the slave owning southeastern United States as their attacks on biblical authority were considered an offence to the religious sensibilities of that region. Stanton, W. 1960:161-173

²⁸ Nott, J.C. and G.R. Gliddon, 1854:68.

²⁹ Nott, J.C. 1857:400.

³⁰ On the cultural impact of the 'Romantic Movement' see, Hampson, N. 1982:239-250, Bowler, P.J. 1989, Beiser, F.C. 1992, Trigger, B. 1998:45-59.

³¹ In 'The Aryans' Childe argued that the Indo-Europeans did not succeed because they possessed a material culture, or natural intelligence which was superior to other people, but rather that they benefited from a superior *language* and the more competent mentality it made possible. Though Childe was more successful than most in avoiding the racism which permeated the social sciences at that period, he did bow to prevailing sentiments in suggesting that it was the 'superiority in physique' of the Nordic peoples which made them the appropriate initial bearers of this superior language. Cf. Childe, V.G. 1926:211. On the use of linguistic similarities to trace historical relationships between different races see, Poliakov, L. 1974.

time, arguing that they had diverged as a result of different environmental conditions,³² philological studies suggested an underlying unity linking all Aryan languages, such as Teutonic and Celtic – a unity widely held to uphold the monogenetic theory that all human groups possessed a common origin.³³

While the forms of classification, and explanation which characterized the emergent disciplines of physical anthropology and ethnology during the earlier part of the nineteenth century were structured by a tension between monogenetic and polygenetic theories of human origin, the basis of this debate was essentially dismantled during the 1860s and 1870s following the impact of Darwinian evolutionary theory, coupled with palaeontological evidence for the deep antiquity of humanity.

In 1859, Charles Darwin published the first edition of 'On the Origin of the Species', 34. Though he carefully avoided any discussion of human origins, the inescapable implications of his work, that human beings, rather than being created, had 'evolved' from some ape-like primate, made the antiquity and physical attributes of prehistoric human beings and their predecessors, a burning issue which had to be studied empirically. While the more religious regarded Darwin's suggestion that human nature had slowly evolved from that of an ape-like ancestor as encouraging a dangerous loss of reverence for what was distinctive about human beings, the slow rate of change which his concept of biological evolution postulated simply did not fit within the six thousand years officially established as the age of the earth in the early 1600s. What a Darwinian account of human origins required was that our savage ancestors, though biologically and culturally primitive, had been recognizably human for a long period of time.

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³²On the issue of 'environmental determinism see, Stocking, G.W. 1987:51. Hogden, M.T. 1964.

³³ The claim that the Aryan race had already been civilized before it 'split up' into the discrete, recognisable peoples of classical and modern Europe was compatible with the Christian understanding of present human diversity as emerging from the unity of blood and culture which are outlined in Genesis.

³⁴ Darwin, C. 1859.

³⁵Very much in line with Medieval Christian views of the past, the world was thought to be of recent, supernatural origin, and unlikely to be more than a few thousand years old. Rabbinical authorities estimated that it had been created about 3700 BCE, while Pope Clement VIII dated the 'creation' to 5199BCE. Indeed as late as the seventeenth century Archbishop James Ussher was to set that date at 4004 BCE. Cf. Harris, M. 1968:86. Slotkin, J.S. 1965:36-37.

While throughout the nineteenth century there were occasional reports of human artifacts being found in geological deposits so old they contained the fossilized bones of animals long extinct, the majority of scholars still preferred to believe there could be *no* link between the geological and human timescales.³⁶ Indeed it was an article of faith to suppose that the human race only appeared after the earth was given its modern form in the last geological catastrophe – Noah's flood.³⁷ As such, reports of apparently ancient human remains, which would entail the extension of human antiquity beyond the traditional timescale of history, were dismissed as the result of deliberate burial, or, if found in caves, of the natural mixing of geological deposits.³⁸ What the resolution of such controversies concerning the antiquity of humanity required was an improved understanding of the geological record.

The revolution which broke down the barriers against the acceptance of deep human antiquity began in 1858 when two reputable geologists, William Pengelly and Hugh Falconer conducted carefully controlled excavations at Brixham cave near Torquay in Southern England.³⁹ There, chipped stone tools and the fossilized bones of long extinct animals were found in close proximity beneath a thick layer of stalagmatic drip, the slow formation of which suggested that the material which lay underneath must be older than the traditional date for the creation of the world, reckoned at 4004BCE by Archbishop James Ussher. The following year, a group of British archaeologists and geologists led by John Evans examined Jacques Boucher de Perthes' and Marcel-Jerome Rigollet's discoveries of stone hand axes and extinct animal bones deep in the stratigraphic gravel levels of the Somme Valley. By employing the principles of the new 'uniformitarian'

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³⁶For example, when a flint hand-axe was found near the skeleton of what was most probably a mammoth beneath a street in London towards the end of the seventeenth century, the antiquary John Bagford interpreted the find as that of a war elephant brought to Britain by the Roman emperor Claudius in A.D. 43 and slain by an ancient Briton armed with a stone tipped spear. Cf. Grayson, D.K. 1983:7-8.

³⁷ Ibid: 1983:69.

³⁸ Ibid: 1983:107

³⁹ Though similar excavations had been carried out by the Reverend John Macenery at Kent's Cavern in England his excavation techniques were not sufficiently developed to establish the contemporaneity of the human material he discovered alongside extinct animal species.

geology⁴⁰ they were able to demonstrate not only that these deposits had been formed many thousands of years previously, but that the human race was of a much deeper antiquity than had previously been supposed. The following years witnessed the publication of numerous papers which supported the view that human toolmakers had coexisted with now extinct animals, at a time which was far removed from the present in terms of calendar years. Indeed, this new view of the antiquity of human beings won what amounted to official approval when perhaps the greatest geologist of the period, Charles Lyell, accepted it in his widely read 'The Geological Evidences for the Antiquity of Man'. At 2

Although Lyell's 'gradualism'⁴³, the central feature of the uniformitarian geology, represented a serious challenge to the centrality of biblical orthodoxy which, in part he attributed to the catastrophists' attempt to retain a pivotal position for Noah's flood in shaping the earths surface,⁴⁴ he had no intention of using the concept of socio-evolution as a model for the earth's history. Rather, he set out to replace the catastrophists' developmental view of the earth's past with a purely 'steady state' model in which all change was cyclic, or non-directional. While this steady state view of the earth's past met

⁴⁰ Though generally ascribed to Charles Lyell, it was the Edinburgh physician James Hutton who first proposed what came to be known as the 'uniformitarian' view of geological history which argued that all geological strata could be accounted for in terms of the forces currently at work operating over very long periods of time. As such we should abandon all hope of trying to discover the remains of a 'primitive' period when the earth was affected by 'causes' no longer in operation. As far as scientific geology is concerned, the earth has always been more or less the same, because the constructive forces of elevation which create mountains and continents are exactly balanced by the destructive forces of erosion. This perfect adjustment allows the earth to maintain itself indefinitely as a suitable habitat for living creatures, thus demonstrating the perfect workmanship of the Creator.

⁴¹ Cf. Chorley, R.J., A.J. Dunn and R.P. Beckinsale 1964:447-449. Grayson, D.K. 1983:179-190.

⁴² Lyell, C. 1863. Though modern geologists hail Lyell as one of their heroes, this adulation rests on an interpretation of his work which picks out only those aspects which seem to anticipate modern ideas. For a recent account of how historians have begun to challenge the orthodox view of Lyell as 'a champion of the scientific method' see, Gould, S.J. 1987.

⁴³ 'Gradualism' in this respect refers to Lyell's insistence that the changes which had occurred in the earth's structure can be explained without recourse to any single catastrophe such as that posited by Noah's flood. The earth, he argued is in a gradual state of development, rather than one which involved sudden and dramatic change.

⁴⁴ It is a popular misconception that the 'catastrophist' geologists of the early nineteenth century still wanted to defend a literal interpretation of the Genesis story of creation and deluge. To be sure most thought that the earth's development had been punctuated by a series of violent catastrophes – but at most, only the last of these events could be associated with the biblical deluge. Under the influence of Lyell however, even this claim was abandoned, and the scale of hypothetical catastrophes gradually reduced.

with considerable resistance, if not ridicule, 45 there was considerable support for his efforts to explain the past in natural terms, most notably from Charles Darwin, perhaps Lyell's greatest disciple. 46 Indeed, Darwin's greatest achievement was to extend Lyell's appeal for explanations based on observable causes into the one area which Lyell himself had excluded from the system – changes in the organic world. It was thus on his world wide voyage of discovery aboard HMS Beagle that Darwin, a recent convert to Lyell's gradualism, saw within the realms of the new geology, the possibility of a similarly naturalistic explanation of organic change. Together these developments served not only to establish the essential unity of the human species, but further stimulated a tradition of socio-evolutionary thought which had begun to mature in the 1850s.

⁴⁶ However, even Darwin accepted that the fossil record confirmed the sequential appearance of new types, a position Lyell would not condone.

⁴⁵ Although Lyell certainly believed it was possible to reconstruct what had happened in the more recent periods of the earth's past on the basis of the fossil record, he insisted that we should not expect that record to reveal an irreversible process of historical development. Yet, while he was in fact able to demonstrate that this record did not support a simple, linear scheme of progress since a small number of mammal fossils had been found alongside dinosaurs in the heart of the so-called 'Age of Reptiles', his contention that the 'minor fluctuations' in the earth's climate which had created an environment more favourable to reptiles than mammals may be recreated in some future cycle was widely derided. See Gould, S.J. 1987.

SOCIAL EVOLUTION AND RACE

Although the systematic emergence of evolutionary theories of human society began, in essence with the Enlightenment, especially with the works of Millar and Ferguson, the heyday of evolutionary thought - its golden age - came in the second half of the nineteenth century. 47 Indeed, after 1850 evolutionary theories of social life came to dominate the social sciences with scholars such as Spencer, Morgan, Tylor, Lubbock and numerous others advancing often multi-volumed tomes within which they set forth their elaborate evolutionary doctrines. 48 In contrast to the existing racial classifications of human diversity however, which resulted in historical, or abstract hierarchical classifications of physical types, socio-cultural evolutionism involved the classification of certain 'cultural stages' within a developmental and evolutionary framework. Furthermore, in contrast to the preceding ethnological tradition, the socio-cultural evolutionists were no longer primarily concerned with tracing the history of particular races or nations, but rather with the classification of the universal stage, or condition of development such races were assumed to represent.⁴⁹ The major methodological tool employed in the construction of such evolutionary frameworks was the 'comparative method', a procedure which had been employed to a considerable extent by their eighteenth century predecessors.

The procedure was actually quite a simplistic one, and involves the accumulation and compilation of data about various known cultures that differed markedly amongst themselves, and then arranging these cultures in a manner presumed to represent an

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⁴⁷ Sanderson, S.K. 1990:2. Apart from attempting a systematic survey of the historical ebb and flow of evolutionary theories in the social sciences from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present, Sanderson's volume is also concerned with eradicating the confusion which has arisen from the failure to distinguish between *evolutionist* and *evolutionary* perspectives. Following the work of S. Toulmin, Sanderson defines *evolutionist formulations* as those that account for long term societal changes 'in some mysterious way' as the 'conclusions' of a Cosmic argument, which unfolds 'logical implications' operative throughout the 'Whole History of Society'. *Evolutionary formulations* on the other hand are those which, like Darwin's account of biological evolution, attempt to explain changes as responses to the particular requirements imbedded in specific historical situations.

⁴⁸Cf. Sanderson, S.K. 1990: 12-37. Trigger, B.G. 1998: 55-95. Stocking, G.W. 1987.

⁴⁹ The development of a unilinear evolutionary framework did not however result in a complete disjunction with the particularist historical approach of the earlier ethnological tradition. Indeed a complex interplay between these two approaches is evident in the work of both John Lubbock and E.B. Tylor, two prominent socio-cultural evolutionists. For a further discussion see Stocking, G.W. 1987:152-162.

actual historical sequence – a sequence through which such cultures could be said to have passed. In other words, contemporary cultures of a certain type were presumed to closely resemble historical cultures as they would have looked in their own time. Arranging known cultures in a particular manner then, according to certain specified criteria, not only allowed one to infer historical change, but to assume that the synchronic data represented an actual historical sequence. While in this respect the socio-cultural evolutionists' view of *culture* as a universal process of development is closely related to the concept of '*civilization*' which can be traced back to the eighteenth century, where the nineteenth century evolutionists differed most significantly from the universalizing framework so central to the Enlightenment philosophers was in their racism.

While 'race' may have constituted a subsidiary position within a discipline which has been defined as "the science which deals with the cultures of human groups and is not primarily concerned with races as biological divisions of Homo Sapiens" this did not result in the total abandonment of racial concepts. Rather, the establishment of an evolutionary framework led to the reconfiguration of existing racial categories within a spatial and temporal hierarchy of progress, often explained in terms of the evolutionary notions of 'competition', 'natural selection', and 'survival of the fittest'. While Tylor's commitment to a general evolutionary perspective betrays evidence of a hierarchy of races arranged in accordance with their relative degrees of intellectual development⁵², other evolutionists went further, utilizing Lamarckian ideas about the inheritance of

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⁵⁰ Although Sanderson argues that the classical evolutionists such as Tylor did not ignore archaeological evidence, using it whenever possible, no systematic effort was made to correlate specific tool types with ethnographic cultures so that those tool types could in turn be used to draw detailed and controlled comparisons between ethnographic and archaeological assemblages. Rather, as long as archaeological data could reveal the level of development that a particular culture had attained, ethnographic data concerning modern societies at the same stage were capable of supplying all that needed to be known about the nature of life associated with that culture. As such, comparisons between archaeological assemblages and ethnographic cultures remained impressionistic. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:145-147.

⁵¹ Lowie, R.H. 1937:3.

⁵² Though Leslie White has chosen to view Tylor as proposing a basically technological interpretation for the causes of social evolution, most scholars have opted for an 'idealist' interpretation of Tylor's evolutionism, suggesting that his work was dominated by intellectual development, particularly the development of increasingly rational thought, as the key to social evolution. If for Marx and Engels humans were basically toolmakers and productive manipulators of their environments, for Tylor they were essentially philosophers, thinking their way towards increasingly rational thought. Cf. Voget, F.W. 1975:289.

acquired characteristics to develop bio-social theories of race within an evolutionary framework.

Although the classical theories of social evolution happened to coincide historically with the rise to prominence of Darwinian bio-evolutionary theory, the specific nature of this relationship has been the subject of much discussion.⁵³ For while Darwin's estimations of biological development gave an unprecedented measure of scientific credibility to evolutionary perspectives on cultural development⁵⁴, in many respects it was the philosopher Herbert Spencer who converted Victorian society to evolutionism.⁵⁵ Indeed, prior to Darwin's eventual publication of his ideas in 'Origin', Spencer had already formulated a unified evolutionary theory within which the Lamarckian mechanism of 'acquired cultural characteristics' allowed individual effort to be portrayed as the driving force of both 'organic progression', and the historical development of society. 56 Although he recognized that such acquired characteristics were transmitted differently in the socio-cultural as opposed to the biological realm, in both cases the efforts of 'individuals' to cope with the difficulties of their environment pushed that 'population' further up the scale of biological and/or social complexity. He was, therefore, advocating a similar view with respect to both biological and social evolution, one based upon the assumption that the inherited effects of an organism's efforts to better itself resulted in

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⁵³ While the conventional interpretation of the Darwinian Revolution holds that there was no serious support for evolution in Britain before the publication of Darwin's '*Origin of the Species*' such an interpretation conceals a substantial tradition of radical evolutionism which flourished throughout the early nineteenth century. On the particular nature of this relationship see in particular, Bowler, P.J. 1989:129-168.

⁵⁴ The Origin of the Species played a crucial role not because it convinced everyone of the power of natural election, but because it catalysed a transition to evolutionism within a still largely developmental worldview. The more radical aspects of Darwin's thought however lay hidden until revitalized by the synthesis with genetics in the early twentieth century. Cf. Bowler, P.J. 1989:132-136.
⁵⁵ Cf. Spencer, H. 1851. 1861. 1883.

⁵⁶Although Spencer had already established his key evolutionary doctrines well before Darwin's ideas eventually appeared in print, Harris goes so far as to suggest that the label 'social Darwinism' is a complete misnomer since in view of the priority of Spencer and the esteem in which Darwin held him, the term 'biological Spencerism' would be a more appropriate label for that period of the history of biological theory in which Darwin's ideas gained their ascendancy. However, in the final analysis, it is not really a claim for the causal influence of Spencer on Darwin which Harris is arguing for, but rather that both Spencer and Darwin's evolutionary theories were largely independent outcomes of the same cultural and intellectual milieu. Cf. Harris, M. 1968:127.

the progressive evolution of increasingly differentiated, and more complex entities. Furthermore, by praising individual enterprise and the unimpeded competition for property and social status as the key factors in bringing about such 'progress', Spencer's particular brand of socio-cultural evolution helped to promote the 'laissez faire' capitalism of Victorian society as the ideal towards which all others should aspire⁵⁷. Similarly in biology, his readers would have been led to assume that there was something special about the evolutionary line leading towards the human race. This line had been first to reach the threshold at which social and mental evolution began to reinforce one another, and hence could be identified (at least in hindsight) as the 'main line' of development.

Yet whilst socio-cultural evolution and Lamarckian mechanisms of change allowed for considerable fluidity in racial categories over time, as did the long standing traditions of philology and national genealogy⁵⁸, a more rigid conception of race, that is, the explanation of cultural diversity and inequality on the basis of physical, biological diversity, also persisted, and became even more entrenched within the Social Darwinist milieu of the later nineteenth century.

While such explanations of behavioural differences were certainly not new, with the alleged inferiority of blacks being used to justify the slave trade during the eighteenth century, the advent of Darwinian evolution infused this belief in racial inequality with a large degree of scientific authority.⁵⁹ Yet while Darwin's view of natural selection offered a more convincing explanation of how biological inequalities had developed

⁵⁷ Instead of concentrating on the British constitution as a vehicle for promoting liberalism, Spencer argued that all societies were governed by a law of progress in which the economic pressures of feeding an expanding population encourages the trend towards 'free enterprise'. The gradual elimination of state control then is essential if all members of the population are to experience the full rigour of economic necessity needed to stimulate their initiative and force them to participate in economic development. See Bowler, P.J. 1989.

⁵⁸ For example see, Beddoe, J.W. 1885. Fleure, H.J. 1922.

⁵⁹ Like the majority of his contemporaries, Darwin saw European civilization and the White race as the highest products of social and mental evolution, and dismissed 'lower' races as branches of the human species which had not advanced so far up the scale of development.

among human groups than polygenism had done⁶⁰, his model of evolution as an 'ever branching tree' proved very difficult for the Victorians to accommodate within their 'progressionist' world view⁶¹. Indeed, there can be little doubt that Darwin realized how radical the implications of his theory would be, and how difficult it would be for his contemporaries to accept the incorporation of mankind into a vision of the universe which had no meaning, and no purpose. Thus, in the course of the 1840s and 1850s, as he gradually refined the scientific basis of his theory, Darwin sought metaphors which would not only encourage his readers to believe that a moral purpose lay behind the apparently blind activities of nature, but that natural selection was, at least indirectly, a mechanism of progress leading towards humankind, and ultimately towards European civilization. That he accomplished this task can be seen most clearly in the conclusion of his popular account of that theory –

"Thus from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having been originally breathed [in later editions he added by the creator] into a few forms or into one; and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved." 62

If he did not offer a simple ladder of progress, Darwin certainly minimized public anxiety by presenting evolution as the progressive unfolding of a potential which God had originally 'breathed' into life. While 'conservatives' were largely unwilling to accept Darwin's assurances, and dismissed natural selection as a mechanism which left

⁶⁰Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1998: 63-65.

62 Darwin, C. 1859:460.

⁶¹ The central feature of Darwin's new mechanism of 'natural selection', one based upon observable changes, was that evolution is not directed towards any predetermined goal. The variation within a population is essentially random and is incapable of pushing the species in any particular direction. Selection acts purely by adapting the population to its way of life within the local environment, and if the environment changes, the direction of evolution will change. In this kind of theory there can be no 'goal' towards which evolution is striving, and 'progress' will become at best an irregular by-product of the endless pressure to 'adapt'. Cf. Bowler, P.J. 1989:149ff.

evolution at the mercy of chance, the impulses generated by the 'Origin' travelled down many channels, catalyzing a transition to evolutionism within a still largely developmental world view. Thus, while those aspects of Darwin's thought most highly regarded by modern biologists were largely ignored, 'Darwinism' was, nevertheless, absorbed into the liberal progressionist view of things, providing the perfect natural foundation for the theory of social progress towards industrialization and the Whig interpretation of history.⁶³

While in the course of its development the 'Darwinian' approach profited from, and adapted to, both the economic theories of Adam Smith, and the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, it was John Lubbock, later Lord Avebury, who produced the most comprehensive syntheses of these new developments in his 'Prehistoric Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages', a hugely successful work which passed through several editions between 1865 and 1913.⁶⁴ While his overall view of cultural evolution as that of a 'ladder' up which different people had climbed was inherently different from the 'dendretic pattern of speciation' which characterized Darwin's biological theory, what was distinctly 'Darwinian' was Lubbock's insistence that, as a result of natural selection, human groups had become different from each other biologically, as well as culturally, and that these biological differences directly influenced the capacity of these groups to utilize culture. As the product of intensive biological and cultural evolution then, modern Europeans had been equipped with a level of intelligence and emotional control which was superior to that of all other peoples. This made Europeans more innovative, more adaptable, and hence better equipped to manage an advanced technology. Technologically less advanced

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⁶³ As Bowler has noted, in a sense Darwin's 'public relations exercise proved too successful. For while it may have provided nineteenth century thinkers with a highly valued, albeit erroneous, sense of there being a preordained order and purpose to human history, it also provided a needed reassurance that the disruptions, exploitation, disease and suffering bought about by the industrial Revolution, however horrible, served a higher purpose. Factory owners and investors were not simply exploiting the working classes and indigenous peoples for their own financial profit, but were striving to create a better world for future generations of humanity. In this sense 'Darwinism' triumphed only because the open-ended, undirected character of evolution in his original theory was either ignored, or deliberately misrepresented. Bowler, P.J. 1989:152-154. Cf. Burrow, 1966. Trigger, B.G. 1998:59-63.

⁶⁴ Lubbock, J. 1865. See also, Lubbock, J., 1870, where his ideas on socio-cultural evolution are presented in a more extreme form.

peoples on the other hand were not only culturally but also morally, intellectually and emotionally more primitive than were civilized ones.

While prior to this time, a primitive culture was thought to reflect a relative lack of knowledge, or at least a temporary and reversible environmental limitation on the physical constitution of different human groups, within the context of Lubbock's work, primitive cultures were interpreted as a measure of the unalterable biological inferiority of that group. It was a difference which, in the long run, doomed them to destruction.

To reinforce this evolutionary perspective, and make it more credible, Lubbock selectively mined the existing corpus of ethnographic data in an effort to portray the simplest living societies as bestial and intellectually deficient as possible in comparison with modern Europeans⁶⁵. Furthermore, by assuming that these poor, wretched and depraved peoples, who regularly abused their children and performed human sacrifice, personified the various stages through which Europeans had progressed in prehistoric times, he sought to convince his readers how much progress Europeans had made, even prior to the earliest historic records. 66 By combining archaeology and anthropology then, Lubbock sought to present an image of initial human bestiality which directly challenged the biblical concept of 'degeneration' from an original state of grace. While at the 1868 meeting of the British Association he successfully employed archaeological evidence against Archbishop Whately's assertion that the earliest humans had received the 'gift of civilization' from the creator, he encountered a more formidable opponent in the Duke of Argyll⁶⁷. Though merely an amateur naturalist, Argyll made the point that the archaeological record could prove only technological, not moral progress, as Lubbock insisted. The evolutionist he argued, simply assumed that the makers of primitive stone

⁶⁵ While on the whole, this corpus of ethnographic data, consisting mainly of descriptions of non-Western peoples by missionaries and travellers, presented a rather negative image of simpler societies, in creating his own descriptions of 'our savage ancestors' Lubbock tended to ignore any positive observations. In this manner Lubbock sought to establish the vast moral, biological and intellectual gulf which separated modern aboriginal peoples from Europeans.

⁶⁶ By presenting socio-cultural evolution as an indefinate phenomenon which would be characterized not merely by greater technological and moral improvement, but by increased human comfort and happiness, Lubbock sought to counter Romantic followers of Jean-Jacques Rousseau who questioned whether the development of civilization had led to an increase in human happiness.

⁶⁷ See Gillespie, N.C *ISIS* 68 1977:40-54.

tools had the moral characters of the most degraded of modern savages; but that there was *no necessary link* between the invention of better tools and moral development. Nevertheless, while Argyll's argument illustrated well the extent to which evolutionary anthropology rested upon an assumption about the integral nature of economic and moral development⁶⁸, his position became increasingly isolated as evolutionism became the dominant metaphor of late-nineteenth century thought.

Under the influence of Darwinian biological theory then, socio-cultural progress no longer represented the gradual realization of a fixed human potential, rather, surviving primitive peoples were barred by their biological inferiority from participating fully, and sometimes at all, in further cultural evolution since no amount of education could compensate for the thousands of years when natural selection failed to adapt them biologically for more complex and 'orderly' ways of life⁶⁹. Nor was their 'replacement' by more innovative, intelligent and adaptable peoples to be seriously regretted, except that it involved the liquidation of 'living examples' of what modern Europeans and other 'civilized' peoples had been like in the remote past. Lubbock further maintained that as a result of the differential operation of natural selection amongst Europeans, women, the 'criminally inclined' and lower classes were biologically, and hence, intellectually and morally inferior to the fitter middle classes, a theory which formed the cornerstone of Francis Galt's 'eugenics movement'⁷⁰. Though the belief that as a result of heightened social competition in modern times the biologically and hence intellectually most 'fit' had risen to the top of society was certainly based upon a misunderstanding, if not perversion of the mechanisms of biological inheritance, Lubbock and other 'Social

⁶⁸ Indeed, in some respects Argyll's argument seems to anticipate the twentieth century fear that humankind is not mature enough to deal with its ever expanding military technology.

⁶⁹ Even Charles Darwin who had previously claimed to believe that 'excepting fools, men did not differ much in intellect, only in zeal and hard work' professed to have been led to view intelligence as far more innate and biologically determined as a result of his Lubbock's research. Desmond and Moore 1992:572.

To It was Galton who in his 'Hereditary Genius: An Enquiry into Laws and Consequences' of 1869 expounded the idea that mental as well as physical characteristics were inherited. In an attempt to improve the physical and mental condition of the human species then Galton sought to introduce a programme of 'selective parenthood' in which those judged to be feeble minded, insane or suffering from severe and inheritable physical disabilities were to be sterilized. Though it is difficult to determine how far such doctrines were accepted by the working classes, eugenics did offer a means not only of coercing the 'lower orders' but of reassuring the dominant middle classes that their privileged position in the scheme of things was natural rather than accidental. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1998:58-70.

Darwinists' used this ignorance to construct a single theory that purported to account for both social inequality in Western societies and the assumed superiority of Europeans over all other peoples. Thus, whether dealing with issues of class, or criminality, in western society, or with native peoples caught up in the expanding European 'world system', Social Darwinism transferred responsibility for human inequality from the political to the natural realm by attributing it to biological differences which could be altered only very slowly, if at all!

Throughout the nineteenth century then, the concept of 'race', albeit in many diverse forms, remained the dominant mode of conceptualizing human groups and their differences, frequently being employed as a synonym for national, cultural, and linguistic groups in much of the literature⁷¹. While in this sense Barth's generalization that traditional modes of classifying peoples in the human sciences can be characterized by the equation, 'race = language = culture', certainly appears to be valid⁷², it must be emphasized that the conflation of 'language' and 'culture' with biological notions of race in the nineteenth century was the combined product of a number of quite different approaches. Principally, these 'approaches' can be branched into four discrete, yet not entirely unrelated 'perspectives': 1. The linguistic notion of race which was central to the 'ethnological' and comparative philological traditions. 2. The racial determinism of the physical 'anthropological' tradition which assumed a direct, fixed correlation between physical form and structure. 3. The widespread adoption of the Lamarkian proposal that acquired cultural characteristics could become inherited, which served to reinforce a vague correlation of race with national, cultural and linguistic groups. 4. The Social Darwinist conception of a parallel relationship between cultural and physical evolution.

Although such theoretical approaches, outlined in this chapter, did contribute to a dissolution of the boundaries between physical and cultural diversity in the classification of peoples, the role of racial classifications in broader social and political contexts provides some indication as to why the concept of race was so powerful, and why it

71

⁷¹ Huxley, J.S. and A.C. Haddon, 1935:20.

⁷² Barth, F. 1968:13.

became so entrenched towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

While modes of racial classification and explanation penetrated many aspects of social life, and were widely used to mediate, and justify colonial policies, making them appear less as a political act then a reflection of the innate natural superiority of Europeans, they were also implicated in efforts to counteract the growing threat of class warfare within Europe.⁷³ In their efforts to counteract the growing political threat of Marxism which sought to enhance the international solidarity of the working class⁷⁴, leading intellectuals placed increasing emphasis on biological factors as determinants of human behaviour. As such, the Marxist call for the 'workers of the world to unite' was countered by claims that English, French and German workers could never understand each other's behaviour, let alone agree on common policies, since their allegedly distinctive behaviour was determined not so much by current economic, political or cultural factors, but by ancient and immutable racial differences. Furthermore, as economic and political conflicts within nation states grew more acute, and competition between them increased, there was a growing appeal to nationalism as a basis for maintaining unity.⁷⁵ This served to strengthen the belief that much of what was different between one nationality and another was biologically determined and could not be fundamentally altered as a result of political or economic change. In fact, when coupled with an increased disillusionment with the value of technological progress, such beliefs promoted an increased sense of skepticism about the nature of human creativity. Social analysts began to maintain that change was contrary to human nature, and psychologically harmful to human beings. ⁷⁶

⁷³Cf. Biddiss, M.D. ed. 1979:11-35. Gossett, T.F. 1975. Stocking, G.W. 1987. Trigger, B.G. 1998:55-82.

⁷⁴ Because they were anxious to bring about major social and political changes, Marxists continued to adhere to Enlightenment philosophy in stressing the flexibility of human behaviour and the ability of humans to use reason to bring about changes that were in their personal, economic and political interest, and that of a society as a whole. Since the ruling middle-classes were unwilling to relinquish their privileged positions voluntarily, Marxists maintained that the working classes would have to unite and seize power by 'revolutionary' means.

⁷⁵ Unlike Marxism however this was a broadly based and apparently spontaneous intellectual reaction

Unlike Marxism however this was a broadly based and apparently spontaneous intellectual reaction which had no obvious founder or intellectual leader.

⁷⁶ The sociologist Emile Durkheim argued that a healthy society was one characterized by social solidarity, and that societies experiencing rapid social change, such as his own, produced feelings of anomie and alienation. Yet he also believed that, as societies grew more complex, they ceased to be held together by mechanical solidarity, or shared beliefs, and were integrated to an even greater degree by organic solidarity,

The belief that a static condition was best suited to most, if not all, human beings was congenial to scholars who were anxious to resist change in their own societies. It was a thesis which, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, actively discouraged belief in the likelihood of parallel cultural development, that is that particular inventions were likely to be made more than once in human history, and hence a growing reliance on the explanatory mechanisms of migration and/or diffusion to elucidate cultural change⁷⁷. While many of the ingredients necessary for the production of such a doctrine were present in the Romantic idea that race and nation naturally coincided with one another and that the state should represent a homogenous racial-cum-national unit, the belief that the members of each state were distinguished by immutable biological differences which imposed a limit on socio-cultural development resulted in some decidedly exclusivist forms of nationalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Yet, while the role that nineteenth century ideas about race played in the construction of instrumental social categories was undoubtedly a significant force in the development and perpetuation of the concept as a means of classifying, and explaining the variability of peoples, the ambiguity of the relationship between ideas about race and specific political arguments suggests that the persistence of race as a taxonomic category and mode of explanation cannot be interpreted simplistically in terms of the legitimation of political aims⁷⁸. Nevertheless, as future chapters will attempt to demonstrate, the interrelationships between the category of race and broader nationalist and imperialist

which was the result of growing economic interdependence. Indeed Durkheim valued this form of social cohesion as it freed individuals from the tyranny of custom and tradition. Durkheim, E. 1893, 1895. For an insightful review of some of the central tenets of Durkheim's sociology particularly as they have been utilized within biblical studies see Mayes, A.D.H. 1989:87-142.

⁷⁷ Indeed, Harris has observed that diffusionists were generally far more dogmatic in dismissing the possibility that the same invention had been made twice than evolutionists were in denying the importance of diffusion. Harris, M. 1968:174. See also Sanderson, S.K. 1990:36-47.

⁷⁸ The relationship between political doctrines and particular forms of racial classification and explanation was complex. For example, while in the nineteenth century monogenists argued both for and against the institution of slavery, rigid racial typologies and associated notions of racial determinism were also used to justify the worst of colonial exploitation whilst at the same time used to support the need for western philanthropy. See Gossett, T.F. 'Race: The History of an Idea in America' 1975:61-64.

discourses have, in part, set the agenda for subsequent modes of human classification. However in spite, or perhaps because of, the social and ideological purposes which the concept of race served, there inevitably emerged a reaction against the concept itself, and a concerted attempt to separate the analysis of cultural and biological diversity in the human sciences.

HUMAN EVOLUTION AND THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE(S)

During the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century, a concern with the study of 'culture', and 'society' as distinct from a focus on the physical, so called 'racial divisions' of the human species resulted in a shift away from the all encompassing notion of race, and the reorientation of social thought around the concept of 'culture'. While this translation drew upon a long tradition of ideas about 'custom' and 'civilization', it was the codification of the concept of 'culture' by anthropologists such as Edward Burnett Tylor and Franz Boas, coupled with the institutionalization of the disciplines of social anthropology and sociology which provided the basis for this shift in emphasis.

Indeed, the central concept of Tylor's thesis was that of 'culture,' which he presented in a formulation which has exercised vast influence since it was first forwarded in his best known work, 'Primitive Culture' in 1871. Therein Tylor declares that 'culture' is " that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of a society." Although such a definition could be utilized in the analysis of a plurality of discrete cultural entities, it is clear that Tylor's presentation is, as was customary in his day, mainly evolutionistic. Indeed in his widely read textbook of anthropology, this commitment to a general evolutionary perspective is made explicit when he proclaims. "On the whole it appears that wherever there are found elaborate arts, abstruse knowledge, complex institutions, these are the results of gradual development from an earlier, simpler, and ruder state of life. No stage of civilization comes into existence spontaneously, but grows or is developed out of the stage which came before it. This is the great principle which every scholar must lay hold of if he intends to understand either the world he lives in or the history of the past."

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⁷⁹ Narroll, R. and F. Narroll eds. 1973:25-56.

⁸⁰ Tylor, E.B. 1871:1.

⁸¹ Tylor, E.B. 1871:20. Carneiro however has argued that 'Tylor showed himself to be a good deal more of a culture historian than an evolutionist. His concern was largely with tracing the history of myths, customs, games, rituals, artifacts and the like rather than laying bare the general processes or stages in the evolution of culture as a whole.' Carneiro, R. 1973a 61.

Because he held to the basic Darwinian premise then that historical processes did not make any sudden great leap, but rather operated in a slow continuous manner, Tylor, along with Morgan and Spencer maintained that present institutions could only be understood from the study of past ones. Indeed he was determined to set this study on a scientific footing, demonstrating that the comparative method would convince those in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology to admit that the problems of anthropology are indeed amenable to scientific treatment. Through proper and consistent observation and comparison of information from around the globe then it would be possible to show that, "the institutions of man are as distinctively stratified as the earth on which he lives. They succeed each other in series substantially uniform over the globe...shaped by similar human nature acting through successively changed conditions in savage, barbaric and civilized life."82 The key for Tylor in demonstrating this succession of 'evolutionary sequences' lay in his employment of the concept of survivals. These he identified, by means of an historical approach, as aspects of older systems of thought which had been carried by the force of custom into stages of social development beyond that in which they originated. 83 Despite a high regard for the importance of 'materialist' conditions in social evolution however, Tylor remained a fervent embracer of the Enlightenment's idealist heritage and his work is dominated by the question of intellectual development – particularly the development of increasingly rational thought which he approached through the specific realm of religion.84

For Tylor, the earliest form of religion was that of animism, a belief in spiritual beings which had been arrived at by attempts to account for the apparent separation of mind from body experienced in dreams. Though this particular brand of religion had a certain rationality about it given the conditions which primitive peoples faced, the evolution of religion demonstrated an increasingly rational understanding of the world as these 'primitive philosophers' applied their powers of reason to explain those events which

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⁸² Tylor, E.B. 1888:269.

⁸³ On the concept of 'survivals in Tylor's work see Burrow, 1966:253-255.

⁸⁴ Again and again Tylor makes reference to the human mind, to the mental state of savages or of civilized men, and to the intellect: and he does so without making any really countervailing statements which suggest the subordination of intellectual conditions to material advances. Cf. Mandelbaum, 1971.

were beyond their control in the human and natural realms. While the scheme presented here is less elaborate than that developed in Tylor's thesis, in principle the trajectory of his evolution was from a belief in souls and that of spirits, through a polytheistic pantheon of gods, until finally arriving at monotheism. Indeed, in a display of ethnocentrism which now takes one's breath away, Tylor saw both Europe and America as purveyors of the intellectual, if not moral standard, for the rest of the world to reach.

In its overall structure then, Tylor's scheme parallels that of other socio-cultural evolutionists such as Morgan, in that culture, rather than reflecting the patterned ways of life of distinct peoples, refers to a universal process of development measured in terms of cultural stages. Indeed, as Stocking has noted, while the concept of a plurality of 'cultures' had existed since the nineteenth century and is at least implicit in portions of Tylor's work, when he went on to speak of "the civilization of the lower tribes as related to the civilization of the higher nations" it is clear that he meant the *degree*, rather than the *type*, or style of civilization. Furthermore, as Jones points out, the concept of race continued to constitute an important aspect of such socio-evolutionary theories, providing the basic unit of human differentiation, and in many respects, as in Spencer's bio-social theory of development, an explanation of developmental inequality between various peoples. The structure of the socio-evolution of the socio-evolution of development inequality between various peoples.

While Tylor's evolutionary scheme arose at the apogee of Victorian self-confidence, by the 1880s, a growing sense of political and economic insecurity prompted many leading European intellectuals to jettison the thesis of unilinear cultural evolution⁸⁸ and the associated notion of progress in favour of a more pessimistic view of human beings as

⁸⁵ As Kroeber and Kluckhohn have summarized the situation in late nineteenth century anthropology, '...the whole orientation of the evolutionary school, whose productivity began just ten years before 1871 and of which Tylor himself formed part...was towards origins, stages, progress and survivals, and spontaneous or rational operations of the human mind...In short, the assumptions as well as the findings of the 'evolutionists' were schematic and...the men remained uninterested in culture as a concept.' Kroeber, A.L. and C. Kluckhohn, 1952:112.

⁸⁶ Stocking, G.W. 1968:73.

⁸⁷ Jones, S. 1997:40-51.

⁸⁸ As to the question of whether the classical socio-evolutionists were in fact' unilinearists' see the detailed arguments laid out in Sanderson, S.K. 1990:35-39.

naturally conservative and resistant to change⁸⁹. While the belief that a static condition was best suited to most, if not all, human beings resulted in a growing reliance on migration and cultural diffusion as mechanisms of cultural change, it further stimulated an interest in the idiosyncratic features associated with particular 'cultural groups' which has its roots in the Romantic Movement. 90

An emphasis on sensibility and feelings, including those of the most bizarre type, as well as on local cultural traditions gave rise to the Romantic Movement, which was initially centered in the German states as a middle class protest against the domination of French culture amongst the German ruling classes. 'Romanticism' began with the German literary revival of the eighteenth century which took the form of a revolt against the literary and artistic restrictions of neo-classicism in an effort to glorify Germany's ancient and medieval past. 91 While in this respect Romanticism was to become closely linked with Nationalism, it was Johann Gottfried Herder who was to provide this movement with a philosophical basis in the 1770s⁹². Stressing the importance of 'individual cultures' which he viewed as the embodiement of the creative energies of peoples who shared the same language and same patterns of thought in their everyday lives⁹³, Herder argued, contrary to the Enlightenment philosophers, that one 'culture' was not inherently superior, or inferior to another. Rather, each was an expression of humanity's potential to

90 If, in the 1860s the desire of the British middle class to monopolize the political and economic gains they had made induced Lubbock to abandon the concept of psychic unity in favour of a biological explanation of the behaviour of different ethnic groups, the still greater political insecurity of the 1880s led a growing number of intellectuals to jettison the Enlightenment doctrine of progress and regard all human beings as naturally conservative and resistant to change.

⁸⁹ While in the 1850s Industrialism had been held as a source of pride and hope for the future, by the 1880s its negative effects were becoming increasingly evident. As the high unemployment, pollution and international competition it spawned began to escalate out of control, the Industrial Revolution which had once made Britain the 'Workshop of the World' was now seen as the cause of its social chaos, squalor and spiritual depravity. In the political realm, anarchists denounced industrial societies for undermining communitarian values which had been preserved as late as the medieval period. Influenced by such considerations, a younger generation of intellectuals, led by the art critic John Ruskin and the designer William Morris, turned against the idea of 'Progress', romantically preferring what they saw as the comforting religious faith, mutual support and aesthetic values of an earlier age to the selfishness, materialism and ugliness of industrial society. Cf. Bowler, P.J. 1989:40-44. Trigger, B.G. 1998:83-89.

⁹¹ Romantically inclined individuals tended to treat 'primitive' or 'natural' societies and the 'spirit' of European nations as preserved in their monuments and folk traditions, especially those of the medieval period as the ideal inspiration for the arts and letters. Clark, K.M. 1962:66.

²Cf. Barnard, F.M. 1965

⁹³ Hampson, N. 1982:241/248-249.

create many different patterns for living, and as such, could not be dismissed as mere illustrations of 'stages' through which more advanced ones had evolved in the past. Such progress that did occur represented the unfolding of the spiritual potential which was latent in each culture. ⁹⁴ In this vein, true insight into a culture was found by seeking to reconstruct in one's own imagination the spirit that had animated it.

While Herder and the German intellectuals who followed him in embracing the ideals of Romanticism tended to stress the extraordinary cultural diversity of humanity as opposed to those features which all human beings shared as members of a single species⁹⁵, it was not until the late nineteenth century that the concept of culture, in the sense of a *plurality* of historically conditioned distinct cultural wholes, along with the explanatory mechanism of diffusion, was established and popularized in the works of Friedrich Ratzel and Franz Boas.

Whilst the evolutionists tended to stress the evolution of culture as a unitary, pan-human phenomenon, the German ethnographer and geographer, Friedrich Ratzel sought to portray cultural change as essentially, a fortuitous process which comes about as a result of either diffusion, the miscopying of traditional ways of doing things, and chance recombinations of existing ideas. Yet, despite its capriciousness, Ratzel sought to illustrate how diffusion created 'culture areas', that is, blocks of relatively homogenous, organically integrated cultural complexes which were adjacent to each other. To support his thesis, Ratzel sought to demonstrate how, despite their discontinuities and widely separated occurrences, material items such as the blowpipe, and the bow and arrow, found in both the Americas and South-East Asia, were derived from a single source. Contra the evolutionary thesis of parallel cultural development then, Ratzel cautioned ethnologists against believing that even the simplest, or most generic innovation was likely to have been made more than once, let alone repeatedly. This was a thesis which

⁹⁴ Bowler, P.J. 1989:70.

⁹⁵ In keeping with this view, the emerging German anthropological tradition was to emphasize the idiosyncratic and unpredictable nature of change, while the evolutionary approach, derived from the Enlightenment, would stress cross-cultural similarities and parallelisms in cultural development. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1998:44-50.

received considerable elaboration in the 'hyper-diffusionary' work of Grafton Elliot Smith. Noting that the technique of embalming had been widely practiced in the ancient world, Smith, unable to detect an evolutionary pattern, proposed not only that it had been invented in Egypt where it had attained its most highly developed form, but that it had been carried from there to various parts of the world by Egyptian prospectors and merchants – hence the introduction of 'imperfect' versions into local cultures. While Ratzel's theories reflected German Romanticism's emphasis on idealist explanations of human behaviour, and its preference for studying cultural specifics rather than crosscultural uniformities, the most sophisticated theoretical development of this approach was carried out by the German physicist turned ethnologist, Franz Boas.

While Boas began his career with a notion of 'culture' which was largely within the framework of traditional humanist and contemporary evolutionist usage ⁹⁷, by the time he published 'The Mind of Primitive Man' in 1911 ⁹⁸, Boas had sensed that the word 'culture' was better reserved for the 'cultures' of individual human groups. What is involved here is precisely the emergence of the modern anthropological concept. Whereas pre-anthropological culture is singular in connotation, the anthropological conception which emerged with Boas is plural. ⁹⁹

It is tempting to interpret this change largely in terms of field experience – especially tempting for modern anthropologists for whom fieldwork is at once both a sub-cultural *rite de passage* and the methodological cornerstone of their discipline. In this context, one sees, on the one hand the Victorian ethnologist, sitting in his armchair rearranging the

⁹⁶Cf. Smith, G.E.1923, 1933. Further examples of this 'hyper-diffusionist' thesis can be found in Perry, W.J. 1923, 1924. About the same time the Viennese school of anthropology, developed by the Roman Catholic priests Fritz Graebner and Wilhelm Schmidt, argued that a single series of cultures had developed in Central Asia from where cultures of different types had been carried to various parts of the world. For a critical review see, Harris, M. 1968:250-289.

critical review see, Harris, M. 1968:250-289.

That is, it was still in effect 'a singular phenomenon', present to a higher or lower degree in all peoples.

Boas, F. 1911.

⁹⁹ Needless to say I do not mean to claim for Boas – as others have done for Tylor – the 'invention' of the modern anthropological concept of culture. One need only note that at this time the cultural and social determination of individual behaviour was a matter of concern to thinkers across the whole range of the social sciences, regardless of the specific terminology they may have used.

fragmented elements of cultures into evolutionary sequences leading from the lowest savage to the very doors of his own study. Posed against him is Boas, who "must be understood first and foremost as a fieldworker." 100 While on this basis it has been suggested that the Tylorian view of culture could not withstand extensive fieldwork, the point however is not to deny the role of field experience in the emergence of the anthropological culture concept, but simply to suggest some of the complexities involved. Indeed Boas indicated his own awareness of these in 1904 when he suggested that the fieldwork of ethnologists had been variously conditioned by the 'theoretical discussions' of anthropologists and that the results of detailed empirical study had in turn retroacted upon anthropological theory. Enlarging on his argument one might say that a modern anthropological concept of culture developed out of the interaction of Boas' prior personal attitudes and intellectual orientation, the theoretical issues posed by contemporary anthropology, his experience in the field and his own armchair interpretation of that experience. In this context aspects of historicity, plurality, holism, behavioral determinism and relativism, which were present in Boas' thought from the very beginning were elaborated upon, and the evolutionary elements were either rejected or minimized. 101

In the year after his first field trip to the American Northwest, this interaction had already produced an orientation which, in important respects, was at odds with the prevailing evolutionism of the late nineteenth century. These differences were clearly evident in the controversy with Powell and Mason over the principles of museum arrangement. As the title of Boas' opening attack suggested, the specific issue underlying the debate was the explanation of 'The Occurrence of Similar Inventions in Areas Widely Apart'. Like many evolutionists, including Tylor, Mason offered three alternatives. Two of them – the migration of peoples and the migration of ideas – were in effect, forms of 'diffusion'. The choice between this and 'independent invention' was an empirical and theoretical issue central to the entire evolutionist point of view.

¹⁰⁰ Stocking, G.W. 1968:204.

¹⁰¹ Cf. H.B. Yamplosky, 1958:314-315. R. Rohner, 1966:159-163.

While diffusion was by no means excluded from evolutionary theorizing, since along with race it served to explain departures from the normal evolutionary sequence, the principle of 'independent invention' was more central to their nomothetic purpose. Prima facie, the regular, independent occurrence of the same idea in similar circumstances seemed to offer direct evidence that the development of human reason was governed by natural laws. In contrast to Powell and Mason's dogmatic advocacy of this position, Boas, both by his ties to geography and his historicist outlook, was predisposed to favour the diffusionist alternative. Indeed his disillusionment with geographic determinism simply accentuated this – to him, "the similar circumstances eliciting the evolutionists 'independent inventions' were simply geographic determinism in another guise." 102

In 1896, in a paper he read to The American Association for the Advancement of Science, Boas drew together the threads of his developing critique of the methodological principles of 'modern'- or evolutionary – anthropology in general. By focusing on the similarities of human culture, which implied the existence of laws of human development, modern anthropology, as advanced by Tylor and Morgan, had captured the imagination of the public in a way that the older descriptive and historical ethnology never could. Yet, in doing so, modern anthropology had gone much further. It had assumed that these similarities were the products of the *same* underlying psychic causes, that they were the regularly recurring independent responses of the human mind to similar environments. On this basis, it had embarked on the more ambitious scheme of discovering the laws and history of the evolution of human society, going on to subsume that history under one grand scheme of human development. If however, the same phenomena were not always due to the same cause, then the logical basis of the whole approach was undercut.

Offering a variety of examples from his own fieldwork, Boas argued that in fact apparently similar phenomenon could be the end result of such varied complex historical, environmental, and psychological factors that the similarity of their causes could no

¹⁰² Boas, F. 1887:485

¹⁰³ Boas, F. 1896:901-908

longer be assumed.¹⁰⁴ While in this context the comparative derivation of laws of human development remained the goal of anthropology, it had now receded into an indefinite future. First of all it was necessary to carry on a detailed study of customs in their bearings to the total culture of the tribe in connection with an investigation of their geographical distribution among neighbouring tribes in order to determine the environmental conditions, the psychological factors and the historical connections which had shaped them. In essence, Boas' point was that the comparative method rested on a process of mere inference which was much too insecure a foundation for establishing fundamental theoretical principles, "if anthropology desires to establish laws governing the growth of culture it must not confine itself to comparing the results of that growth alone, but whenever such is feasible, it must compare the processes of growth." As an alternative to the widely employed, yet logically flawed, comparative method then, Boas proposed the historical method. A method which actually observed the historical changes taking place within a particular society. ¹⁰⁶

If the subsequent work of Boas and his students did not produce such 'general laws of human development' there is no doubt that the extension of his critique of evolutionary anthropology did much to stamp the next half-century of American, if not European, anthropology with a strong anti-evolutionary bias. By focusing attention on the fundamental historicity of cultural phenomenon – *on the fact that they were the result of specific and complex historical processes* – as well as on the historical processes that conditioned them, Boas stood in marked contrast to the evolutionists. ¹⁰⁷ Even to say all of this however, does not bring us to the most important point.

¹⁰⁴ Boas, F. 1896:901/904-905.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 1896:906.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Ibid. 1896:905-908.

¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, it has often been suggested that Boas' own approach was not really historical since it did not provide the basis for the reconstruction of actual sequences of historical development. Indeed, it was difficult to accomplish this unless one made further assumptions which Boas' own spare outlook would not permit him to make. All one could normally do was to *suggest* the existence of certain historical relationships.

It has been suggested by Leslie White that Boas' obsession with 'particularities' rendered him blind to general outlines or forms. For White then it seems that the key to Boas' mind and work lies in the latter's suggestion that "once the beautiful simple order of evolutionary anthropology had been shattered, the student stood aghast before the multitude and complexity of facts that belie the symmetry of the edifice he had laboriously erected." In this situation then, Boas, according to White, was left with little more than the chaos of beliefs and customs which he found in the data of his field notes. Such a position however overlooks the positive residue of Boas' critique of the method and theory of evolutionism.

True, once the single grand scheme of the evolution of culture, valid for all humanity, had lost its plausibility, it was difficult to bring under one system the multiplicity of converging and diverging lines which stood in its place. Yet it was precisely in shifting attention to these diverging lines, in recognizing that before we seek what is common to all 'culture' one must analyze each culture, that the singular culture of the evolutionists became the plural 'cultures' of modern anthropology. ¹⁰⁹ It was only by comparing these distinct histories of growth that the general laws of human development could be discovered.

Furthermore, this concept of a plurality of historically conditioned, discrete cultures, which Boas advanced as an alternative to the evolutionists' single sequence of cultural stages had important implications for the question of 'racial mental capacity'. While Boas first tackled this issue in a paper presented to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1894, most of the arguments he employed against traditional racial assumptions were to resurface seventeen years later when he published 'The Mind of Primitive Man'. Indeed as Stocking has illustrated, in an attempt to undermine prevailing ideas of racial determinism, Boas not only laid emphasis on the historical condition of diffusion and the relativity of standards of evaluation, but perhaps most

¹⁰⁸ Quoted by Stocking, G.W. 1968:212

importantly sought to explain the apparent differences in racial mental capacity in terms of different cultural traditions. In developing this argument against racial mental differences Boas began by maintaining that the mind of the dark skinned primitive shared with that of the white skinned European all of the characteristic human mental powers – abstraction, inhibition and choice. Granting that these capacities must have evolved over time, and granting that they might differ in development, Boas argued that the differences were not great as to allow living men to be placed on different evolutionary stages. This assertion however was dependent on showing that the variations exhibited in the production of these mental functions were largely determined at all stages of cultural development by the body of custom and traditional material which was transmitted from one generation to another.

That is, the apparently primitive deficiencies in the 'logical interpretation of perceptions' were the result of the character of the ideas with which the new perception associates itself. Whereas the education of a 'civilized child' transmitted to him a large body of knowledge based on the investigations and speculations of generations of scientists and scholars, most people received this knowledge simply as 'folklore'. To cite Boas' own example, on hearing of the explosion of a previously unknown chemical, the 'civilized' man simply assumes that certain materials had the property of exploding under proper conditions. For the primitive however, the traditional context of such an event was a world which, since a child, he had been taught to regard as animate. One in which the very stones were endowed with life. Small wonder then he would cower in 'superstitious' fear! The difference then is largely in the character of the 'traditional material' within which this new perception was amalgamated. It was in this context that Boas argued the immense importance of folklore in determining the 'mode of thought'.

While he was still enough of a Victorian liberal positivist to retain a limited belief in the 'progress of civilization', the general effect of Boas' argument was that the behaviour of all men, regardless of 'race' or 'cultural stage', was determined by a traditional body of habitual behaviour passed on through what we would now call the 'enculturative process' – in other words, by the particular 'culture' in which they lived. Whilst Boas had always

emphasized the role of authority, tradition and habit in effecting the thought patterns of men, it was only within the context of his developing anthropology that he came to view 'culture' itself in these terms. It was within this context that the idea of culture, which once connoted all that freed men from the blind weight of tradition became identified with that very tradition – a burden which was seen as functional to the continuing daily existence of individuals in any culture, and at every level of civilization. ¹¹⁰

When coupled with Boas' appreciation for the historically conditioned plurality of human cultures, the cultural determination of human behaviour tended to undercut any singular standard of cultural evaluation. As we have already seen, cultural evolutionism was methodologically dependent on the idea of progress in all areas of human activity. The 'comparative method' attempted to arrange the coexisting manifestations of human culture into a temporal sequence of progressive development at whose peak stood western European civilization. Insofar as the basis for this development was not in fact a question begging comparison to an a priori European standard, it was often some variant of the related Spencerian assumption that evolution always moved from 'simplicity' to 'complexity'. Boas' research however showed that in regard to many cultural phenomena, this simply was not true. For example, the grammatical categories of Latin and English were far less complex than those of most primitive languages. The complexity of much primitive music was such as to tax the art of even the most skilled virtuoso. Beyond such specifics however, the general effect of Boas' critique was to show that, contra the evolutionists' conviction, the various elements of human culture did not march together in any sort of lock step or regular sequence. Once the one grand scheme of evolutionism was rejected, the multiplicity of cultures, which took the place of the cultural stages of savagery, barbarism and 'civilization' were no more easily bought within one standard of evaluation than they were within one system of explanation. Each was an integrated way of life, and although they may be based on 'different traditions', and on different

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As such, Boas had inverted the meaning folklore had for the evolutionary anthropologists. While Tylor had seen folklore as originally rational in origin, but surviving as irrational custom, Boas saw it as unconscious in origin but central to the maintenance of society through its rationalization of traditional forms of behaviour.

equilibriums of emotion and reason, they might still be of 'no less value' than our own. As Boas points out, a large part of what we deemed 'rational' is as much determined by 'cultural tradition' as the primitive customs whose 'different-ness' was the sole measure of their inferior rationality. In the sense of withholding any judgment by any external or apriori standard then, *relativism* came to be a fundamental premise in Boas' anthropological method – a necessary basis for accurate observation and sound interpretation.

Though Boas did not, as Tylor is assumed to have done, offer a definition of anthropological 'culture', what he did do was create an important portion of the context within which the word was to acquire its characteristic meaning. He was a leader of a cultural revolution which by changing the relation of 'culture' from man's evolutionary development to the burden of tradition, transformed it into a tool quite different from what it had been before. Indeed it was within the context of the growing interest in the geographic and historical dimensions of cultural variation which Boas' work ignited that archaeologists began to classify the spatial and temporal variation in material culture which was becoming increasingly obvious as data began to accumulate across Europe. 111

While a concern with the classification of 'cultures', and the reconstruction of 'culture histories' came to dominate North American cultural anthropology, within British circles, social evolutionism was rapidly superseded by 'functionalist' and 'structural functionalist' theories of society. Strongly influenced by the anti-historical character of Durkheimian sociology¹¹², it was the concept of 'society' and 'social structure', as opposed to 'culture', which constituted the central focus of research. Yet, despite such variation in the classification of socio-cultural entities within these different traditions, there are a number of similarities in the abstract concepts employed. For example in the works of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, who developed the theoretical position known as 'functionalism', 'society', and primarily the notion of 'tribal society' was

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¹¹¹Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1998:148-155. Daniel, G. 1978:242.

¹¹² For a review of the dependency of the functionalist theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown on the sociology of Emile Dirkheim see, Godsen, C. 1998:75-85.

viewed as an organic, coherent system made up of interdependent social institutions.¹¹³ Furthermore, analogous to Boas' advancement of the culture concept in the sense of a plurality of historically conditioned, distinct cultural wholes, structural functionalists presented tribal societies as homogenous, isolated and autonomous units based on a shared set of values, kinship and an awareness of a common social and cultural identity.¹¹⁴

However, whilst the emergence of the culture concept reflects a shift away from racial classifications of human diversity, particularly in the work of Boas, it did carry with it many of the assumptions which were central to the nineteenth century classification of human groups 115. If this seems paradoxical, it is in fact quite appropriate, for if the roots of racial thought are to be traced to Herder's conception of history in terms of the embodiment of the human spirit in organismic ethnic, or national forms, then Boas' thinking on cultural diversity is rooted in the very same soil. Thus, while he may have elaborated on aspects of historicity, relativism and behavioural determinism which were present in his thought from the very beginning, there remains an overriding concern with holism, homogeneity, order and boundedness, concepts which were central to the development of ideas concerning human diversity within the context of nineteenth and twentieth century nationalist thought. Thus, while the need to counter racial determinism may have constituted an important agenda in the 'evolution' of the social sciences 116, the perpetuation of these concerns in twentieth century conceptions of 'culture' and 'society' has resulted in a representation of the world as one divided into discrete, homogenous, integrated cultures, - cultures which are implicitly equated with distinct 'peoples' or

¹¹³ See Malinowski, B. 1944. Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1952.

¹¹⁴ See Rosaldo, R. 1993:31-32. There was however considerable disagreement about the definition of tribal society as numerous technical definitions were devised. For example, while some British anthropologists took the tribe to be the widest territorially defined, politically independent unit, Evans-Pritchard's analysis of the Nuer revealed a group who come together specifically for the purposes of warfare against perceived 'outsiders'. For further discussion of the variety of different ways in which the concept of tribe has been used in anthropology see, Fried, M.H. 1975.

¹¹⁵Cf. Clifford, J. 1988:234/273.

¹¹⁶ For further discussion see Kuper, L. ed. 1975. Stepan, N. 1982.

'tribes' 117. Group identity, or 'people-hood' was, in essence, assumed to be a passive reflection of cultural similarities.

¹¹⁷ Clifford, J. 'The Predicament of Culture' 1988:232-233. Wolf, E. 'Europe and the People Without History' 1982:6-7.

CHAPTER TWO

GERMAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE CULTURE HISTORICAL PARADIGM

ARCHAEOLOGY AND EVOLUTION	72
ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: G. KOSSINNA ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURE: V.G. CHILDE	78
	91
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE IDENTITY OF ISRAEL	102

Like anthropology, archaeology has traditionally concerned itself with 'wholes', a concern epitomized in the identification of past peoples and cultures. Indeed, throughout the course of its history, a desire to attach an identity to particular objects or monuments, most frequently expressed in terms of the 'ethnic group', or 'people' who produced them has figured at the heart of archaeological enquiry. From the Renaissance period onwards, archaeological material has been attributed to various historically attested peoples, be they Romans, Britons, Celts, or indeed, Israelites. Whilst the spread of various 'nationalisms' during the nineteenth century certainly provided fertile grounds for an escalation of interest in such archaeological remains, and particularly in tracing their 'national', or 'ethnic' pedigree, it was only with the development of the anthropological concept of 'culture' that a systematic framework for the classification of such entities in both space and time was established. Thus while Binford's apocryphal statement that "archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing" may appear to some as intellectually indolent, it should not be viewed as a renunciation of disciplinary identity. On the contrary, it serves to reinforce the point that archaeology and anthropology have overlapping subject matter. That ideas and evidence from one inevitably feed into and influence interpretation within the other.²

ARCHAEOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

Throughout the course of the nineteenth century growing amounts of archaeological material were being recovered as the vastly expanding engineering activities of the Industrial Revolution were transforming Central and Western Europe into the "workshop of the world." Indeed, much of the popular appeal of archaeology in early Victorian times lay in its seeming demonstration that this contemporary technological advancement, which both intrigued and delighted the middle classes, was no mere accident but the acceleration of a tendency for 'progress' which was innate in mankind⁴.

¹ Binford, L. 1962:217.

² On the general issue of the historic relationship between the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology see Godson, C. 1997. Also Ingold, T. 1992:694.

³ Trigger, B.G. 1998:55-59. 1989:148-150.

⁴ In Europe, prehistoric archaeology of the early and late nineteenth centuries developed primarily as an evolutionary study of human history. It revealed not only that the most complex industrial technologies had developed from Stone Age beginnings, but also that the Stone Age itself bore witness to the gradual

This 'evidence' then that cultural *evolution*, as opposed to 'cycles', or 'degeneration' had been a significant feature of human history made archaeology pre-eminently a science of progress. Within the context of the history of the discipline however, the birth of this 'scientific archaeology', as distinct from the antiquarianism of earlier times⁶, is generally associated with the unfolding of the 'Three Age System' and the pioneering work of C.J. Thomsen. While in the past a few archaeologists had attempted to subdivide prehistoric materials into various temporal segments⁸, it was Thomsen who first envisaged, and applied, on the basis of archaeological evidence, a systematic classification of antiquities according to the criteria of material use and form which could be correlated with a sequence of temporal periods: The Ages of Stone, Bronze, and Iron, familiar to every student of archaeology for the last hundred years.

The novelty of his approach however did not lie in the concept of technological development gleaned from his familiarity with the conjectural history of the Enlightenment, or in his assumption of a sequence of Stone, Bronze, or Iron ages, itself a

elaboration of the ability of humans to control their environment. Thus, while prehistoric archaeology may have originated in two relatively complementary waves - the first beginning in Denmark which concerned itself with cultural development in the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages and the second in England and France which focused on the Paleolithic period - both reveal themselves as intellectual products of the Enlightenment. That is, they were committed to the belief that the 'evolution' of material culture betokens

both social and moral improvement. By offering evidence that such progress was the continuation of what had been occurring ever more rapidly throughout human history, prehistoric archaeology bolstered the

confidence of the British middle classes and strengthened their pride in the leading role they were playing in that process. See Trigger, B.G. 1989:108-120.

⁷ Trigger, B.G. 1989:73-86. 1978:75-80. Rodden, J. in G. Daniel, ed. 1981:51-68.

⁵ As we have seen, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many writers sought to support what they saw as the literal truth of biblical accounts by arguing that human beings had originated in the Near East and that primitive cultures had come into existence as a result of 'degeneration' as humanity spread from its place of origin and divine instruction. While in the realm of archaeology such speculations were to become particularly evident in the 'hyper-diffusionist' theses of G.E. Smith and W.J. Perry, its basic tenets survive today in the 'extraterrestrial salvationism' of writers such as Eric von Daniken. See Cole, J.R. 1980:1-33. Feder, K.L.1984:525-541. von Daniken, E. 1969.

⁶ On the distinguishing features of this Antiquarian project see Trigger, B.G. 1989:27-73. Daniel, G.E. 1963:20-40. Sklenar, K. 1983:1-60.

⁸ Perhaps the most elaborate of these was Pierre Legrand d'Aussy's six period classification of burial practices from earliest times to the Middle Ages. Indeed the notion of a Stone Age, and subsequently of Bronze and Iron Ages was well established prior to the nineteenth century, and as such was not 'mere speculation' as is often suggested but a hypothesis for which there already existed much evidence. Rodden, J. 1981:51-60.

variation of Lucretius' model⁹. Rather it lay in his employment of 'seriational principles', 10 acquired from his extensive knowledge of numismatics to combine evidence concerning technology, grave goods, and the shape and decoration of various artifacts into an internally consistent developmental sequence 11. Though Thomsen's Museum of Northern Antiquities in Denmark had arranged its collection of artifacts in accordance with this new system as early as 1819, the first written account of his research was not set out in print until the 'Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed' (Guide Book to Scandinavian Antiquities) was published in 1836. 12

While prior to Thomsen's work, thinking about antiquities in both Europe, and the United States, was both intellectually fragmented and essentially speculative, the publication of the 'Ledetraad', and its translation into German a year later unified archaeological studies by providing scholars with an exemplar, or 'paradigm'. ¹³ In the second half of the nineteenth century, Thomsen's system established itself as 'the system' as his basic classification of artifacts, arranged in periods by virtue of an analogy with the form and function of tools in his own day, was modified and elaborated by, amongst others,

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⁹ It was the Latin poet Lucretius who was one of the first to suggest to the popular imagination the concept of three successive chronological ages.

¹⁰ 'Seriation' refers to the relative dating technique in which artifacts are temporally organized according to their relative popularity. Evolutionary seriation, such as we find in Thomsen's schema, is based upon changes which represent essentially technological improvements such as the 'evolution' from stone to iron tools.

For Thomsen's scheme to work it was insufficient that only one class of data formed a sequence. Instead, all the characteristics of both individual artifacts, and those found together in closed finds, had to be arranged in a sequence in which material, style, decoration and the context of discovery formed a coherent pattern of variation. Discrepancies in any part of the pattern (such as the discovery of iron tools decorated with Bronze Age ring patterns) would have caused the entire scheme to fall apart. Thomsen's assumption that his sequence had in fact evolved from stone to iron, rather than moved in the opposite direction as degenerationists maintained, was hence confirmed by decorative continuities between his Late Iron Age and the early historic period. Although some antiquarians mocked him for not including ages of glass, wood and gold to his sequence, whilst others tried to ascribe his stone, bronze and iron objects to different economies that had existed alongside one another, these critics failed to recognize that his phases were not the result of a mechanical sorting of artifacts, but instead were based on a concurrent analysis of style, decoration and context which reinforced each other to produce a rough, but effective chronology. For a detailed account of Thomsen's system see Trigger, B.G. 1989:75-80. Rodden, J. 1981:58-65.

¹² Thomsen, C.J. 1836. The first English translation of Thomsen's work, which went under the title of 'Guide Book to Scandinavian Antiquity' did not appear until 1848.

¹³ Whilst previously antiquarians, and indeed classical archaeologists, who were interested in what are now recognized to be prehistoric remains tended to look to written records and oral traditions to provide a historical context for their finds, it was Thomsen who liberated archaeologists from this restrictive assumption through the creation of a carefully controlled chronology which allowed for the comprehensive study of those periods of history for which no written records were available.

Worsaae¹⁴, de Mortillet¹⁵, and John Lubbock.¹⁶ Yet, whilst part of the appeal, and success, of Thomsen's 'package' lay in its acceptability, namely that it provided what appeared to be material confirmation of the reality of progress throughout human history¹⁷, a chronology which offered independent confirmation of the development of European society from its stone age beginnings was *only* of interest to those already predisposed to regard cultural evolution as a worthwhile topic. Although most archaeologists of the late Victorian period continued to pay lip service to the idea that all cultures had developed through a fixed series of stages, important divergent trends can be recognized, some of which suggest the exhaustion of the evolutionary paradigm.

As the growing economic problems and social conflicts of the late Victorian period began to erode the ideals of the Enlightenment, the negative social and aesthetic consequences of technological development further sapped belief in the value of both 'reason' and 'progress' 18. The early stages of this 'reaction' prompted many intellectuals to reject rationalism and the universal ideals of liberty and equality in favour of a Romantic belief that history was moulded by the unconscious habits, and idiosyncratic modes of thought

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¹⁶ Lubbock was deeply committed to the idea of unilinear cultural evolution. The parallel that he drew between palaeontological analogies and those involving modern 'primitive' peoples and pre-historic ones however is perhaps best viewed as an attempt to enhance the scientific respectability of cultural comparisons rather than providing any methodological innovation. Cf. Lubbock, J. 1865. 1870.

¹⁴ Although trained informally as a volunteer working for Thomsen, it was Jens J.A.Worsaae who was to become the first professional prehistoric archaeologist, and perhaps the most influential contributor to the development of Scandinavian archaeology. Unlike Thomsen who remained a museum researcher, Worsaae was to become a prolific field worker whose excavations helped to confirm Thomsen's chronology by providing more closed finds and also by means of stratigraphic excavations which offered a more concrete demonstration of cultural change over time than did seriation.

¹⁵ Though he was to emerge as perhaps the leading figure in French Paleolithic archaeology, Mortillet, like the geologists and palaeontologists of the mid-nineteenth century, was caught up in the evolutionary enthusiasm that characterized scientific research at that time. Indeed, in his guide to the archaeological displays at the Paris Exposition of 1867, Mortillet declared not only that prehistoric studies revealed the great antiquity of humanity but the gradual, and inevitable development of Civilization from very primitive beginnings. Daniel, G.E. 1967:144. See also Trigger, B.G. 1989:94-103. Bowler, P.J. 1989:75-85.

¹⁷ A shared commitment to an evolutionary approach promoted a close alignment between prehistoric archaeology and ethnology in both Western Europe and the United States during the 1870s and 1880s. In Europe in particular the basis of this alignment was a belief in the concept of 'unilinear cultural evolution' as developed by the Enlightenment philosophers. It was widely accepted that arranging modern cultures in a series from the simplest to the most complex illustrated the 'stages' through which the most advanced, and particularly European, cultures had developed in prehistoric times. Cf. Chapter One ¹⁸ Trigger, B.G. 1998:83-85. Grayson, D.K. 1983:142-149. Bowler. P.J. 1989:43-45.

implanted in people as members of a particular ethnic group.¹⁹ Furthermore, such 'Romanticism' helped to promote the nationalist sentiments stimulated by the Napoleonic wars by recording, glorifying and whetting an interest in tracing the origins, and unique historical trajectory of each culture/ethnic group.

In the politically reactionary environment of Post-Napoleonic Germany then, archaeologists, inspired by such 'Romantic Nationalism' tended to reject the Scandinavian Three Age System, which, though not devoid of patriotic embellishments, generally reflected an evolutionary perspective²⁰. For this new wave of German archaeologists, it was not the description of a find that mattered, nor its typological classification, nor indeed the determination of its exact age, for now the prime questions would be; To whom did such a find belong? Who had manufactured this artefact? Who was buried in this grave? Even if all the other questions raised by archaeology were to remain unanswered, these had to be settled in the case of every find. Indeed, it was considered the patriotic duty of every archaeologist to settle it in favour of his own country²¹. Furthermore, this 'ethnic identification' of an artefact not only transformed it into a weapon in the arsenal of an emergent national consciousness, but, taken to its logical conclusion meant, in theory at least, that it was now possible to claim the territory where the object was found in the name of those who were, or felt themselves to be, the modern descendents of the original author of that artefact. Thus while Thomsen had made a 'science' out of archaeology by demonstrating that the archaeological record could be interpreted without reference to written sources, the success of his method did not wholly suppress an interest in relating the known peoples of antiquity to the archaeological record. Rather, it was this view of archaeology, as offering a history of the peoples of

Within this intellectual milieu, archaeologists became increasingly aware that a single sequence of 'stages' did not account for the growing geographic and temporal variation that could be observed in the archaeological record. While this interest in the complexity of the archaeological record was part of a general concern with 'indeterminacy' and 'unpredictability' that was coming to dominate the study of man, it led archaeologists to pay increasing attention to the geographic distribution of distinctive types of artifacts and artifact assemblages in an effort to relate them to historical groups.

²⁰ While Danish archaeology in particular continued to be strongly nationalistic and to enjoy the patronage of successive generations of the royal family, its innovators and increasingly its audience were members of a growing commercial middle class for whom nationalism and evolutionism were not only attractive, but wholly complementary concepts. See Daniel, G.E. 1950:52. Hampson, N. 1982:251-283.

While there may have existed the best will in the world to achieve a 'scholarly' approach, the spirit of the times, in both academia and popular culture, was Romantic in the extreme.

Europe which was to provide the basis for the most significant new developments in archaeology.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: G. KOSSINNA

Though he was certainly not the first person who attempted to ascribe archaeological finds to specific peoples, certainly today it is the name of Gustav Kossinna, philologist turned archaeologist, who is inseparably associated with this idea. Initially standing in the tradition of German Antiquarianism of his teacher Karl Mullenhoff, which utilized mainly written sources for research into German prehistory, Kossinna saw the future of that discipline in developing and establishing specifically archaeological methods. His motto, "away from Rome, and away from anthropology and ethnography", emphasizes not only his distinctly archaeological claim to prehistory, but also a clear nationalist motivation. Indeed, his call for a new chair for Germanic Prehistory at Berlin in 1902 sprang, apart from any specific scientific motivations, from the idea of stimulating, clarifying and consolidating nationalist sentiment. As Kossinna considered only modern Germans to be the true inheritors of a 'nationalist prehistory' then, the first question of his archaeological research would be "where are we dealing with Germans, and where with non-Germans."

Indeed, it was precisely for this purpose that he developed his 'settlement archaeological method', the core principles of which are summed up in his well-known axiom of 1911²⁵. In its expanded version of 1926, this states "clearly defined, sharply bounded, archaeological provinces, correspond unquestionably to the territories of particular tribes

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²² On the specific issue of Kossinna's predecessors, and his contemporaries in European archaeology see Meinander, C.F. 1981:100-111.

²⁴ Kossinna, G. '1895' Quoted in Wiwjorra, I. 1996:174.

When, at a meeting of his Deutsche Gesellschaft für Vorgeschichte (German Society for Prehistory) on August 4 1911, Cosine declared German prehistory as an eminently national discipline, discussions about the leading roles of Germans since prehistoric times had been ongoing in popular scientific discussions for the past thirty years.

²⁵ Although Kossinna first stepped onto the archaeological stage in 1895 with a paper presented at a meeting of the Anthropological Society at Kassel, it was only in 1911 that an extended presentation of this methodological basis, combined with a highly polemical settling of accounts with his academic opponents, appeared under the title of '*The Origin of the Germani: On the Settlement Archaeological Method*' It was on page three of this work that Kossinna delivered his famous statement, 'Sharply defined archaeological provinces coincide with certain peoples or tribes of peoples throughout the ages.'

and peoples."²⁶ This guiding principle, that a clear, archaeologically defined, prehistoric, or proto-historic entity (province), also represents an ethnic entity, and that the geographic limits of its distribution correspond to the area settled by that group is combined with the 'retrospective method' taken over from Montelius, which involves using the ethnic conditions of the present, or the historically documented past, to infer the situation in prehistory. Importantly, it is the combination of these two standards, which make up the celebrated 'Kosinna Method'.²⁷

On the basis of the commonly held belief then, that archaeological cultures, which are supposed to be characterized by the greatest homogeneity of material culture, are inevitably a direct reflection of ethnicity, Kossinna declared that clearly defined, and more importantly, sharply bounded cultural provinces always correlate with major ethnic groups, be they Germans, Celts or Slavs. Various individual cultures, on the other hand, correspond to particular tribal groupings, such as the Germanic speaking Saxons, Vandals or Lombards. Furthermore, because he freely accepted, as did many other archaeologists, including Montelius, that evidence of continuity in a particular style of material culture was a clear indication of ethnic continuity, Kossinna believed that by identifying particular archaeological cultures with historically known groups, it would be possible to trace them back in time and hence, throw light on their particular cultural and historical development.²⁸ Though at some point in this retrospective journey it may no longer be possible to distinguish between the mosaic of archaeological cultures, and by extension, tribes, since they would not yet have 'differentiated' from each other, archaeologists could still discriminate between the major clusters which apparently represented the

²⁶ Kossinna, G. 1926:4

²⁷Working backwards then from earlier historic times Kossinna attempted to throw light on the development of specific peoples in prehistory by tracing continuities in material culture within certain geographic areas. It was on the basis of this technique that Kossinna attempted to delineate the descent of the Nordic, Aryan, Germanic super-race to the Indo-Europeans. In this task however he did not respect the principle laid down by Montelius, that typology for this purpose must only be applied within *one* region. In retrospect it seems fair to say however that Kossinna was perhaps more interested in the *results* rather than the correct application of the method. Cf. Sklenar, K. 1983:54-70.

²⁸ By mapping the distributions of types of artifacts that were characteristic of specific tribal groups, Kossinna believed that it would be possible to determine where these groups had lived in prehistory. This is what he referred to as his 'Siedlungsarchäologie', that is, 'settlement archaeology'.

higher ethnic units of Indo-European culture, such as the Germans or Celts. For those still more remote periods of prehistory, it would only be possible to differentiate between Indo-Europeans and non Indo-Europeans²⁹. While this endeavour to attribute archaeological finds to certain peoples according to certain characteristics may correspond to the research aims of other archaeologists, what was new, and distinctive, was Kossinna's emphasis on everything Germanic. ³⁰

While as professor of German archaeology at the University of Berlin, and as president of the newly founded 'German Society for Prehistory', Kossinna continued to publish his theories systematically³¹, it was during a period of fervent nationalist, and indeed chauvinist sentiment, before, during and after World War I, that Kossinna's views became more radicalized as he supplemented his method of settlement archaeology with race-historical assessments. Indeed, when he presented his views on 'Old Germanic Cultural Achievement' during a wartime lecture in 1917, archaeological argumentation took second place behind purely politically motivated racial considerations³². That there had been thinkers before him, and a public openly susceptible to nationalist and/or racist views of prehistory when Kossinna shifted his guidelines from those of 'scientific

²⁹ While it is obvious that the hypothetical character of such identifications increases as one goes further back in time, Kossinna tried to come to terms with this difficulty by means of an idea influenced by evolutionary principles and deriving from linguistic concepts. It was the notion of apparently less complex 'primeval cultures' or 'primeval peoples' which supposedly enabled him to 'reconstruct' the former relationships between peoples over a time-span stretching as far back as the Mesolithic. In reality however, Kossinna simply deluded himself about the limited possibility of knowledge arising from the fragmentary nature of the sources.

³⁰ It must be remembered that in interpreting archaeological evidence in a way that encouraged Germans to regard Slavs and indeed all other peoples as inferior to themselves and excused aggression against these peoples, Kossinna was not acting any differently to amateur and semi-professional archaeologists in North America, Africa or Australia who actively portrayed native peoples as inferior to Europeans. In different ways archaeology in each region reflected the racist attitudes which had become widespread in Western civilization in the early twentieth century. For an insight into archaeological theory and practice in America, Africa and Australia at this time see Trigger, B.G. 1989:119-145.

³¹ This was indeed a period of extensive work for Kossinna as he combined his roles as a university professor and author with his presidency of the newly founded *German Society for Prehistory* and his editorship of the journal *Mannus*, and of the monograph series of the same name associated with it. Indeed, apart from academic publications in the strict sense, Kossinna also produced a whole series of publications intended to influence a wider, non-academic audience.

³² It was here that Kossinna began to speak of 'our racial, cultural superiority over other peoples'. See Wiwjorra, I. 1996:174.

research' to those of 'racial ideology' was indeed remarkably convenient.³³ One might even go so far as suggest it was this upsurge in emotive nationalism which made possible the rise in status of prehistory as an independent discipline.³⁴

Though interest in the German past had been influenced by a patriotic antiquarianism of this kind since the seventeenth century, the social prestige and following engendered by Kossinna and his disciples accrued from their ability, and willingness, to place their professional teachings at the service of the German nation – as ideological spokesmen for its imperialist policies. Indeed, one of the most welcome aspects of Kossinna's ideology was his constant emphasis on the fact that the archaeological evidence showed the Germans to have always been warriors and should thus remain warriors in modern times too³⁵. This goes someway towards explaining the favouritism, and prestige accorded to archaeology, and particularly Kossinna's version, during the pre-war period by a number of highly placed personages, starting with Kaiser Wilhelm II himself. Nevertheless, whilst Kossinna's 'settlement archaeology' certainly aimed to reveal the earliest historical settlement of different ethnic groups within Europe, and hence their origin, his contention that a 'Germanic' element could be distinguished in Northern Europe as early as the Stone Age and that even then this element was the bearer of progress and the creator of all values met with considerable opposition.

Up until the mid, and late nineteenth century, the theory that the ancestors of the Germans had come down the slopes of the Caucasus in ancient times and migrated into

³³ Whilst the idea of an inherent 'racial and cultural superiority' is very much rooted in the traditions of prehistoric anthropology from which Kossinna originally intended to keep away, the discussion about the continuity of race as an historical principle was made popular within Germany by Houston Stewart Chamberlain. There were however many renowned scientists who held a rather ambivalent attitude towards a national view of race history. One of them was Moritz Hornes, the influential founder of Austrian prehistory who on the one hand saw the dangers of forging the picture of old European culture and listening to subjective views rather than the objective truth of finds, yet felt inclined to ascribe the greatest influence on culture to race.

³⁴ Cf. Veit, U. in S.J. Shennan ed. 1989:36ff.

³⁵ As Field Marshall von Hindenburg declared as he stood by those graves excavated during Kossinna's *first* and *only* campaign in the field, 'As we gaze at this Ancient High German Culture we must realize once again that we shall only remain Germans as long as we keep our swords clean and our young men battle worthy.' Quoted in Sklenar, K. 1983:152.

their present, modern day homeland was widespread in certain circles.³⁶ While this theory was based upon biblical chronology and corresponded to earlier theories about the Indo-Germanic people which assumed an Indian, or generally Asiatic origin,³⁷ it also embraced the anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's term 'Caucasian race',³⁸. While the assumption of an ancient Asiatic origin was, in those days, an obvious part of views on national history, internationally renowned archaeologists such as Oscar Montelius were forced, by the nature of their finds to consider this 'immigration theory' before it became modernized into the thesis of chronological cultural dependency of the North on the South³⁹. Although this theory, which went under the title of 'ex oriente lux', was strongly advocated by such figures as Hugo Winckler and Eduard Meyer, it soon became a contradiction to national pride when such cultural dependency was taken to suggest that the historical Germans had lived as barbarians before their conversion to Christianity.

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³⁶ Indeed there is a frieze of this migration scene in the national monument of *Walhalla* near Regensburg, built in imitation of a Greek temple and inaugurated in 1842.

³⁷ While tracing the origins of European civilization to the Near East certainly appealed to many Christians as a reaffirmation of the biblical view of world history which saw successive empires – Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman - transferring power and creativity westwards from the near east to Europe, the original interpretation of European prehistory favoured by archaeologists and philologists in the early nineteenth century also supported the view that at certain points in European prehistory the invasion of superior racial types with higher levels of civilization had displaced the original inhabitants. While Worsaae and the Scandinavian originators of the Three Age system had argued on the basis of their finds that bronze and iron were introduced into Europe by more civilized peoples invading from the East, the philologists argued that the Aryan speakers had invaded from the same source, possibly in a series of waves corresponding to the various Aryan languages. While they severed the blood relationship between the Aryan speaking races, physical anthropologists also preserved the image of higher races invading from the East. This view of prehistory served as a powerful alternative to the 'linear progressionism' adopted by archaeologists and cultural anthropologists of the 1860s. Whereas they saw indigenous development as the source of all technological and cultural innovations, this theory held that only invasion from external source could introduce a superior culture into a particular territory.

³⁸ Though Blumenbach was unable to state precisely what the peculiarities in 'Caucasian' skulls actually meant, others such as Cuvier and Carus were not so reluctant. Indeed in his division of *Homo Sapiens* into three subspecies of vertebrate, Caucasian, Mongolian and Ethiopian, Cuvier, who held that differences in both culture and mental ability were a direct product of differences in physique, wrote 'It is not for nothing that the Caucasian race has gained dominion over the world and made the most rapid progress in the sciences' Coleman, J. 1964:166. Banton, M. 1977:27-61.

sciences' Coleman, J. 1964:166. Banton, M. 1977:27-61.

³⁹ Because the level of cultural development in southeastern Europe in prehistoric times was always ahead of that to the north and west, Montelius believed that his cultural chronology indicated that cultural development had occurred initially in the East and had been carried from there to Europe by waves of immigration and diffusion making their way through the Balkans. Though Montelius believed that this chronology was derived objectively from the archaeological record, today we are not so certain that presuppositions did not play a significant role in determining his selection of the cross-ties he used to correlate the chronologies of different parts of Europe. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:155-163.

⁴⁰ Renfrew, A.C. 1973:36-37.

Indeed, this conception was put into fairly drastic terms by the architect Gottfried Semper who labeled the Germans, "a pack without national unity or a common language."⁴¹

Whilst nationally motivated researchers took this statement as a sign of arrogance, and ignorance, characteristic of a conceited scholarship alienated from the people, resistance to the thesis of cultural backwardness dates to the beginning of the nineteenth century. For example, Freidrich August Wagner, driven by a patriotic enthusiasm, saw reasons to take a 'different view from that of our ancestors up to now', suggesting the possibility of an autochthonous cultural development in the North, a thesis fully augmented by Matthaus Much⁴⁴. Although these somewhat clumsy interpretations, which do not deny an admiration for southern civilizations, were meant to stimulate and strengthen national pride, they were a far cry from the aggressive undertones of nationalist authors from the 1880s onwards.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, those voices fed up with research which indicated the influence of 'foreign culture' on Germanic cultural development began to gather force. One feature of this growing intolerance was the increased hostility exhibited towards the 'Romlinge' (Romelings), a hostility which, along with the name, had been

⁴¹ Quoted in Wiwjorra, I. 1996:167.

While many scholars supported Montelius' interpretation of European prehistory, the most vocal objections were raised not against his idea of diffusion from an original center of innovation, but against his claim that this center was located in the Near East. Many scholars objected to an interpretation which ran counter to European convictions of their own superior creativity and which derived civilization from outside Europe. For example, Carl Schuchardt, Adolf Furtwangler and a host of other German archaeologists maintained that the Mycenaean civilization was in fact the creation of 'Aryan' invaders from the North. Cf. Sklenar, K. 1983:145.

⁴³ Though his youthful dream of gazing upon the monuments of the old ages in Egypt, Greece and Italy were never to be realized, Wagner sought out similar temples and pyramids closer to his own Saxonian homeland believing at one point to have found 'something like Egypt in Germany'. Driven by a patriotic enthusiasm Wagner suggested that instead of the usual cultural dependency of the North on the South, there had been an independent cultural development. Indeed, not only did he think it correct to compare the burial mounds of Germany with the pyramids, Wagner claimed these 'local monuments' should be 'more interesting to us than the products of foreign art and labour' as they were not boastful, but 'hidden away, decent and modest'. Wagner F.A. 1883:79.

⁴⁴ It was Much who originally coined the expression 'oriental fata morgana' to bring the possibility of autochthonous cultural development in the North into academic discussion.

taken from the Romantics, and which rejected as un-nationalistic, if not treasonable, all scholarly interest in classical archaeology or that of the former Roman provinces. For while the background to this so-called 'West German' research was not so much a yearning for national identity as an admiration for the achievements of classical antiquity as they had been 'reflected' upon the North⁴⁵, the preference for Roman cultural achievement over and against pre-Roman ones was increasingly opposed by the national demand for the glorification of the German ancestors.

Indeed, it was within this context that Kaiser Wilhelm II, though personally an admirer of the oriental and classical civilizations, sought a 'national base' for German education -"We must take everything German as a foundation: we should educate national young Germans, not young Greeks or Romans."46 Besides these sometimes hostile discussions on the relationship between Germans and Romans, and the relative priority to be accorded to each, interest in the fundamental question of the origin of the Indo-Germans was gathering pace as the theory of 'ex oriente lux' was seen against an ideological background. Indeed, it was with the institutionalization of prehistoric anthropology that the national demand for the demonstration, and glorification, of Germanic cultural antiquity gathered force.⁴⁷ Though it is certainly true that in their efforts to document the deep antiquity and prehistoric descent of humankind, anthropologists had been strongly influenced by racial concepts, it was the existence of certain written sources, widely considered an authorative insight into prehistory, which initially provided them with the interpretive matrix through which they diffused such racial sentiments. Indeed during the nineteenth century these 'sources' were used as a background for almost every popular description of German, or early German history, and it was on the basis of these texts that the excavated finds (which were becoming increasingly important) were interpreted.

⁴⁵ The investigation of the Roman inheritance in Germany was manifest in several institutions such as the Romano-Germanic Central Museum, (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum) in Mainz, and the Imperial Commission on the Roman Frontier (Reichlimeskomission). Nevertheless, whilst the humanistic ideals of this West-German research could go with a conservative national attitude, a racial one went well beyond its remit.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Wiwjorra, I. 1996:168.

⁴⁷ The institutionalization of anthropology had been greatly assisted in Germany by the foundation of many anthropological societies from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards though it was not recognized as a scientific, or indeed moral problem at the time, their research interests were strongly influenced by ethnic concepts from the very beginning.

Complementary to this practice, the archaeological finds were then seen as a proof of the assumption that these sources gave a correct view of prehistoric life in Germany, even in the smallest detail.

The interpretation of three early written sources that were considered an authoritative insight into Germanic prehistory were of crucial importance for the evolving discipline of archaeology in that country. They were, 'The Edde', a compendium of proverbial and mythological traditions written down in Iceland in the twelfth century, 'The Nibelungenlied', concerning the dragon slayer Siegfried, also dated to the twelfth century, and Tacitus' 'Germania', dated to approximately 100 AD. Whilst all three served to magnify German national self esteem, and were established as leading influences on research into national prehistory from the time of Romanticism onwards, particular attention was devoted to Tacitus' Germania, wherein the Roman author, sharing the common belief that the Germans were a pure blooded people, attributed to them "fierce blue eyes, red hair, and a tall frame." Whilst source criticism of the Germania, to the effect that it had been written to critique Roman decadence, was hardly ever acknowledged, this general identification played a substantial role in the production of race-anthropological stereotypes of the German people. Indeed, in many annotated German translations of Tacitus' work this identification was taken as proof for the existence of a prehistoric German type.⁴⁹

Such stereotypical characterizations became so rooted in both the popular, and academic imagination of the nineteenth century that the German defeat of the French in 1871 occasioned the celebrated French anthropologist Armand de Quatrefages to suspect an ancient Finnish population to be part of this 'Prussian race', and which was of

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⁴⁸ Tacitus, 'Germania' Book 4. Later German editions of *Germania* variously translate *rutilae comae* as 'reddish', 'red-blond' or 'blond' hair.

⁴⁹ As late as 1921, the celebrated prehistorian G. Wilke came to a similar conclusion stating that material finds were 'an addition to, rather than a correction of the *Germania* and thus could serve the purpose of magnifying national self esteem.' Cf. Wiwjorra, I. 1996:169.

particularly bad character⁵⁰. Though he rejected de Quatrefages' national insinuations as a politically motivated misuse of anthropology, the incident did trigger the celebrated physician Rudolf Virchow to undertake a general examination of the eye, hair and skin colour of German schoolchildren – the results of which were taken as proof that a major portion of the German population *did fit* this Germanic stereotype. Though blond hair, blue eyes and a great body length were commonly accepted characteristics of this Germanic stereotype, it was Alexander Ecker who not only accepted 'long skulls' as a supplementary attribute when he discovered them amongst the post-Roman cemeteries of Southern Germany, but was among the first to extend the application of this characteristic to prehistory. ⁵¹

Though initially professional archaeologists did not presume a continuity of Germanic population since prehistoric times since they were dealing with archaeological cultures defined by a conflation of characteristic items of material culture and find circumstances, this stereotypical anthropological conception of Germans became so ingrained in both popular and academic discourse that people would freely speak of Bronze, or even Stone Age Germans. Indeed, such accounts of Germanic prehistory were rarely limited to the German area alone since prehistoric cultural remains from both Northern, and Western Europe, served equally well to demonstrate Germanic cultural achievement. The only precondition was that the prehistoric cultures in question be associated with the German race – however doubtful or dubious the link. This anthropological concept became even more generalized when the Germans were characterized as the original Indo-Germanic type, an identification which was to have fateful consequences.

⁵⁰ Though it was Francois Bernier who had been the first to characterize the Lapplanders as a race in a negative way, his assessments remained particularly popular and influenced a wide range of scholars, including no less a figure than Rudolf Virchow who himself claimed that the Lapps, whom he related to the

'long skulls' in Central European prehistoric skeletons as a sign of their Germanic identity. Short skulls on the other hand were generally associated with the much maligned dark haired, brown eyed 'Slavic type.'

including no less a figure than Rudolf Virchow who himself claimed that the Lapps, whom he related to the Finns were a 'pathological race.'

Although Ecker himself did not undertake any gross generalizations other authors did not hesitate to take

By placing the origin of Indo-European culture in the North, be it Scandinavia, or Germany itself, this thesis presented modern Germans as the core people, not only of the Germanic, but the entire Indo-European race. Furthermore, because Indo-European, and by extension, modern German origin, had been centered in this northern cradle of civilization, and hence subject to the 'Northern selection conditions' for the longest period, modern Germans, toughened by a merciless environment, were the 'fittest race', destined to rule the world - "and one look into history and present times should be enough to confirm this." 53 Writing in 1918, the ethnic prehistorian Karl Felix Wolff declared "the next bi-millennium will be the age of the Germans, for German prehistory is just repeating Indo-German prehistory, and the world is about to become German in the way it once became Indo-German."⁵⁴ Thus, whilst Kossinna was certainly equipped with a powerful set of ingredients with which to render his fanciful glorification of German prehistory as that of a biologically pure master-race, as Veit makes clear, it was Kossinna's singular achievement to project these assumptions into prehistory by linking this 'race' with distinct material culture distributions, and explaining changes in these distributions in terms of the activities of that 'race', 55.

While he freely accepted the widespread belief that the original Indo-Europeans, and hence, modern Germans, were members of this blond, longheaded Nordic racial group,

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⁵² Many European historians maintained that harsher northern climates were responsible for the later development of civilizations in such regions, but that eventually their demands stimulated greater progress than did more southerly ones. The English historian Henry T. Buckle argued that, because of the relatively easy conditions under which tropical civilizations developed, they tended towards despotism, pomp and sensuous display rather than the promotion of mental and moral progress amongst the masses as did cultural development in more temperate climates. Indeed the idea of the superiority of northern climates for cultural development was to play a major role in both anthropological thinking and nationalist rhetoric throughout most of the nineteenth century. Cf. Berger, C. 1970. Keen, B. 1971:433-444.

Wilser, L. 1904:180. Quoted in Wiwjorra, I. 1996:172. Though Virchow did himself assume the existence of anthropological types, he strongly rejected Wilser's simplifications which he argued declared the Germans 'the people of all the peoples out of pure patriotism.' While as a spokesman for several colleagues Hermann Klaatsch dismissed Wilser's efforts as a 'sort of anthropology that lessens the dignity of science' such criticisms did not prevent Wilser from publishing his ideas, which met with considerable success particularly amongst right wing extremists who championed him as a 'rightful fighter for our

cause.' 54 Wolff 1918:425. Quoted in Wiwjorra, I. 1996:171.

⁵⁵ Veit, U. 1984:349:350. Quoted in S.J. Shennan, ed. 1989:8.

and that racial characteristics were the fundamental determinants of human behaviour⁵⁶, Kossinna also employed Gustav Klemm's distinction between 'Kulturvölker' and 'Naturvölker', that is, a distinction between *culturally creative* peoples, and *culturally passive* peoples⁵⁷. For Kossinna this was a distinction between Indo-Europeans, and above all Germans, and all other peoples, particularly Slavs⁵⁸. It was within the context of this idealized anthropological concept of a 'Nordic Race' then, superior to all others, that Kossinna saw the key to an unwritten history as it lay in the prehistoric find groups that his 'settlement archaeological method' had delineated.

Because more advanced cultures were considered an expression of an innate biological superiority, their achievements could *only* be spread from region to region by migration, *not* diffusion. Thus, according to Kossinna, in ever repeated advances towards the south, it was this slim, tall, intellectually brilliant Indo-European race who gave the decisive push to the course of history, conquering native populations and using them to build civilizations in the Near-East and Greece. Yet, as each of these successive waves of migrating Indo-Europeans had, of necessity, inbred with native ethnic clusters, they had impaired their creative abilities to such an extent that eventually these 'hybrids' became incapable of sustained cultural ingenuity.⁵⁹ The Germans however, because they had remained in their original homeland, remained, *racially*, the purest, and therefore the

⁵⁶ According to Kossinna, different peoples produced artifacts in a distinctive style as a result of certain genetically fixed propensities. As such the inherent racial superiority of the German people led them to produce aesthetically superior and progressive artifacts whereas Slavic culture in particular, was disparaged, it's pottery characterized as both 'dirty grey' and of 'shocking crudeness'.

⁵⁷ Though Klemm did divide mankind into 'active' and 'passive' races stating that such peoples differed in both temperament and mentality, it is not evident that he regarded racial characters as innate and permanent. Thus, while he selects Caucasians as exemplifying the active races, and coloured peoples the passive races, and though he pays considerable attention to the expansion of the former, any conception of them as superior is left implicit. Indeed, he emphasizes the complementary nature of the two halves since active races isolated from their passive partners, such as the nomadic Mongols, cannot achieve true culture. For a contextual review of Klemm's racial doctrines see Banton, M. 1977:27-40.

⁵⁸ The stigmatizing of Slavic culture as utterly debased and foreign was underlined by Carl Schuchardt who

⁵⁸ The stigmatizing of Slavic culture as utterly debased and foreign was underlined by Carl Schuchardt who stated that the Slavs had 'crept into Eastern Germany with a completely foreign culture.' Wiwjorra, I. 1996:176ff.

⁵⁹ The 'Laws of Hybridity' which held that those races of men most separated in physical organization, such as the blacks and whites do not, and should not amalgamate are particularly evident in the writings of de Gobineau who declared 'if mixtures of the blood are, to a certain extent beneficial to the mass of mankind, if they raise and ennoble it, this is merely at the expense of mankind itself, which is stunted, abased, enervated and humiliated in the persons of its noblest sons.' De Gobineau, J.A. 1853:209.

most gifted and inventive of all the Indo-European peoples. As such, they *alone* remained capable of carrying out the historical responsibility of creating civilization and imposing it upon inferior peoples.

Though in light of these ideas it comes as no surprise that Kossinna attempted to derive political demands from the results of his ethno-historical research⁶⁰, it was with the rise of National Socialism that his 'settlement archaeology' was elevated to the status of dogma and exploited for the legitimation of racist and expansionist policies. Though at first archaeological work was hindered by the economic disruption which characterized the immediate post-war years, it was the need for a rehabilitating program of national self- respect which in many ways provided fertile ground for the development of Nazism in Germany and the further popularizing of archaeology into all areas of life. 61 Though Kossinna 'the master' did not live to witness the considerable prestige and institutional support his theories enjoyed within the Third Reich, it goes without saying that had he survived, he would have hailed it with considerable satisfaction⁶². Indeed the debt owed by prehistoric archaeology to the patronage of the National Socialists is undeniable with as many as eight new chairs being endowed in prehistory coupled with an unprecedented level of funding for prehistoric excavations across Germany and Eastern Europe. As Arnold points out however, there was of course a price to be paid for this generous financial and institutional support. For just as Faust struck a bargain with Mephistopheles, prehistoric archaeology was to become the 'handmaiden' of the National Socialist platform of territorial expansion and racialist dogma.⁶³

Nevertheless, one must state that the official Nazi party attitude towards prehistoric archaeology within both Germany, and the countries earmarked for invasion or annexation, was at best ambivalent, at worst, openly cynical. For while Himmler and

⁶⁰ Apart from his rather explicit war propaganda during the course of the 1914-1918 conflict such demands included his flawed attempts to influence the decisions being taken at Versailles, the central tenets of which were laid down in his book, 'The German Ostmark: A Homeland for the Germani' 1918.

⁶¹ Cf. Sklenar, K. 1983:157-159.

⁶² Kossinna died in 1931, one year before Hitler rose to power in Germany.

⁶³ Arnold, B. and H. Hassmann, in Kohl, P.H. and Fawcett, C. eds. 1995:70-81.

Rosenburg, did their utmost to make progress with the institutionalization of prehistory as an ideological science, both were ridiculed, and criticized by the Führer and other highranking party officials for taking seriously their 'homemade Germanic myths'. 64 On the other hand, the propaganda value of an academic discipline which openly advertised its ability to identify ethnic boundaries on the basis of material culture remains could not be denied, and certainly proved seductive to the many German intellectuals who collaborated with, or at least acquiesced to the ideological prescriptions of the Rosenburg office. 65 Whilst this inconsistent attitude towards prehistoric research was partly due to the absence of any centralized organizational structure within the Nazi party, and partly due to the lack of any unified party ideology, it certainly does complicate any thorough analysis of the actual significance of archaeological research to the party platform and its inner circle. This difficulty has been highlighted by Hunger who characterized the National Socialist system as a "polycratic form of bureaucratic Darwinism whose activities and motives are extremely hard to interpret in the absence of adequate documentation, which is rarely accessible, even after almost fifty years."66 Nevertheless. if the rise in status of Kossinna, albeit posthumously, with the National Socialist takeover was logical, then his fall from grace after 1945 was equally inevitable.

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64 Arnold, B. Antiquity 64 1990:469.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Arnold, B. and H. Hassmann. 1995:77.

⁶⁵ While it should not be forgotten that there were many archaeologists who refused to go along with the Nazi transformation and exploitation of archaeology, it must be stressed that the majority of those who collaborated with the Nazis, be it out of conviction or opportunism, still produced good work in the sense of the German 'craft' tradition. See Harke, H. in P.J. Ucko ed. 1995:47-58.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURE: V. GORDON CHILDE

While during his own lifetime Kossinna certainly did not lack critics, a fact due, at least in part, to the provocative and polemical style of his work, the common reaction amongst German archaeologists in the post-war period was to distance themselves from the overtly racist character of Nazi archaeology. In fact many were quite content to single out Kossinna as "the evil mind behind all chauvinistic and facist exploitation of archaeology." Furthermore, because of the seemingly ready compatibility of Kossinna's identification of the modern Germans as the direct descendants of the original Indo-Europeans with the Nazi myth of an Aryan master race, many scholars rejected Kossinna's direct ethno-historical method for tracing historically known groups into prehistory. As Veit has pointed out however, inasmuch as people from now on anathematized Kossinna's work, and thus did not subject it to a proper critique, they were committing the same mistakes as in 1933, albeit it with the opposite premises. For with the verbal damnation of the Kossinna method, and his convenient branding as the only guilty party, the reasons for the ideological misuse of his ideas, which were, after all, based on the nature of archaeological knowledge, remain largely unexplained. 68

Nevertheless, it was during Kossinna's own lifetime that K.H. Jacob-Friesen gave expression to the dissenting voices concerning the legitimacy of Kossinna's equation of archaeological cultures and prehistoric peoples, when, in the conclusion of his wide ranging theoretical volume he stated – "Today it is still extraordinarily difficult to identify the areas of cultures with the areas of peoples when we know little more than the names of those peoples from historical sources. To make this kind of equation in periods millennia before the first historical mention of those people is a claim which can only be rejected." This debate was rekindled during World War II when, against the background of the Nazi dominance of prehistory, Ernst Wahle, himself a disciple of Kossinna courageously published a small, but now famous book entitled, 'On the Ethnic Interpretation of Early Historical Cultural Provinces' within which he sought to discredit

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⁶⁷ Renfrew, C. 1976:38.

⁶⁸ Veit, U. 1989:37-41.

⁶⁹ Jacob-Friesen, K.H. 1928:144. Quoted in Veit, U. 1989:41.

the erroneous assumption which lay at the roots of Kossinna's analysis – that in every period, a given archaeological culture equals a certain ethnos. By analyzing archaeological material, particularly from the early historical period, which could be compared against historical and linguistic evidence, Wahle sought to show how a single archaeological culture could in fact envelop several ethnic units and that a change in ethnos *does not* necessarily result in a new material culture. As such, a new material culture does not of necessity, as Kossinna maintained, indicate a new ethnic group. Nevertheless, despite Wahle's theoretical rebellion against the simplistic and uncritical conflation of archaeological, anthropological, linguistic, written and ethnographical sources, because of the particular circumstances of the time, with Kossinna's 'settlement archaeology' canonized as a constituent part of state ideology, the immediate published reaction was confined to a rejection of the critique by Kossinna's own pupil, M. Jahn. The wheels of ethnic interpretation continued to turn smoothly, and in the direction in which the regime of the time needed them to go in order to justify its geo-political ambitions.

Although enormous amounts of paper were printed in an effort to demonstrate the impropriety of the 'Kossinna method', and particularly its overtly racist component, many archaeologists, and not just in Germany, continued to employ his basic methodological principles. This is particularly true of Oswald Menghin. Though his work illustrates the initial replacement of the term 'people' by the more neutral, and supposedly less offensive alternative, 'culture', a development which continued after World War II⁷², lurking in the shadows of its archaeological correlate the old ethnic concepts continued to survive. For while scholars abstained from speaking of 'Indo-Europeans', or even 'Germani', the notion that 'peoples' must be lurking behind the various archaeological groupings remained something take for granted, albeit rarely made explicit. As such, the archaeological culture became, as in the works of V. Gordon Childe, an ideologically untainted, and therefore useful synonym for the term ethnic unit.

⁷⁰ Wahle, E. 1941:133.

⁷¹Jahn, M. 1941:73-82.

⁷² See Veit, U. 1989:42-47.

Unfortunately in doing so, it encouraged a tendency to obscure some of the real problems with regard to the equation between 'peoples' and certain group finds.⁷³

While Kossinna's work, in spite of its explicitly nationalistic, racist and ethnocentric approach to German prehistory did offer a means to account for the growing evidence of geographic, as well as chronological variation in the archaeological record⁷⁴, for the generation of scholars who came archaeologically of age before the 1960s, it was V. Gordon Childe who personified, indeed largely created, the emerging discipline of prehistory⁷⁵. It was with 'The Dawn of European Civilization', ⁷⁶ wherein Childe first combined Kossinna's concept of the archaeological culture and the identification of such cultures as the remains of distinct prehistoric groups, with Montelius' belief in the diffusion of technology from the ancient Near East, that he succeeded in producing a model for the 'culture-historical' approach to prehistory which was to dominate archaeological interpretation for the next three decades. Nevertheless while Childe's systematic application of the 'culture concept' in an attempt to account for the origins of what he deemed the 'distinctiveness and greatness of European civilization' constitutes for many the defining moment in the establishment of 'culture-historical archaeology', its use was fairly commonplace in the archaeological literature of the 1920s – and not just in Germany.

Whilst the isolation of geographically, and temporally restricted assemblages of prehistoric archaeological material as 'cultures', and their labeling as the material

⁷³ Hodson, F.R. BIA 17 1980:1-10.

⁷⁴ While there is a continuing tendency to set Kossinna up as a sort of 'straw man' whose scholarly work is presented as the primary basis of later archaeological research under the Nazis, such an approach tends to lump all of his works into an indistinguishably negative and ideologically tainted mass while ignoring his potentially valuable contributions. For in spite of its sometimes 'amateurish' quality Kossinna's work did mark the final replacement of an evolutionary approach to prehistory by a historical one. He must therefore be seen as an 'innovator' whose work was of major importance for the development of archaeology. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:165-167.

⁷⁵ As Kent Flannery has succinctly stated, 'it was Childe who made order out of archaeological chaos'. Quoted in Harris, D.R. ed. 1989:2. ⁷⁶ Childe, V.G. 1929.

⁷⁷ In his earliest works Childe followed his Oxford mentors John L. Myers and Arthur Evans in attributing this greatness to the manner in which technological innovations of Near Eastern origin had been put to new social uses as a result of the political genius and dynamism of nomadic Indo-European conquerors who had supposedly entered Europe from the steppes of Central Asia. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:168.

remains of particular named groups of people seems to have occurred independently to a number of archaeologists, generally it occurred first in Northern and Central Europe where there had been a longstanding interest in tracing ethnic entities in the archaeological record. As early as 1866, the Norwegian archaeologist Olaf Rygh interpreted distinctive spear points and arrowheads found in his country as the product of a particular Stone Age culture and people, and by 1871 had noted the existence of "two Stone Age cultures, and two Stone Age peoples in Norway", one of which he referred to as the 'Arctic culture', could be attributed to the Lapps. 79 Furthermore, in 1898, the Danish archaeologist Sophus Muller argued that whilst the separate graves and megaliths he had unearthed in Denmark were contemporary, the weapons and ornaments they contained were of a different kind and thus, must represent two different, and distinct groups of people. 80 Whilst this concept of culture, in the sense of the distinctive life ways of discrete groups of people developed rigorously within European archaeological literature, similar views only began to gain currency in Britain at the turn of the century, their rise to prominence in many ways paralleling the demise of the evolutionary perspective.81

Though John Meyers' 'The Dawn of History', published in 1911, did not refer to 'archaeological cultures', as early as 1890, his Oxford colleague, Arthur Evans had identified a late Celtic urnfield in Southeastern England with the Belgae whom the Romans had reported as invading England in the first century BCE. Later, archaeologists such as Cyril Fox, M.C. Burkitt 4, and Harold Peake 5 were referring to individual cultures such as the 'Maglemose', and 'Tripolje' cultures, amongst others, with

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⁷⁸ Cf. Sklenar, K. 1983:67-87.

⁷⁹ Meinander, C.F. 1981:104. Though he sharply rejected the theory of a culture, archaeological or otherwise, being associated with a particular race in his 1909 thesis '*The Arctic Stone Age*' A.W. Brogger did, seemingly unawares, equate the Arctic population with the 'Slate Culture' he had delineated, thus giving culture an ethnic compass.

⁸⁰ Trigger, B.G. 1978:81.

⁸¹ On the demise of the 'evolutionary perspective' within British social science circles see Trigger, B.G. 1998:83-109.

⁸² Evans, A. Archaeologia 52 1890:315-388.

⁸³ Fox, C. 1923. 1932.

⁸⁴ Burkitt, M.C. 1928.

⁸⁵ Peake, H.J.E. 1922. 1927. 1940.

a confidence, which assumed a widespread familiarity with the concept. Indeed, during the 1920s, the term 'archaeological culture', as well as its general significance, was widely understood, if intermittently used, in Britain. For example, in attempt to track down the historical Dorians through archaeological research, Casson associated the Dorians with the appearance, and general development of a culture distinguished by objects of pottery and bronze known as 'geometric'⁸⁶. Likewise, in their discussion of the Llynfawr hoard, Crawford and Wheeler referred to a late Bonze Age culture characterized by distinctive finger tip urns, razors and square camps⁸⁷. Furthermore, though such taxonomic categories as 'race', and 'area of cultivation' had been utilized in earlier literature, it is not difficult to detect some of the same basic assumptions being employed in the culture concept.

For instance, in 1905, Greenwell argued that two early Iron Age burials in Yorkshire belonged to a common group because "there is so much in common in their principal, and more important features, that they must be regarded as the burial places of people whose habits, and manner of life were similar." On this basis he argued that, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, such an, 'area of cultivation' suggests the existence of a people united by an, 'affinity of blood' Indeed, while it is important to recognize that whilst 'ties of blood' and 'race' had been supplanted by references to 'ancestry' and 'common origins', a similar emphasis on the correlation of distinctive cultural habits and ways of life with discrete communities and /or cultural groups is evident in O.G.S. Crawford's discussion of techniques for the identification of cultures Herein he stated that, "culture may be defined as the sum of the ideals, activities and materials which characterize a group of human beings. It is to a community what character is to an individual". Furthermore, he argued that archaeologists should aim at he recovery of such

⁸⁶ Casson, S. The Antiquities Journal 1 1921:198-221. The 'new evidence' to which Casson alludes in his title is the 'appearance' and distribution of a distinctive new pottery type he referred to as 'geometric' as a result of its decorative patterns.

⁸⁷ Crawford, O.G.S. and R.E.M. Wheeler. Archaeologia 71 1921:133-140.

⁸⁸ Greenwell, W. Archaeologia 60 1905:306

⁸⁹ Ibid. 1905:307.

⁹⁰ Crawford, O.G.S. 'Man and his Past' 1921.

⁹¹ Ibid. 1921:79.

homogenous cultures through the analysis of a broad range of types and their distribution in space and time.

While the prevalence of such works may explain why Childe felt no need to define the 'archaeological culture' within his grand synthesis of European prehistory, even though it is now regarded as the first major demonstration of the potential for this 'new approach'92, he did develop, and systematically apply a more exacting view of that entity in some of his more detailed studies. In 'The Danube in Prehistory'93 Childe, criticizing those who chose to label every local variety of pottery as a 'new culture'94 stated that a culture consisted of "certain types of remains – pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites, house forms – constantly recurring together...We assume that such a complex is the material expression of what today would be called a people." For Childe then, cultures had a distinctive content, occupied a specific geographic area and were sufficiently limited in time that their remains can be regarded as representing a synchronous phase of a society's existence. Though his presentation of this complex of regularly associated material traits was based largely upon ideas already in circulation of, Childe did make some original contributions which foreshadowed later developments not just in his own thinking, but across the discipline as a whole.

Though Childe's tendency to equate archaeological cultures with the ways of life of particular peoples has led some to dismiss him as 'yet another twentieth century archaeologist who viewed cultures as collections of homogeneously shared and hence

⁹² It was Crawford who was among the first to recognize the immense value of Childe's bold historical analysis in which traditional periodization was greatly enriched by the systematic organization of material data into 'archaeological cultures'. Cf. Clark, J.G.D. 1957:34-35. See also BIA 13 1976:5.

⁹³ Childe, V.G. 1929.

⁹⁴ This position which Childe espoused until the end of his life corresponds to Clark's observation that the early culture historical archaeologists relied on a closed circle of pots and stones to define assemblages, contacts and chronologies. Clark, J.G.D. 1975:6.

⁹⁵ Childe, V.G. 1929:iv-v. Though he viewed them as much less comprehensive, for Childe, the archaeological culture, as the distinctive creation of real peoples, did not differ in kind from the culture delineated from the observations of the ethnologist.

⁹⁶ Although Childe did not acknowledge it at the time, he later made it quite clear that he had borrowed his conceptualization of the archaeological culture from Kossinna, purging it of its explicit racist and Germanic connotations though retaining Kossinna's central idea that an archaeological culture 'corresponds' with a particular 'people' or 'society'.

diagnostically equivalent traits, 97 as early as 1929 Childe began to differentiate between those material traits which functioned as *ethnic* indicators and those which were primarily of technological significance. The former, he argued, which included home made pottery, specific ornaments and burial rites, and which tended both to reflect local tastes and to persist relatively unchanged over long periods of time amongst particular peoples, could, with a large degree of certainty, be treated as diagnostic of specific cultures, and hence provide evidence of ethnic identity. On the other hand, new, and more efficient tools, weapons, and other technological items were likely to have diffused rapidly from one group to another since considerable advantage could be derived from their utilization 98. For Childe both sorts of evidence were necessary for a legitimate culture-historical analysis. While ethnically persistent traits, such as those he delineated allowed specific peoples to be identified in the archaeological record since they were likely to be associated with particular groups for long periods of time, functionally efficient ones, because they diffused rapidly from one culture to another, were especially valuable for assigning neighbouring cultures to the same period, and establishing cultural chronologies prior to the invention of radio-carbon dating.⁹⁹

In this fashion Childe believed it was possible to fit the complex mosaic of cultures he had delineated for European prehistory into a spatial and temporal framework which revealed, not only technological change, but the origins, movements and interactions of prehistoric peoples. Though Childe decided which material traits were ethnically and/or technologically significant on the basis of 'common sense' as opposed to the results of any specific ethnographic parallels, as Renfrew makes clear, he was one of the first archaeologists to introduce explicitly *functional* considerations into the study of archaeological data. Whilst such a discriminating approach to the evidence for cultures in the archaeological record enabled Childe to avoid any crude assumption of a direct

⁹⁷ Binford, L.R. and J.A. Sabloff. JAR 38 1982:137-153.

⁹⁸ Childe, V.G. 1929:vii/248.

⁹⁹ Yet, while the powerful comparative tool of radio-carbon dating has resulted in the rejection and/or revision of most of Childe's chronological and spatial arrangements, his theoretical work continues to inspire and resonate with the perspectives of successive generations of archaeologists and with new fashions of archaeological interpretation.

equivalence between 'peoples' and 'cultures' ¹⁰⁰, he was however, unable to escape the nineteenth century view that that there is something fundamentally and essentially different about different ethnic groups. Indeed, this dependency, which Renfrew refers to as 'Childe's essentialism' is illustrated in the widely read *The Aryans*. Therein Childe writes of a "a people who, whether they came from South Russia or represented a section of the pre-Dolmenic population, were, we believe, Aryan in character. It was these who inspired the higher developments even in the megalithic culture of the North. The interaction of the two types of civilization was the mainspring of a rapid progress." ¹⁰¹

Childe however was *not* a racist. Having rejected the idea that a 'particular genius resided in the conformation of Nordic skulls', Childe argued that the Indo-Europeans succeeded, not because they possessed a material culture or natural intelligence superior to those of other people, but because they spoke a superior language and benefited from the more competent mentality it made possible. ¹⁰² Nevertheless, while it continued to matter to Childe "which peoples were which" ¹⁰³ it is extremely doubtful that he continued to believe that the Indo-Europeans, or their language, were in some sense superior. Indeed, in *The Dawn of European Civilization* Childe explicitly rejected the racist interpretations of Kossinna which attributed all human progress to the biological superiority of an Indo-European master race. ¹⁰⁴ On the contrary, he frequently appealed to the concept of 'ethnic mixing' as an invigorating, culturally dynamic process which led to progress. While this notion of the dynamism of inter-ethnic interaction emerges in the previously quoted passage from *The Aryans*, it can be substantiated by another, this time from *The Bronze Age* where Childe speaks about developments in Europe in the aftermath of the

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which correspond with peoples. Indeed Childe was quite explicit on this issue on several occasions – 'cultures and race do not coincide...there are no grounds for assuming that the creators or bearers of a culture were always a single race whose members shared distinctive genetic characteristics.' Childe, V.G. 1950:1.

¹⁰¹ Childe, V.G. 1926:210-211.

^{&#}x27;...the lasting gift bequeathed by the Aryans to the conquered peoples was neither a higher material culture nor a superior physique but...a more excellent language and the mentality it generated.' Ibid. 1926:111.

¹⁰³ Renfrew, C. in D.R. Harris ed. 1998:131.

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, repelled by the misuse of ethnic concepts by the National Socialists in Germany during World War II, Childe was to later distance himself from the 'Aryan' theme entirely.

Beakers: "Thus three currents met in England during the Early Bronze Age: one from central Europe, represented by the invading Beaker folk, another from the Iberian peninsula, perhaps unconnected with population movements, and a third, plainly mercantile, from Scandinavian countries. That explains the intense vigour and originality of our Bronze Age civilization." ¹⁰⁵

While such an interpretation contrasts sharply with Kossinna's belief that ethnic and racial mixture inevitably led towards cultural decline, it is also symptomatic of a broader positive attitude towards foreign influence than was evident in Germany at this time. For while the British of the Edwardian period were as proud of their supposed Nordic or Aryan racial affinities as were the Germans, unlike the Germans who could trace their ethnic group back into prehistoric times as the sole occupants of their modern homeland, the British were keenly aware that England had been conquered and settled in turn by Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans, with archaeologists positing that similar 'invasions' had occurred in prehistoric times also. Thus, while some English claimed that the prehistoric Celtic peoples were only their predecessors and not their ancestors, most historians argued that what was biologically and culturally most desirable in successive indigenous populations had combined with what was most advanced in invading groups to produce a people whose hybrid vigour, composed of various European stocks, made them the best in the world. ¹⁰⁶

Soon after the initial publication of *The Dawn of European Civilization* however, Childe began to express serious reservations about the value of an ethnically based culture-historical approach to prehistory. ¹⁰⁷ Indeed, whilst he increasingly doubted that there was a sufficient correlation between 'ethnicity' and material culture for archaeologists to be

¹⁰⁵ Childe, V.G. 1930:167.

Rouse, I.B. 1972:71-72. Furthermore, this positive attitude towards foreign influence made British archaeologists more receptive than nationally motivated Germans to Montelius' contention that prehistoric Europe owed much of its cultural development to the Near East.

¹⁰⁷ Despite the doubts Childe expressed about the theoretical value of such an approach he continued to produce revised editions of *The Dawn of European Civilization* as well as more detailed 'culture-historical' analyses of the Danube Valley, the Near East, Scotland and England. See, Childe, V.G. 1929. 1928. 1935. 1940.

able to trace historically known peoples deep into the past, a position which accorded with that held by Boasian anthropologists in the United States, he also became increasingly nebulous about what such 'peoples' might be 108. As an alternative to this ethnically based culture-historical approach then, Childe undertook a series of studies of economic and technological innovations in prehistoric times as a means of better understanding cultural change. In rapid succession he examined the impacts of plant and animal domestication and of metallurgy in the ancient Near East which in turn led him to the idea of successive 'revolutions' as engines of demographic, social and political change which had irreversibly transformed human history. 'Progress' was achieved through human effort and inventiveness, it was not determined by external forces. Though such interpretations were often based on very little archaeological data¹⁰⁹, they did demonstrate better than any previous studies, the importance of investigating technological and economic changes in prehistory as a basis for comprehending other forms of change. While this early interest in major economic and technical innovations (domestication, the beginnings of metallurgy, urbanism) when coupled with his less well known work on settlement form and functions, have led some to suggest that Childe was a forerunner of the 'processual' archaeology of the 1960s and 1970s, as Renfrew notes, his lack of any serious comparative interest in cultures, as well as his continuing loyalty to the concept of diffusion as the principal creative force in human history meant he did not contribute to the theoretical development of what came to be known as the 'New Archaeology' to the same degree as the Americans Julian Steward and Lewis Binford. 110

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¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Childe was to conclude that such ethnic studies were nothing more than the archaeological equivalent of an antiquated political history. Childe, V.G. 1958: 70.

¹⁰⁵ Childe assumption that all three 'revolutions', the Neolithic, the Domestic and the Urban, had many features in common led him to postulate tenuous and often misleading parallels between the Industrial Revolution and earlier episodes of cultural change. For example, he imagined that Sumerian cities had supported their populations by being major centres of industrial production and that each successive revolution had been followed by a major increase in population. Childe, V.G. 1934:42/285-288.

Renfrew, C. in Harris, D.R. ed. 1998:121-135. In fairness to Childe however it must be stressed that before the 1960s few archaeologists had more than a regional interest in prehistory. Only after that time did a growing battery of radio-carbon dates make it possible to correlate regional sequences of development on a worldwide basis and to compare rates, as well as sequences, of change in prehistoric times. On the development of processual, or New Archaeology in the 1950s and 1960s, see the contributions of Clark, J.G.D. 1939. 1952. 1954. Binford, L.R. AA 28 1962:217-225. Steward, J.H. Anthropos 32 1937:87-104. 1937.

Nevertheless, whilst Childe's growing functionalist agenda added a further social dimension to the culture-historical approach, it was the methodology which he forged for The Dawn of European Civilization and made explicit with his definition of the archaeological culture in The Danube in Prehistory, in part due to Kossinna, which, in one form or another, has provided the dominant framework for archaeological interpretation throughout most of the world during the twentieth century. 111 including the land of Israel, "where more sins have probably been committed in the name of archaeology than in any commensurate portion of the Earth's surface"112.

¹¹¹ In the new 'nation-states' created in Europe after the Great War, this culture-historical paradigm often converged with a nationalist agenda to provide, and occasionally fabricate, material evidence of unbroken historical continuity. Cf. the contributions to Diaz-Andreu, M. and T.C. Champion eds. 1995. See also Kohl, P.L. and C. Fawcett eds. 1995.

¹¹² Wheeler, S.M. 1956:178.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE IDENTITY OF ISRAEL

The archaeology of the land of Israel constitutes one of the most time-honoured traditions of excavation and scholarly enquiry in any region of the world. While a historical interest in the region in the sense of the exploration of biblical topography and antiquities goes back centuries to the earliest pilgrims' reports of the Byzantine period, it was only with the disintegration of the Ottoman empire towards the end of the nineteenth century that the region became an attractive target for economic, political and cultural penetration from the West¹¹³. Throughout that period, archaeological exploration, along with health, education, missionary work and civil engineering became one of a number of highly visible European endeavours. Permanent national societies for the exploration of Palestine were founded by the British (1865), the Americans (1870), Germans (1877), and French (1890), with scholars from each country viewing the various archaeological sites they were excavating not so much as sacred shrines, but as valuable sources of prestige-giving antiquities. Beyond specific national competitions however, there was a larger shared concept which transformed the potential significance of each and every archaeological site in the 'Holy Land'. In a manner strongly reminiscent of the imperialist/colonialist archaeologies outlined previously, Western explorers, as selfidentified participants in the conquering, civilizing crusade which this European advance represented, began to dissociate the modern peoples of the land from the achievements of its ancient civilizations.

While during the years of the British Mandate such exploration, largely due to the necessary expense and logistical difficulties involved, remained primarily the prerogative of large foreign institutions, as Shavit has shown, an interest in what might be called 'modern archaeology' eventually dawned amongst the Jewish intelligentsia who not only found it intellectually cogenial, but from a nationalistic point of view, saw it as providing

¹¹³ Though no full scale history of this branch of archaeology has yet been written, insightful reviews of the historical development of the discipline before, during and after this period are available in Moorey, P.R.S. 1991, Fritz, V. 1994, Callaway, J.A. BAR 6(6) 1981:44-55, Dever, W.G. BA 43 1980:40-48, King, P.J. CBQ 45 1983:1-16, BA 45 1983:230-232, ABI 1987:15-30, Mazar, A. BTC 1988:109-128, Silberman, N.A. 1982.

a tangible means of communion between the people and the land¹¹⁴. It was thus that Nahum Schloucz, supervisor of the first Jewish excavation of Hamat-Tiberias in 1920 opined that the aim of this 'Hebrew archaeology' was to reveal the deep roots of Jewish existence in the land of Israel and thus 'resolve the riddle of its creative forces'. More specifically he argued that archaeology could help recover important chapters in Jewish history that had been literally forgotten, and buried. With the creation of the 'Hebrew Society for the Study of Palestine and Its Antiquities' alongside the major international institutions then, local interest in archaeology shifted from a purely intellectual enterprise to a 'holy duty'. ¹¹⁵

Indeed in the years of struggle leading up to the establishment of the new state, and owing much to mounting Arab opposition, the cult of archaeology did much to determine the direction of Israeli culture. In a largely immigrant country, among a hybrid people of over a hundred different countries of origin, archaeology came to reflect an almost obsessive search for identity. As Silberman writes, archaeological discoveries of various ancient sites offered 'poetic validation for modern Jewish settlement' 116. Not only did archaeological findings nurture a sense of continuous Jewish habitation of the land however, they also served to verify the historicity of the biblical accounts, thereby validating the ancient history of the Jews. This internal Jewish discourse then helped to normalize Jewish existence in Palestine by recalling a time when Jewish sovereignty in the land was taken for granted, banishing any ingrained Diaspora dissonance over the notion of Jewish national autonomy in the land of Israel. It provided young Jewish immigrants with local historical roots to replace the pseudo-roots of the Diaspora, fostering a kind of 'historical amnesia' which assured that the events which took place over two thousand years ago were grasped more vividly than anything since. Archaeology then provided this virgin society with a potent political weapon which both celebrated the endurance of Jewish settlement, and confirmed the legitimacy of the Zionist claim to the land.

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¹¹⁴Cf. Shavit, Y. in N.A. Silberman and D.B. Small eds. JSOTS 237 1995:48-51.

¹¹⁵ Brawer, A.Y. 1965:228-236.

¹¹⁶ Silberman, N.A. in N.A. Silberman and D.B. Small eds. JSOTS 237 1995: 62-81.

Yet, while the old lament about 'foreigners' handling the archaeological recovery of the Jewish past in Palestine had faded into the dim recesses of memory¹¹⁷, the various internationally funded institutions in Jerusalem, and particularly the American School of Oriental Research, now under the direction of W.F. Albright continued to dominate the field. Over and against the patriotic oversell of his more 'nationally motivated' contemporaries however, Albright's stated goal was to show that there was 'objective' evidence for accepting the picture of external invasion and conquest recounted in the biblical traditions. His reconstruction of Israelite origins, which continues to be highly influential, was based on his unparalleled knowledge of archaeological results from Palestine married to a somewhat idealistic reading of the biblical traditions. As Whitelam points out, he saw a *direct* correlation between evidence for the destruction of numerous Palestinian urban sites at the end of the Late Bronze Age, their replacement by substantially poorer settlements during the early Iron Age, and the tradition in the book of Joshua of an Israelite invasion and conquest of Palestine. 118 Nevertheless, while Albright's espousal of an Israelite conquest of Palestine was motivated by a desire to transform the biblical narratives from the allegorical realm into authorized citations of historical fact, the entire procedure was dependent upon his ability to isolate a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture in the highlands of Central Palestine. In this respect the year 1934 was of special significance, not merely for excavation in Palestine, but for research into the origins of Early Israel.

While up to this point excavation throughout the hill-country at various sites with 'established' biblical connections had laid the groundwork for the ceramic chronology of the Iron Age, it was at Bethel that the stage was set for the first connection between what would be seen as a characteristic assemblage for Iron I hill country sites, and where the

Other complaints however were periodically aired. From the initial protests against Sukenik's excavations at Beit Alpha in 1928, to the charge that the 'cult of archaeology' had deleterious effects on Jewish religion and spiritual engagement with modernity. Cf. Shavit, Y. in Silberman, N.A. and D.B. Small eds. 1995:50. Elon, A. in N.A. Silberman and D.B. Small eds 1995:34-41.

Whitelam, K.W. 1996:80. For convenient reviews and details of Albright's reconstruction of Israelite origins see Miller, J.M. in J. Hayes eds. 1977:212-279. Gottwald, N.K. 1979:192-203. Ramsey, G.W. 1982:65-98. Chaney, M. in D.N. Freedman and D.F. Graf eds. 1983:39-90.

famed collared-pithos would be singled out for special mention. Yet, whilst Albright did note in his preliminary report on the excavations at Bethel that "virtually all of the hundreds of store-jar rims found...have the collar which is so characteristic of early Iron I in central Palestine", the primary usefulness of this vessel-type remained as an aid to chronology, *not* an ethnic indicator. It was not until 1937 that Albright, in a synthesis of recent seasons of excavations at Bethel, Lachish and Megiddo was to make his first explicit statements about the assumptions he was beginning to formulate with regard to the Iron I ceramic assemblage of the hill country.

Describing the pottery discovered at stratum VI at Megiddo in 1934 as "almost indistinguishable from contemporary Israelite pottery in Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel. 'Ai, Gibeah and Beth Zur, etc.", all sites documented in the Joshua narrative as recent Israelite acquisitions, Albright declared that the Megiddo assemblage, which included large amounts of collared-rim pithoi, "must accordingly be Israelite" More significantly, he was explicit about his own decision to make such a bold claim, noting that "last year the writer was not yet ready to claim this pottery as specifically Israelite, but this hesitation is no longer warranted." Whilst the foundation was certainly laid for a marked shift in archaeological theorizing in the region, away from the use of ceramic types merely to identify chronological periods, to their direct linkage with political and ethnic boundaries, it was not until the publication of his 'Archaeology of Palestine' in 1949 that Albright was to establish the collared-rim pithos as the ethnic indicator of Israelites par excellence. 122

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Recognized in the 1930s as a major component in the ceramic assemblage of hill-country sites associated most closely with early Israel, this pot-type has received intense scrutiny by all who have studied the period, primarily in order to define the borders of ancient Israel and hence track the extent and date of its expansion. Cf. Finkelstein, I. 1988:275-285. Mazar, A. IEJ 31 1981:27-31. London, G. BASOR 273 1989:43-47.

¹²⁰ Albright, W.F. BASOR 68 1937:25. Cf. W.F. Albright and N. Glueck AJA 41 1937:147.

Albright, W.F. 'Further Light on the History of Israel From Lachish and Megiddo' BASOR 68 1937:25.

¹²² Albright's bold identification of the collared-rim pithos with the Israelites was however challenged by a senior member of the Megiddo staff, Robert Engberg. What particularly bothered Engberg was that Albright seemed to have broken his own rule, namely that 'pottery cannot be used in the Near East, except in rare cases, as an index of ethnic movements'. Cf. Engberg, R. BASOR 78 1940:4-9. This article also includes an appended note from Albright who attempted to respond to some of Engberg's major criticisms.

Though it has been argued that central to Albright's reasoning was Glueck's pioneering work in Transjordan which was yielding regional ceramic differences which seemed to parallel ancient national ones¹²³, the approaches of both Glueck and Albright are firmly grounded in the 'culture-historical' framework initiated by Kossinna, and developed by Childe. Indeed while Albright's tendency to define an ancient ethnic population on the basis a small number of supposedly diagnostic traits, namely the collared pithos and the 'four-room' house, parallels some of Childe's earlier efforts¹²⁴, the philosophical assumptions which underlie his work have far more of an affinity with Kossinna's 'settlement archaeology'. For while his espousal of an Israelite 'conquest' of Palestine requires him to posit an external origin for these invading 'Israelites', their historical mission of *creating* civilization and *imposing* it upon inferior peoples is remarkably reminiscent of Kossinna's migrating Indo-Europeans. Within the broad evolutionary schema which informs Albright's entire philosophy of history then, there is an inevitable historical process by which "...people of a markedly inferior type should vanish before a people of superior potentialities, since there is a point beyond which racial mixture cannot go without disaster..." It was within the context of this all-encompassing philosophy of history then that Albright presents the "Canaanites, with their orginatic nature worship...sensuous nudity and their gross mythology" being replaced by "Israel with its pastoral simplicity, its lofty monotheism and its severe code of ethics." ¹²⁶While such a typology of 'mental phenomena' which Albright used to describe the development of human cultural achievement in the ancient Near East certainly reinforced his reading of a sharp distinction between 'Israelite' and 'Canaanite' material culture 127, the end

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¹²³ Esse, D.L. JNES 51(2) 1992:84.

¹²⁴ Although Childe did stress the importance of all aspects of the material record in the description of archaeological/ethnic cultures, in practice most were defined on the basis of a small number of supposedly diagnostic artifacts. Cf. Childe, V.G. 1956:121-123.

¹²⁵ Albright, W.F. 1957:280. As Long points out, Albright published two books of intellectual history, really histories of theism in the West, which while intended to solidify his position as the fore-most interpreter of the ancient Near East, were also planned as correctives to J.H. Breasted's strictly humanistic work, '*The Dawn of Conscience*' 1933. Cf. Long, B.O. in Silberman, N.A. and D.B. Small eds. JSOTS 237 1995:82. See also Albright, W.F. 1940. 1964. American Scholar 5 1936:287-299. ¹²⁶ Albright, W.F. 1957:281

^{&#}x27;Since Israelite culture was in many respects a *tabula rasa* when the Israelites invaded Palestine, we might expect them to have been influenced strongly by the culture of their Canaanite predecessors. Yet excavations show a most *abrupt break* between the culture of the Canaanite Late Bronze Age and that of the Israelite early Iron Age in the hill-country of Palestine' Albright, W.F. 1957:284-285.

result of the inexorable progress of this divinely guided evolution, and replacement of cultures, was to be the foundation of an Israelite national state.¹²⁸

While Albright as the objective academic continually assures the reader that what is being presented is a trustworthy reconstruction of Israel's past, investigation of the ideological and political contexts in which these claims were generated 'reveals a thinly disguised program of religious and cultural apologetics'. 129 Just as Kossinna developed his 'settlement archaeology' with the aim of stimulating, clarifying, and consolidating nationalist sentiment during a period of radical social re-adjustment, Albright's own reconstruction of Israelite origins also implicates him in the contemporary political debate, in the "most frightening way". 130 For while his approach to archaeological investigation, similar to his Israeli contemporaries, tended toward 'scriptural fundamentalism', it is Albright's vision of social change, predicated on the arrival of a distinct new ethnic group which Whitelam sees as giving succuor to a growing Zionist national consciousness... "silencing any claim to the Palestinian past other than that of Israel." Though his profession of friendship to both Arabs and Jews displays a clear recognition of the political context of his work, such oscillation between the causes of the two peoples was eventually resolved as Albright emerged as a vocal advocate of the historical right of the Jewish people and its internationally recognized legal right in Palestine. 132 In this respect, Albright's conquering Israel of the Iron Age constitutes a mirror image of the Israel of his own day: Israel is presented as the carrier of a (European) civilization which can only benefit the impoverished region. No mention is ever made of the rights of the indigenous population to the land. His only concern is with the historic right of Israel to the home of the patriarchs and prophets.

¹²⁸ Such theological and evolutionary assumptions are made explicit, if not justified in the epilogue where Albright states, 'It is far more *reasonable* to recognize that, just as man is being evolved by the eternal spirit of the Universe, so his religious life is the result of stimuli coming from the same source and progressing toward the same goal. In other words, the evolution of man's religious life is guided by divine revelation.' Albright, W.F. 1957:401 n.1

¹²⁹ Long, B.O. in Silberman, N.A. and D.B. Small eds. JSOTS 237 1995: 83

¹³⁰ Whitelam, K.W. 1996:82

¹³¹ Ibid. 1996:79.

¹³² Ibid. 1996:89-90. Cf. Albright, W.F. New Palestine 8 1942:14

While Albright's characterization of the sensuous, immoral Canaanite stands in a long tradition of Orientalist representations of the 'Other' as the polar opposite of the Western, rational intellectual, to accuse Albright of popularizing as historical fact a racist genocide which is "remarkably reminiscent of the demographic distinction following the Zionist influx into Palestine" goes well beyond the evidence. For as Provan has shown, "it has proved perfectly possible for people to hold to evolutionary views of human society, whether convincing or not, while combining this with a code of ethics which demanded the highest respect for all human life." Nevertheless, Albright's passionate conclusions, and those of his contemporaries, cannot simply be dismissed as the private interpretations of various individual scholars from a more uncouth age for they are illustrative of a commitment to a pervasive 'culture-historical' epistemology which continues to be highly influential in archaeological research. As such, the critique to which Albright's vision of 'Israel' may be subjected is a critique which applies to this brand of archaeological interpretation more generally.

¹³³ Ibid. 1996:82

Bruce Trigger has suggested that the widespread adoption of this culture-historical paradigm was stimulated by the need to establish a system for classifying the spatial and temporal variation which became increasingly evident in the archaeological remains of various countries¹³⁴. Indeed, as Renfrew points out, similar arguments continue to be made with relation to 'virgin' archaeological territory¹³⁵. Such statements however seem to imply that the culture-historical approach involves the empiricist extraction, description, and classification of variation in the material record without reference to any preconceived concepts or theories.

It cannot be denied that the way in which people conduct their lives varies from time to time, and from place to place and that this variation is frequently manifested in some form or other in the material record. From this simple truism however, archaeologists have elaborated a complex, and rather unsatisfactory edifice based on the idea of the 'archaeological culture'. Though Trigger is not wrong in declaring that these inclusive archaeological entities were developed as classificatory devices to bring order to the immense range of archaeological material discovered, one of the principal assumptions underlying the development and refinement of these archaeological cultures is that they primarily had meaning as historical indicators of spatial and temporal relationships between human groups. That is, that there existed a direct correlation between these bounded, homogenous groupings of regularly associated material traits and particular prehistoric ethnic groups, peoples, or tribes. This assumption however, the central tenet of culture-history, is itself based upon a normative view of culture. That is, within a given group cultural practices and beliefs tend to conform to prescriptive ideational norms or rules of behaviour. Because such a conceptualization of culture is based on the assumption that 'culture', in the plural sense, is composed of a shared and undifferentiated set of cognitive structures which are maintained both by regular interaction within the group and/or the transmission of such norms to subsequent generations through the process of socialization, the 'cultures' defined by the

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¹³⁴ Trigger, B.G. 1978:86.

¹³⁵ 'In the cases of regions which are still archaeologically *terra incognita* the application of the culture-historical approach has enormous significance. In those areas where a skeletal framework is already available, perspectives developed by processual and post-processual archaeologies are particularly useful.' Cf. Renfrew, C. 1972:17. See also Paddayya, K. in P.J. Ucko ed. 1995:139.

archaeologist are, of necessity, a material expression of the 'mental template' of their makers.

Furthermore, because 'learning' forms the primary means of cultural transmission between generations, internal cultural change, and innovation was, within this paradigm, deemed to be an essentially slow, incremental process, resulting from either an inbuilt dynamic, or 'drift' away from previously accepted norms of behaviour 136. As a result, a high degree of homogeneity in material culture was deemed to be a direct reflection of this regularized contact and group interaction. Obvious discontinuities in the distribution of material culture on the other hand, were variously explained as the result of the migration and/or invasion of new populations, or the diffusion of radically new and powerful ideas and technologies¹³⁷. Thus, because the degree of social and/or physical distance between what were, in essence, discrete and bounded entities could be measured in terms of the degree of similarity in archaeological assemblages, it was widely proclaimed that "prehistoric archaeology could recognize peoples and marshall them onto the stage to take the place of the personal actors who form the historians troupe." ¹³⁸ Whilst doubts concerning the question of equivalence between archaeological cultures and peoples were periodically expressed within the framework of culture-history, for instance by Jacob-Friesen, ¹³⁹Wahle, ¹⁴⁰ and Engberg ¹⁴¹ it must be pointed out that such critiques generally consisted of cautionary tales focusing upon the apparent poverty of the archaeological record in revealing ethnicity, as opposed any explicit questioning of the principal assumptions underlying the culture-historical approach itself¹⁴². That is, it was

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¹³⁶ In this respect 'culture' was seen as an essentially conservative phenomenon – a view which was entirely consistent with a diffusionist and migrationist framework. Internal cultural change and innovation were perceived as a slow and gradual process amongst most cultural groups, with the exception of a few particularly creative ones, such as the Aryans. These latter groups were considered to be the centres of innovation and change, either because of their inherent biological or cultural characteristics, or because of their particular environmental circumstances.

¹³⁷ As Childe himself stated 'Distributional changes [in diagnostic types] should reflect displacements of populations, the expansions, migrations, colonizations or conquests with which literary history is familiar.' Childe, V.G. 1956:135.

¹³⁸ Childe, V.G. 1940:2. See also Piggott, S. 1965:7.

¹³⁹ Jacob-Friesen, K.H. 1928.

¹⁴⁰ Wahle, E. 1941.

¹⁴¹ Engberg, R. BASOR 78 1940:4-9.

¹⁴² In this respect however Engberg's critiques deserve special mention since his contention that ethnic change and material culture change were not always co-terminous drew a revealing response from Albright

argued that archaeological evidence might not provide access to the ideational norms of past cultures or ethnic groups due to technical difficulties with the data rather than the interpretive principles themselves. As a result, assumptions about the holistic and monolithic nature of cultures and societies have stubbornly persisted within the discipline – in the face of much evidence to the contrary.

who admitted that it was exceedingly dangerous to equate ceramic repertoires with ethnic groups. Engberg, R. BASOR 78 1940:8

CHAPTER THREE ETHNICITY: A THEORTEICAL REVIEW

THE MEANING OF ETHNICITY	115
PRIMORDIALISM IN ETHNICITY	127
INSTRUMENTALISM IN ETHNICITY	138
FOUNDATION OF AN INTEGRATED THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: PIERRE BOURDIEU	146
A PRACTICE THEORY OF ETHNICITY	162

This view of culture, or society, as a discrete, homogenous entity, unchanging through time, is the combined product of various kinds of analysis which intersect and reinforce one another¹, but it has been clear for some time that reality is far more heterogeneous, and diverse than such concepts acknowledge. For instance, in ethnographic studies where researchers have long been faced with defining the boundaries of their group, the concepts of *culture*, *society*, and *tribe* have raised methodological problems, even at the height of their authority. Consequently, it has long been acknowledged that as analytical units, concepts such as culture, society, and tribe are not absolute, but arbitrary: "The lines of demarcation of any cultural unit chosen for description and analysis are, in a large part a matter of level of abstraction, and of convenience for the problem at hand. Occidental culture, Greco-Roman culture, German culture, Swabian culture, and the peasant culture of the Black Forest of 1900 – these are all equally legitimate abstractions if carefully defined."²

In his study of the Tallensi, Fortes argued that it was difficult to distinguish the Tallensi from other 'so called tribes' on the basis of any political, or linguistic unity or similarity³. In order to overcome this difficulty however, he suggested an alternative abstract concept as the basis for the definition of the unit of study. "For the concept of a society as a closed unit... we must substitute the concept of the *socio-geographic region*, the social elements of which are more closely knit together among themselves than any of them are knit together with social elements of the same kind outside of that region." Whilst a great deal of anthropological fieldwork between the 1920s and the 1960s was concerned with similar situations, namely the distinct lack of coincidence between the boundaries of cultural, linguistic and socio-structural phenomena, an emphasis on the concept of 'culture', served in many cases to obscure the significance of such facts. Thus while conceptual modifications such as Fortes' 'socio-geographic region', sought to overcome some of the methodological difficulties concerning boundary definition, in essence, the

¹Cf. Rosaldo, R. 1993. See also, Fardon, R. in L. Holy ed. 1987:168-187.

² Kroeber, A.L. and C. Kluckhohn 1952:367.

³ Fortes, M. 1969.

⁴ Ibid. 1969:231.

trusted anthropological concepts of 'tribe', 'culture' and 'society' remained fundamentally unchallenged.

Although the definition of group boundaries tended to be merely an initial step in the analysis of the internal structural inter-relationships of the social system within British structural functionalism, within American cultural anthropology under the influence of Franz Boas, a concern with 'diffusion' and 'acculturation' meant that cultural boundaries and their delineation were a more prominent aspect of analysis.⁵ Yet, even here, cultural traits such as language and religion, were assumed to be passed between discrete, autonomous cultures as a result of instances of contact, or, as in the case of acculturation, to lead to the amalgamation of one culture with another, ultimately resulting in a single, homogenous bounded entity. Discontinuity, and heterogeneity were considered to be fleeting exceptions, abnormalities which are "destructive of law, logic, and convention" and certainly were not regarded as a focus of over-arching social relations.

Thus, while the concept of *race* had been vehemently attacked, the idea of a bounded, holistic social unit, defined by language, culture, and political autonomy remained intact, seemingly close enough to many empirical situations to serve the purposes of most anthropologists.⁷ It is this general picture then which provided the backdrop to critiques of the concepts of *'tribe'*, *'culture'* and *'society'*, and the eventual emergence of *'ethnicity'* as a central category in the classification of peoples.

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While in American culture-anthropology a concern with the classification of 'cultures' and the reconstruction of 'culture-histories' persisted during the early part of the twentieth century, in British anthropology extreme diffusion and social evolutionism were rapidly superseded by functionalist and structural-functionalist theories of society. In contrast to culture-historical and diffusionist traditions, structural-functionalist anthropology was strongly influenced by Durkheimian sociology and was 'anti-historical' in character. Society was regarded as an organic, coherent system made up of inter-dependent social institutions and the study of 'social structure' – the central focus of research – involved the ordered arrangement of those parts or components within social system. Cf. Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1952:9. 1922. See also Malinowski, B. 1922. 1944. For general discussions of the structural-functionalist position within anthropology see – Trigger, B.G. 1989:244-289. Godsen, C. 1995:78-90. For an insight into the use of structural-functionalism within biblical studies see, Mayes, A.D.H. 1989:78-105.

⁶ Leach, E. 1964: 287.

⁷ As Clifford has suggested, 'To a certain extent, the concept of culture emerged as a liberal alternative to racist classifications of human diversity, and the notions of 'a culture' and 'a society' became used in place of 'a race' as synonyms for a group of people.' Clifford, J. 1988: 234. See also Handler, R. 1988:7-8. Spencer, J. CA 31 1990:283.

THE MEANING OF ETHNICITY

While it is not possible to describe a coherent series of discoveries which culminated in the conceptual and theoretical shifts embodied in the notion of ethnicity, a significant factor was a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the explanatory potential of those concepts which had traditionally formed the basis of anthropological research. Indeed, whilst virtually all anthropological reasoning rested on the premise that cultural variation is discontinuous: that there were aggregates of people who, in essence shared a common culture and interconnected differences which distinguish each such culture from all others⁸, during the 1950s and 1960s critiques of such assumptions not only emphasized the non-correlation of different boundary phenomenon, but in some instances questioned the very existence of discrete socio-cultural entities⁹. For example, in his influential study of the Kachin and Shan of Burma, Edmond Leach argued that "There is no intrinsic reason why the significant frontiers of social systems should always coincide with cultural frontiers ... The mere fact that two groups of people are of different cultures does not necessarily imply - as has always been assumed - that they belong to two quite different social systems." Stimulated by studies such as those of Leach then, scholars sought to develop theoretical frameworks which would enable the analysis of the interrelationships between social and cultural boundaries.

It is important to realize however, that such internal critiques were connected in a plurality of ways with the processes of colonization and de-colonization within the Third World, and the increasing political salience of minority voices within the Western hemisphere. For generations the theoretical predictions of liberalism held that the development of advanced complex societies, characterized by large scale industrialism, democracy and integrated education systems would lead to the dissolution of ethnic differences. As A.D. Smith has pointed out "Liberals have generally taken the view that, as mankind moves from a primitive tribal stage of social organization towards large scale industrial societies, the various primordial ties of religion, language, ethnicity, and race

⁸ Barth, F. 1969:9.

⁹ Cf. Jaspan, M. CA 5(4) 1964:298. See also, Leach, E. 1964:299.

¹⁰ Leach, E. 1964:284.

which divided it would gradually, but inexorably loose their hold and disappear." Reality, however, has failed to match the prediction, as even in the heartland of the industrial west, 'ethnic groups' have not disappeared Industrial in some instances new elements of cultural diversity have been introduced.

Although in the latter half of the twentieth century the world has become dramatically more unified as a result of technological advance, and its states more inter-dependent than any previous period in history, the designs of cosmopolitans everywhere seem further than ever from being realized. Far from fading away as the dreams of modernization had projected, specific cultural allegiances have become a decisive factor in the social and political life of practically every continent. Indeed, as Glazer and Moynihan have illustrated, despite a degree of acculturation, the familiar image of the United States as the world's 'melting pot' is in essence flawed, since many generations after their initial arrival the ethnic allegiances of various immigrant groups continue to play a major role in their economic and social strategies¹⁴. At the same time, the demise of formal colonialism between the 1950s and 1970s provided the background to further critiques of anthropological concepts particularly that of tribe which was attacked for its pejorative connotations of primitiveness and backwardness.¹⁵ Within these diverse contexts, various ethnic alliances and interests became increasingly salient in the domain of national and international politics, stimulating a concerted effort within disciplines such as anthropology to develop theoretical explanations for what has been variously proclaimed as the "Ethnic revival" or the development of a "New Ethnicity".¹⁶.

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¹¹ Smith, A.D. 1981:2.

¹² Cf. the contributions in Glazer, N. and D.P. Moynihan eds. 1975.

¹³ Cf. Roosens, E.E. 1989:9.

¹⁴ Glazer, N. and D.P. Moynihan eds. 1963. See also Glazer, N. Social Problems 18(4) 1971:444-461.

¹⁵ As Cohen has pointed out, the various pejorative connotations associated with 'tribe' is one of the main reasons why scholars from the developing world have rejected the ethno-centric division it implies. For while distinctions in their societies are represented as 'tribal' those of the Western world are presented as 'ethnic' or 'national' – a division which corresponds to the labeling of the study of our society as 'sociology' and of theirs as 'ethnography' or 'anthropology'. Cf. Cohen, A. ARA 7 1978:379-403. See also Colson, E. in J. Helm ed. 1968:201-206. Fried, M.H. in J. Helm ed. 1968:3-20. Ranger, T. in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger eds. 1983:211-262.

¹⁶ Smith, A.D. 1981. See also Glazer, N. and D.P. Moynihan eds. 1975.

While a perusal of the contents of any social science journal of the last thirty years would indicate a pronounced shift in anthropological terminology concerning the nature of the social units under investigation, with terms such as 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group' growing in currency, such prolific use has resulted in considerable disagreement about the nature of ethnic groups. As a result, 'ethnicity' is a term whose meaning remains obscure to a great majority of ordinary native speakers of English, and either justification or apology for its use is therefore suggested. As such, the questions, which in essence motivate this inquiry, are, 'what is ethnicity?' and, 'what are ethnic groups as distinct from other socio-cultural groups?'

While definitions of ethnicity within the human sciences have been influenced by a variety of intersecting factors¹⁷, this picture is further complicated by the fact that few people explicitly define what they mean by the terms ethnicity and ethnic group. In his survey of sixty-five anthropological and sociological studies of ethnicity, Isajiw found only thirteen which included some form of definition - the remaining fifty-two contained no definition whatsoever¹⁸. Nevertheless, despite this a distinct lack of explicit definitions, it was with Edmund Leach's influential study of the Kachin and Shan of Burma that the phenomenon of ethnicity emerged as a key problem in anthropology.¹⁹

The central contention of Leach's study was that social units are produced by subjective processes of categorized ascription which have no necessary relationship to the ethnographic observers' perceptions of cultural discontinuities. It was this observation which reconfigured in the form of a distinction between 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' definitions of ethnicity, the classic anthropological debate concerning the polarization of

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¹⁷ These factors include, though are not limited to – the impact of different theoretical and disciplinary traditions ranging from neo-Marxism and phenomenology to psychology and anthropology; The particular aspects of ethnicity being studied, such as the socio-structural dimensions of ethnicity within plural societies, the cultural construction of ethnic difference, to the effects of ethnic identity on individual performance in education etc; The particular region of the world where such research is being conducted; The particular group which is the subject of research, be they Australian Aborigines, migrant workers in Europe, or the Jewish or Irish people in the United States.

¹⁸ Isajiw, W.W. Ethnicity 1 1974:15-41.

¹⁹ As Olsen and Kobylinski point out however, even in this work, which could quite reasonably be classified as a study of 'ethnic processes', the term 'ethnicity' is nowhere to be found. Olsen, B. and Kobylinski, Z. AP 29 1991: 5-27.

'emic' and 'etic' perspectives²⁰. In a generic sense 'objectivists' tend to take an 'etic' perspective, defining ethnic groups on the basis of the analysts' perception of socio-cultural differentiation, whilst 'subjectivists' give precedence to the 'emic' perspective and define ethnic groups on the basis of the subjective categorizations of the people being studied.²¹

Though it has long been recognized that such a simplistic distinction is problematic, entailing as it does the naïve presupposition of a value free, objective viewpoint located with the researcher, against the subjective, culturally mediated, perceptions of the people being studied²², the situation is more complex since any distinction between objectivist and subjectivist definitions of ethnicity necessarily relates to a difference of opinion about the nature of ethnicity itself. Are ethnic groups based on shared objective sociostructural relations which exist independently of the perceptions of the agents concerned, or, are they constituted primarily by the subjective processes of perception and derived social organization of their members? The disparity which results from the application of objectivist and/or subjectivist approaches to the definition of ethnicity, that is, whether analytical units should be defined on the basis of observer's criteria, or, on indigenous social distinctions is clearly highlighted in the debate between Michael Moermann and R. Narroll concerning the definition of the *Lue* people of Northern Thailand.

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²⁰ Though initially introduced into anthropology by the linguist Kenneth Pike, it was Marvin Harris who elevated them into modes of scientific discourse. See Harris, M. 1980:32. Gottwald, N.K. 1979:638/785.

²¹ This distinction has also been identified by Olsen and Kobylinski as two possible ways of interpreting the cultural facts within the Polish school of ethnic research. The first of these ways - 'static' or 'objective' has been developed in factographic disciplines such as ethnography, dialectology, or archaeology. It is an encyclopedic approach which can be described as 'a view from the outside'. According to this approach, a student of ethnic identification makes a choice (in a sense an arbitrary one) of elements of culture and by the combination of data gathered in various territorial and ethno-linguist groups, he aims at the definition of cultural traits specific for a given group that distinguish it from all others. The identification of ethnicity is therefore made by means of the criteria selected, gathered or established by the researcher and regarded by him as objective ones. The second, 'dynamic' or 'subjective' approach, consists of the search for subjective criteria around which the feeling of ethnic identity of the members of a given group is framed. This epistemological attitude can be described as the 'view from the inside'. The researcher tries to grasp the inner categories formulated and recognized by the participants as significant in the process of cultural identification. This approach tends towards the study of the consciousness of group distinctivness and traces these cultural elements which maintain this awareness. Olsen, B and Kobylinski, Z. AP 29 1991:7-8. ²² In this respect then it is necessary to distinguish rather different levels of 'emic-ness' and 'etic-ness' since in ideal, categoric form both the 'etic' and 'emic' approach are ideological tools which seek to mask the inevitable intervention of the scientist's own value system.

In his critique of Narroll's definition of the 'culturit' 23, Moermann not only argued that the Lue cannot be defined on the basis of objective, coterminous, discontinuities in language, culture and territory and religion, but that such discontinuities are rarely discernible in ethnographic situations. Rather, as Moermann concluded, not only should the self-identifications of ethnic groups be taken into account in anthropological definitions, but that groups, such as the Lue can only properly be understood within a broader social context of interaction with other groups: "the Lue, at least, cannot be viewed in isolation if one is to define their 'Lueness', identify them as a tribe, and understand how they survive in modern Thailand ... The Lue cannot be identified cannot in a sense be said to exist – in isolation."²⁴ While it is true that classificatory systems vary, and quite rightly, depending on the issues they are supposed to address, it is clear that both Moermann and Narroll are attempting to classify the Lue people for quite different purposes. Narroll's concept of the 'cultunit' was developed within the traditional anthropological framework of cross-cultural analysis – one which requires the definition of readily comparable socio-cultural traits. Within the context of this mode of research, ethnic groups are not the primary focus of research, rather their definition is a means to an end. Though he too is concerned with defining a unit for the purpose of analysis, Moermann was chiefly concerned with formulating a definition of the Lue that was meaningful in terms of the ascription of ethnic identity and the mediation of social relations in that region.

Nevertheless, Moermann's illustration of the significance of ethnic categories, such as that of *Lue*, in the structuring of social relations and social practices within Northern Thailand does question the kind of universal system of cross-cultural classification which Narroll's definition proposes. After all how useful is the category '*Northern Thai*' even

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²³ This 'cultural unit' which Narroll defined the Lue as part of is 'Northern Thai', which is itself defined on the basis of a number of cultural traits, most specifically language. With relation to the use of the label 'Lue' by the inhabitants of the Ban Ping region then, Narroll argued that 'the Lue are the Lue. But to us, for global comparative purposes, they are not the real Lue, rather they are post-Lue or ex-Lue as thet no longer possess all the cultural traits that originally defined the group.' It is an argument which he also uses in relation to other groups, particularly the Basques of Spain. Narroll, R. in J.Helm ed. 1968:72-79. CA 5 1964:283-291/306-312.

²⁴ Moermann, M. AA 67 1965:1216.

as a basis for the cross-cultural comparison of social and cultural practices, if it holds very little, if any importance in ongoing social life in that region? Furthermore, Narroll's notions of 'True' and 'Post' Lue assume that culture bearing units are relatively permanent entities that have an original 'pure' culture²⁵. While this representation of tribes or societies as abstract entities, each possessing an essentially unchanging 'primitive' culture was commonplace between the 1920s and 1960s, it has proved inadequate in the face of the complexity revealed by many ethnographic situations²⁶, and the challenges presented by the political mobilization of groups which were formerly the focus of such studies.

Though Moermann's work anticipated the main direction of subsequent research on ethnic groups, the ascendancy of this 'subjectivist' approach was firmly established with the 1969 publication of Fredrik Barth's seminal collection, 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'. 27

Barth's stated objective was to investigate the social dimensions of ethnic groups, and in particular, the processes involved in the construction of group boundaries, a goal he clearly distinguished from the traditional holistic analysis of supposedly discrete organic entities²⁸. In keeping with this emphasis on the social dimensions of ethnicity, Barth argued that ethnic groups should be defined, not only on the basis of the self-identification of the social actors concerned, but also on the inter-relationships between socio-cultural groups in the process of which both real and assumed cultural differences are articulated in the maintenance of group boundaries.²⁹ For Barth then, it is *not* the cultural content enclosed by the boundary, but the boundary itself, and the symbolic

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²⁵ As Clifford has pointed out, this concern with static, pristine cultures was symptomatic of an essentially synchronic perspective on human societies that was embedded in Western notions of cultural continuity and tradition. Clifford, J. 1988.

²⁶ Jaspan, M. CA 5(4) 1964:298. Messing, S.D. CA 5(4) 1964:300.

²⁷ Barth, F. 1969.

²⁸ Ibid. 1969:9-11.

²⁹Ibid. 1969:13-14. Following the notion of Ardener, that 'the people themselves are the real theoreticians in this field.' Quoted in Olsen, B. and Kobylinski, Z. AP 29 1991:11.

border guards of dress, language, food, etc, which perpetuate the community, that require intensive anthropological study³⁰.

While Barth's approach to the definition of ethnic groups based primarily on categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves was, of itself, not entirely new³¹, his reiteration of the subjective aspects of ethnicity within a programmatic framework is widely regarded as constituting a real turning point in the analysis of ethnic groups³². Indeed, the definition of ethnic groups as 'self-defining systems', with primary emphasis on the cognitive categories of the people concerned has had an influence beyond the confines of academic research, playing an influential role in government legislation and public policy since the late 1960s³³. Nevertheless, while a definition of ethnic groups as self-defining systems represents some considerable advantages over traditional objectivist definitions and their associated views of cultures as fixed, monolithic entities, such subjectivist definitions are not without problems of their own.

Whilst the recognition that ethnic groups are fluid, self-defining systems represents an important contribution to our understanding of the maintenance, and transformation of ethnicity, as some scholars have pointed out, the insistence that all social phenomena involving the ascription of culturally based collective identity and the maintenance of group boundaries should be considered 'ethnic', has led to the incorporation of a wide range of groups within that category³⁴. This expansion of the category of ethnicity in

³⁰ Barth, F. 1969:15.

³¹ As early as 1947 Francis had argued that the ethnic group constitutes a community based primarily on a shared 'we-feeling' and that 'one cannot define the ethnic group as a plurality pattern which is characterized by a distinct language, culture, territory religion and so on' Francis, E.K. AJS 52 1947:397. others who adopted a 'subjectivist' definition of the ethnic group prior to Barth include Shibutani, T. and K.M. Kwan, 1965:40. However, Dorman's claim that such a definition represented the consensus opinion prior to Barth cannot be sustained, Dorman, J.H. JES 7(4) 1980:26.

² Buchignani, N. 1982:5. Eriksen, T.H. 1993:37.

³³ On the transformation of Aboriginal identification within Federal Government policy in Australia see, Ucko, P.J. JBSS 8 1993:25-40.

³⁴ In effect the concept of ethnicity has been used in the analysis of a wide range of groups subject to different kinds of classification, embedded in different forms of social organization, and constituted in diverse social and historical contexts. These groups include minority groups, indigenous groups, ethnonationalist groups, groups based primarily on religion, language, political organization, racial

social scientific research has raised many doubts about the analytical utility of the concept itself, for on the basis of a processual, subjectivist definition, there is little to distinguish ethnicity from other forms of group identity such as gender, class and caste³⁵. As Eriksen has pointed out, when defined as the social reproduction of basic categories of group identity on the basis of self definitions and definitions by others, ethnicity is devoid of any substantial content as a comparative analytical concept³⁶.

In reaction to such an extensive application of the concept of ethnicity, and the questions raised about the analytical validity of such a broad category, many scholars, in an effort to distinguish ethnic groups from other forms of social grouping, have been tempted to generate narrower definitions which emphasize either the primacy of specific cultural criteria or socio-structural and political factors. For instance, de Vos defines an ethnic group as one which is "self-conciously united around particular traditions", such as common territory, language, religion and racial uniqueness³⁷. Whilst such a definition differs from the traditional definition of ethnic groups in that the traditions which de Vos refers to are not given, fixed traits, but rather those which he considers to be the most salient in peoples' conciousness, because the importance of specific aspects of culture varies between ethnic groups, the character of ethnicity as an abstract phenomenon remains elusive. As such de Vos concedes that the "ethnic identity of a group of people consists of their subjective, symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture in order to differentiate themselves from other groups"38. As Blu points out, ultimately it remains a formidable task to pin down "exactly just what it is that sets 'ethnic groups' apart from

categorizations, and groups formerly regarded as 'nations', 'minorities', 'cultures', and 'racial groups'. Cf.

Hunt, C.H. and L. Walker 1974.

³⁵ While there may be a high correlation between ethnicity and class in that persons belonging to specific ethnic groups can also belong to specific social classes, they are not one and the same thing and must be distinguished analytically. As Eriksen points out, theories of class always refer to systems of social ranking and power. Ethnicity, on the other hand does not necessarily refer to rank. True, while many poly-ethnic societies are ranked according to ethnic membership, the criteria for this ranking differ from class based models in that they refer to imputed cultural differences, not to property or achieved status. Cf. Eriksen, T.H. 1993:6-7. See also, Blu, K.I. 1980. Fardon, R. in L.Holy ed. 1987:168-187. Just, R. in E. Tonkin, M. McDonald, and M. Chapman eds. 1989:71-88.

³⁶ Eriksen, T.H. 1992:8-9.

³⁷ De Vos, G. in G. de Vos and L. Romanucci-Ross eds. 1982:9

³⁸ Ibid. 1982:16.

other symbolically differentiated groups with a strong sense of identity"³⁹. Whilst others have also attempted to provide narrower definitions of ethnicity which emphasize the primacy of specific cultural criteria such as language, or conciousness of a common descent/history⁴⁰, it is clear that there is very little agreement as to what particular aspects of culture are essential to the category of ethnicity. Furthermore, social scientific approaches, which combine a subjectivist definition of ethnicity, with an emphasis on particular aspects of cultural differentiation, have a tendency to conform to the ideologies of cultural difference prevailing within the particular social contexts under study.

Aside from the cultural content of ethnicity, socio-structural and political factors have also been utilized in an attempt to distinguish ethnic groups from other kinds of grouping, and indeed, to distinguish different kinds of ethnic groups. For instance, Yinger defines ethnic groups broadly as part of a large multi-ethnic society; "An ethnic group ... is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves, and/or others, to have a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common culture and origin are significant", Vincent however, prefers a more specific definition and argues that ethnic groups in the United States should be distinguished from minority groups on the basis of political mobilization. That is, whilst minority groups are subject to economic, social and political subordination by the categorizations of the dominant society, ethnic groups, on the other hand, are characterized by political mobilization and a re-appropriation of the self. 42 In addition to the adoption of an overarching processual 'subjectivist' definition of ethnicity, still others have sought to develop various sub-categories based on empirical variations in the social context of ethnicity. For example, Eriksen divides ethnic groups into 'urban ethnic minorities', 'indigenous peoples', 'proto-nations' and 'ethnic groups in plural societies' 43. Yet, whilst he argues that such empirical categories may be useful in defining specific forms of

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³⁹ Blu, K.I. 1980:224.

⁴⁰ Cohen, R. ARA 7 1978:379-403.

⁴¹ Yinger, J. 1983.

⁴² Vincent, J. HO 33 1974:375-379. Others who take 'political mobilization' as a fundamental aspect of ethnicity include Bell, D. in N.Glazer and D.P. Moynihan eds. 1975:141-174. Ross, J.A. in A.B. Cottrel and J.A. Ross eds. 1980:1-30.

⁴³ Eriksen, T.H. 1993:13-14.

ethnicity that are more readily comparable than others, he is adamant that the maintenance of a broad subjective definition of ethnicity is essential for the analysis of different manifestations of ethnicity in particular social and historical contexts. That is, in order to facilitate the analysis of diverse expressions of ethnicity in different cultural contexts, "we must initially possess some kind of measuring stick, a constant or conceptual bridgehead which can be used for comparison...we can then use this concept as a common denominator for societies, and social contexts which are otherwise very different"⁴⁴. In this way, an unashamedly broad definition of ethnicity can teach us something not only about similarity, but also about difference.

From the late 1960s onwards, a conceptualization of ethnic groups as self-defining systems, with an emphasis on the fluid and situational nature of both group boundaries and individual identification has prevailed within the human sciences. Within this broad generic definition, the analysis of particular ethnic groups has focused largely on the perception, and expression of group boundaries within the context of social interaction. Ethnicity has been regarded, essentially as a consciousness of identity vis-à-vis other groups, a 'we'- 'they' opposition. This incorporation of a definition of ethnic groups as self- defining systems, within a theoretical framework which focuses on boundary maintenance, has not only facilitated the analysis of the social dimensions of ethnic groups, but in the process has filled a theoretical void in the analysis of inter-group relations. Up until the 1950s anthropologists, and social scientists in general, did not possess the analytical vocabulary to examine the ongoing inter-relationships between socio-cultural groups. Indeed, as Leach convincingly demonstrated there was an urgent need to develop such a vocabulary, and the formulation of the concept of ethnicity by Barth and others served that purpose, implying contact and inter-relationship as well as ambiguity and flexibility. Whilst such a broad definition, incorporating a description of ethnic groups as self defining systems within a variety of social contexts and historical circumstances did gain ascendancy within academic research, the issue subsequently shifted to inquire whether such 'subjective' claims to ethnic identity are derived from the affective potency of certain 'primordial' attachments, or the instrumental manipulation of

⁴⁴ Eriksen, T.H. 1993:37

culture in the service of collective economic and political interests. Despite a growing awareness that such a dichotomy, usually labeled 'primordialist – instrumentalist', ⁴⁵ may obscure many important aspects of the phenomena under investigation, many scholars, whilst not adhering to either pole tout-court, continue to locate their work conceptually with reference to it.

Despite the apparent disagreements on fundamentals, and the continuing tendency towards antinomous posturing in the academic literature⁴⁶, proponents of both approaches seek to develop a theoretical framework which addresses the relationship between peoples' perceptions of ethnicity and the cultural practices and social relations in which they are engaged. It is precisely in pursuit of this common goal, however, to seek an objective grounding for subjective identity claims, that the principal distinction between the two approaches emerges, one centered on the aspects of change each identifies as critical to ethnicity.47 'Primordialists' argue that changing social contexts disrupt conventional ways of understanding and acting in the world to such a degree that people who are disorientated seek refuge in those aspects of their shared lives which most fundamentally define for them who they are 48. A deep-seated need for rootedness then gives rise to communal sentiments that generate ethnic groupings. 'Instrumentalists', on the other hand, turn the causal arrows in the completely opposite direction. They argue that while changing economic and political contexts may disrupt traditional material orders, in the process they create novel constellations of shared material interest which generate the coalescence of people with common interests into groups in pursuit of those

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⁴⁵ This dichotomy has also been labeled as 'primordialist' and 'circumstantialist' by Glazer, N and D.P. Moynihan, *Commentary* 58(4) 1974:37. See also Scott, G.M. ERS 13(2) 1990. As 'primordialist' and 'mobilizationist' by James McKay in ERS 5(4) 1982. Indeed, a recent exchange between symbolic and sociological approaches to ethnicity sets up a somewhat different, but equally artificial, antinomy, this time between cognitive-symbolic and political-economic causality. CF. Drummond, L. *Man* 15(2) 1980:352-374. *Man* 16(4) 1981:693-696. Norton, R. *Man* 18(1) 1981:190-191.

⁴⁶ See Bentley, G.C. 1981. SRRA 8(2) 1983:1-53. 8(3) 1983:1-26.

⁴⁷ In essence, differences between the primordialist and instrumentalist approaches reflect fundamentally different assumptions about human action. On the one hand, instrumentalists tend to view human action as rationally orientated towards practical goals whilst primordialists generally view human action as value-orientated. Cf. Weber, M. 1978. Furthermore, while primordialists point to the emotional power of certain 'primordial symbols', instrumentalists tend to stress the circumstantial manipulation of identities. Cf. Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:25.

⁴⁸ Geertz, C. 1963:105-157. De Vos, G. in de Vos, G. and L. Romanucci-Ross eds. 1975:5-41. See also Isaacs, H.P. 1975. Keyes, C.F. Ethnicity 3(3) 1976:202-213. Epstein, A.L. 1978.

goals. Robing interest groups in ethnic or cultural garb then takes advantage of the legitimating nationalist ideologies of modern states and renders such groups less vulnerable in the face of numerical or political inferiority.⁴⁹ For instrumentalists then, ethnic groups, either newly created or resurgent, "exist as a weapon in pursuit of collective advantage"50. Whilst both models may possess an appealing simplicity, they also share a number of critical gaps in their explanatory logic – gaps which inhibit their ability to address their stated objective.

⁴⁹ Cf. Brass, P.R. 1974. Cohen, A. 1969. Smith, A.D. 1981.

⁵⁰ Young, C. WP 35(4) 1983:660.

PRIMORDIALISM IN ETHNICITY

The concept of primordialism was first introduced by Edward Shils, in his now famous essay on the relationship between sociological theory and research⁵¹. In that article, Shils, re-examining his own sociological enquiries, concluded that during his research on primary group dynamics, he had overlooked the effect of what he termed, 'primordial qualities', on social interaction. "As one thought about the strengths and tensions in family attachments, it became apparent that the attachment was not only to the other family member merely as a family member, as a person, but as a possessor of certain especially significant relational qualities which could only be described as primordial. The attachment to another member of one's kinship group is not just a function of interaction...it is because a certain ineffable significance is attributed to the tie of blood" blood" blood" blood did not elaborate any further on these 'primordial attachments' beyond stating that they differed from ties to other social units, several years later Clifford Geertz, in his analysis of the political development of post-colonial states, expanded the application of the concept beyond that of kinship to larger scale social groups.

Noting how actions by central elites to foster a sense of civic consciousness amongst citizens were often thwarted by the fact that citizens had no concept of loyalty which extended beyond their kinship, racial, regional or cultural groups. Geertz wrote, "By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens' ...of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the given-ness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language...and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves". Importantly however, one should note that 'primordiality' is attributed to such ties as blood, religion, language and custom by the individuals - it does not adhere in the bonds in and of themselves. As Geertz himself goes on to add, "...one is

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⁵¹ Shils, E.A. 1957:111-126.

⁵² Ibid. 1957:122.

⁵³ Geertz, C. in C. Geertz ed. 1963:105-157.

bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbour, one's fellow believer, ipso-facto, as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable, absolute import attributed to the very tie itself'⁵⁴. Although neither Shils, nor Geertz makes it a point to argue the epistemological status of the concept of primordialism, it is clear that neither uses it to *explain* the phenomenon of strong ethnic attachments, but rather, to *describe* them, that is, to convey the special meaning that certain ethnic sentiments are not only extremely coercive, but that their strength seems to transcend the kinds of relationships on which they are based, as well as the fact that they are experienced as some kind of 'indescribable force'.⁵⁵ Hence, it is argued, primordial bonds between individuals are not only *involuntary*, but possess a coerciveness which transcends all other social alliances and relationships. Such endowments then, or *legacies*, are seen to be crucial in giving group members a sense of belonging.

Whilst both Shils, and later Geertz, employed the concept of primordialism as an essentially *descriptive* tool, it was Isaacs who extended the concept as a tool for *explaining* the power and persistence of ethnic identity.⁵⁶ Though he follows his illustrious predecessors in identifying the basic bonds of group identity with a range of characteristics ascribed at birth⁵⁷, his appeal to psychological theories of identity constitutes a further dimension of the primordialist approach. Isaacs argues that such bonds, which individuals acquire through early processes of socialization, have such an overwhelming power because of the universal human psychological need for a sense of belonging.⁵⁸ The manifestation of this basic human condition can be witnessed, according to Isaacs, in the "…massive re-tribalization running counter to all the globalizing effects of modern technology and communications"⁵⁹. According to Isaacs then, the current

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⁵⁴ Geertz, C. in C. Geertz ed. 1963:105-157.

⁵⁵ A more recent application of this essentially descriptive sense of the concept can be found in Dubetsky, A. AJMES 7(3) 1976:433-451.

⁵⁶ Isaacs, H. *Ethnicity* 1 1974:15-41.

⁵⁷ Those characteristics include the names an individual acquires at birth (both individual and group), the history and origins of that group, nationality (or other national, regional or tribal affiliation), language, religion and/or value system. Ibid. 1974:27.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ibid. 1974:29-30.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 1974:16.

world trend towards 'refragmentation', 'retribalization', and 'superbalkanization' has as its basis, the comfort and sense of belonging provided by the emotional strength of such 'basic group identity'. A primal reversion whose cause he identifies with the collapse of old power systems (such as the Ottoman and British Empires), coupled with the failure of new states to provide stable and secure relationships for its people. Similar observations are made by Connor who feels that the apparent global resurgence of ethno-nationalism, some of it to be celebrated, some of it to be regarded with the utmost revulsion, demonstrates that "an intuitive bond felt toward an informal and unstructured subdivision of mankind is far more profound and potent than are the ties which bind them to the formal and legalistic state in which they find themselves" 60.

Although Isaacs, and those who adopt a similar approach, argue that ethnic identity based upon primordial attachments given at birth constitute a more natural and fundamental source of identification⁶¹, there are others, such as Kellas, who see in the psychological and emotional efficacy of such bonds, a basis for inter-ethnic conflict based on the propensity for communal sentiment within a group defined by such attachments, towards members of an 'outgroup'. Indeed, scholars such as Greeley⁶², Isajiw⁶³, and Yinger⁶⁴, have forcefully demonstrated how, despite the effects of modernization, *Gemeinschaft-like* sentiments and relationships still endure among the descendants of European immigrants in both Canada and the United States. Nevertheless, Kellas' psychological explanation of '*in-group amity*' and '*out-group enmity*' does contain a further component, a socio-biological ingredient, which not only raises its own specific problems, but in the process reveals a number of serious difficulties with the primordialist perspective.⁶⁵

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⁶⁰ Connor, W. ERS 1 1978:377.

⁶¹ Keyes, C.F. Ethnicity 3 1976:202-213.

⁶² Greeley, A. 1974.

⁶³ Isajiw, W. in P. Migus ed. 1975:129-138.

⁶⁴Yinger, J. in L. Coser and O. Larson eds. 1976:197-216.

⁶⁵ While Kellas argues that humans have a propensity for communal sentiments within a defined group and hostility towards members of an out-group, and that these psychological processes underlie ethnic phenomena, he also suggests that this inter-ethnic competition has a *biological* basis. See also Reynolds, V., V.S.E. Falger and I. Vine eds. 1987. Reynolds, V. ERS 3(3) 1980:303-315.

Whilst most social scientists tend to explain conflict between ethnic, or racial groups, in terms of competition over scarce resources, such as land or jobs, van den Berghe, in an attempt to bestow a degree of scientific credibility on his research, attempts to push that explanation below the social, historic and economic planes to the biological level⁶⁶. Such an approach assumes that this conflict, though based on certain primordial sentiments, does in turn, further rest on a genetic tendency, derived from the kinship process, for such groups to practice 'in-group amity/out-group enmity'. Van den Berghe's reasoning begins thus: ethnic relations are based on power politics, power politics are based on human nature, and human nature is to some extent aggressive and violent⁶⁷. According to Reynolds however, "such statements are made *a priori* without any supporting evidence."

Within an over-arching socio-biological framework then van den Berghe argues that both race and ethnicity represent an extended, or attenuated form of kin-selection. As such, ethnicity is seen to have a biological basis, not because "we have a gene for ethnocentrism, or for recognizing kin; rather...that those societies that institutionalized forms of nepotism and ethnocentrism had a strong selective advantage over those that did not (assuming that any such ever existed) because kin selection has been the basic blueprint for animal sociality." Within the socio-biological framework then it is kinship-like sentiments which form the basis of the primordial component of ethnicity, and cultural criteria are merely proximate explanations; "Just as in the smaller kin units, the kinship was real often enough to become the basis of these powerful sentiments we call nationalism, tribalism, racism and ethnocentrism." ⁷⁰

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⁶⁶ Van den Berghe, P.L. ASR 39 1974:777-788. 1978. ERS 1(4) 1987:401-411.

⁶⁷ Van den Berghe, P.L. 1978:151-154. Indeed van den Berghe goes so far as to suggest that primordial sentiments of kinship are not based on any shared group interest, but are directed by 'blind ferocity' and 'orgies of passion' in kinship relations – a situation he contrasts with the calculating nature of non-primordial relations between interest groups. Ibid. 1978:405

⁶⁸ Reynolds, V. ERS 3(3) 1980:312.

⁶⁹ Van den Berghe, P.L. ASR 1974:782.

⁷⁰ Van den Berghe, P.L. ERS 1(4) 1987:407.

As Reynolds has pointed out however, the basis of van den Berghe's thesis is the belief that in the early evolutionary stages of mankind, society was based on small kin-based groups and that ethnic groups were simply 'in-breeding super families' that maintained clear territorial and social boundaries. While early Homo-sapiens may well have lived in relatively small groups, as Reynolds points out on the basis of an analogy with primate society, it is far more likely that they met and exchanged members rather than remaining sufficiently separated from one another for their gene pools to remain largely unique. This would have presented two clear advantages: it increased co-operation in times of scarcity, whilst simultaneously increasing genetic variation within the group. Indeed, contemporary ethnographic evidence does not support the contention that groups in the early stages of human evolution would have been hostile towards one another, or that this hostility would have increased at times in times of scarcity. To the contrary, when faced with shortages, present day hunter-gatherers tend to band together and share what food is available. In other words, they do not as van den Berghe's 'kin-selection' argument predicts, practice 'in-group amity-out group enmity'.⁷¹

Furthermore, if, as van den Berghe himself concedes, that because of interaction between such groups, membership within them was often based on "putative rather than real kin relations" then the logic of his socio-biological argument breaks down unless, as Reynolds suggests, "primordial inter-group theory based on sociobiology can explain why the new non-genetic transmission of kin-ship and group relations has to follow the logic of the old genetic one." That is, because ethnic ties often consist of putative rather than real kinship then it is difficult to see how societies that have 'institutionalized ethnocentism' will be 'selected for' in terms of biological evolution as van den Berghe argues. The only way out of this impasse is to posit a genetic basis for ethnocentrism as a result of thousands of years of biological evolution, an idea which van den Berghe

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⁷¹ Reynold, V. ERS 3(3) 1980:312. Moreover, an argument against van den Berghe's thesis may well be provided in terms of Trivers' concept of 'reciprocal altruism'. That is, the idea that the reproductive and genetic success of individuals will be enhanced by assisting one another only if they can rely on the return of the favours which they grant to begin with. Ibid. 1980:312-313. Cf. Trivers, R.L. QRB 46 1971:35-37.

⁷² Van den Berghe, P.L. ERS 1(4) 1978:404.

explicitly rejects.⁷⁴ According to Reynolds then, van den Berghe's only evidence for primordialism is that "it is in fact based on real kinship ie. genetic kin selection, and that it is an extension of that old kinship sentiment which can be simply expressed as 'help your own kin and not outiders'. The theory is left at this very nebulous level and no [further] evidence is offered."⁷⁵

We can however reserve our main criticism of the socio-biological argument for the direction of causation it implies. As Reynolds argues, "In socio-biological thinking, genes determine psychology, and psychology determines individual relationships, group structures and group relationships. However, this whole approach tends to ignore the alternative view which places the causal arrows in the opposite direction. In much of conventional sociology...man is conceived as constructing his own realities and constructing his society, and the screen through which he views other people, and indeed the screen through which he views himself. Man...is a largely self-constructed agent, and in his construction of himself, others, and even to some extent, the surrounding physical world, the use of language and the *categories of his culture are the decisive elements*. Arising from such a perspective, the actions of individuals are largely given in the first place by the norms, expectations, rules and other givens of his culture which also determine the institutions within which his relationships take place"⁷⁶.

To return to the overall primordial perspective then, its main advantage is that it focuses our attention on the great emotional strength of ethnic bonds. Furthermore, such primordially orientated research has effectively demonstrated how some ethnic

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⁷⁴ Van den Berghe, P.L. ERS 1 (4) 1978:405.

⁷⁵ Reynolds, V. ERS 3(3) 1980:312.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 1980: 313. Emphasis my own. As Reynolds asks, if most social scientists not only do not see human society as an epiphenomenon of biological processes, but also see biology as irrelevant as a causal factor in human behaviour, then why does van den Berghe, who is quite familiar with this perspective, prefer a biological approach? While the main focus of his concern is on the explanation of primordial sentiments, it would appear that he believes the usual social science explanations are adequate only as a *description* of this sentiment and as such 'primordialism' remains an element which effects ethnic group relations that can only be *explained* in more basic biological terms. As Reynolds points out however, he does not offer any compelling evidence for this position and as such, it may forever remain an entirely speculative position that the history of relationships between ethnic and racial groups is based on some more fundamental biological predisposition. On the issue of biological determinism see Banton, M. 1977. Bowler, P.J. 1989. From the perspective of a biologist however see, Dawkins, R. 1976. 1995.

attachments may persist for hundreds, even thousands of years, in many cases overriding loyalties to other important collectivities, even when it appears to be to their own social disadvantage. On the other hand, and in addition to the particular difficulties noted in relation to the socio-biological approach, there are several fundamental flaws which limit the explanatory power of a primordial viewpoint.

First of all, primordialists tend to couch their explanations in deterministic, and often static, terms. That is, the ineffable coerciveness of primordial attachments such as blood, language, territory, and culture are not seen to change or display any dynamic properties. Ultimately then, primordial ties, or ethnic sentiments are posited as primitive, largely atavistic attributes which gain power from an instinctive predisposition in human nature.⁷⁷ For instance Kellas argues that "human nature and human psychology provide the necessary conditions for ethnocentric and nationalist behaviour, and such behaviour is universal", For others, primordialism is itself a mystical, psychological disposition, almost by definition shadowy and elusive. 79 Thus, primordial approaches are either too general, or too obscure, to possess any degree of explanatory power. Indeed, as Stack argues, "the intangible aspects of the primordial approach constitute, at best, an ex post facto argument. In searching for the givens [in Geertz's sense] of social existence, the primordial approach explains everything and nothing. Unlike analyses that focus on the importance of social class, the impact of modernization, or increasing levels of global interdependence, the primordial approach is at best static. It fails to explain why ethnicity disappears during one historical period and re-intensifies during another. Ultimately the primordial approach is insensitive to the importance of social structure and posits a standard of immutability that is unrealistic."80

Such difficulties notwithstanding however, Stack goes on tentatively to cling to a monolithic, primordial approach, apparently because it alone can explain the "non-rational, even irrational, dimensions of ethnicity [which] are an undeniable aspect of

⁷⁷ Isaacs, H. Ethnicity 1 1974:15-41. Connor, W. ERS 1(3) 1978: 377-400.

⁷⁸ Kellas, J.G. 1991

⁷⁹ Connor, W. ERS 1(3) 1978:379.

⁸⁰ Stack, J.F. in J.F. Stack ed, 1986:1-11.

contemporary ethnic mobilization throughout the world"⁸¹. Indeed, in conclusion, and contra the assertions of Connor, he argues that, "if ethnicity is always viewed as 'subservient to material conditions', then the complexity, resilience, and even irrationality of ethnic bonds are likely to be underestimated".⁸² According to Stack then, herein lies the true dimension of the ethnic revival: it is at one and the same time an attempt to preserve the past, and to transform it into something new, to create a new type upon ancient foundations, to create a new man and society through the revival of ancient identities and the preservation of the links in the chain of generations.

If, however, one attributes the severity of ethnic conflicts to the intense emotional power of primordial attachments, that is, to the ties which have "to do with something that is so basic to man's life, it is not at all a mystery that he is willing, indeed, almost eager to die in defense of it"83, one patently ignores the fact that people can, and do, have their consciousness raised to highly emotional levels which may have no primordial import. Furthermore, the explanation of ethnic conflict as a romantic, and instinctive response to primordial alliances given through birth, or simply as an innate reaction to cultural diversity, obscures analyses of the economic and political interests which are often a central aspect of such conflicts. Indeed, such posturing leaves one with the impression that primordial sentiments are only salient in times of conflict, when it would be far more logical to inquire as to why ethnic relations are sedate in some instances, yet conflictual in others⁸⁴. The way in which primordial approaches treat the issue of conflict then reflects a general neglect of the role of socio-structural factors in the formulation and expression of ethnicity. Ethnicity becomes situated as an abstract, natural phenomenon, which can be explained on the basis of 'human nature', with little, if any, analysis of particular social and historical contexts within which ethnic groups are formulated. In

⁸¹ Ibid. 1986:2.

⁸² Ibid. 1986:6.

⁸³ Greeley, A. 1974:14.

⁸⁴ Doornbos, M. 1972:263-283.

essence, primordial explanations suggest that ethnic groups are formulated in a social and political vacuum, oblivious to particular situational interests.⁸⁵

In addition to this neglect of the historical and social grounding of particular ethnicities, primordialist approaches also fail to consider the historically situated, and culturally constructed nature of the very concepts that are central to their argument – most notably 'ethnic group' and 'nation'. The 'ethnic' or 'national' unit becomes situated as the natural, and universal unit of human organization and collectively orientated emotional attachment, 86 despite historical studies which patently contradict such an assumption 87. Moreover, in a broader sense, the primordialist approach is, itself, part of a much older intellectual current associated with the romanticization and naturalization of the ethnic or national unit. Representations of national, and ethnic groups which have emerged within such academic traditions, are not far removed from the conceptualization of the 'nation state' inherent in many nationalist discourses. For instance, Connor elevates the ideology of nationalism to the very essence of the nation through his argument that kinship, and blood lineage are the central dimensions of nationhood. As he argues, "Bismarck's famous exhortation to the German people, over the heads of their political leaders to 'think with your blood' was.... [an] attempt to activate a mass psychological vibration predicated on an intuitive sense of consanguity"88. Because people think that descent, and blood lineage, are the basis of their national identities then, Connor claims, irrespective of anthropological and biological evidence to the contrary, that such discourses do in fact reveal the true nature of the nation. On this basis then, the American people are "not a

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⁸⁶ Kellas, J.G. 1991. Though Kellas does pay particular attention to the historical development of the idea of nation his implicit acceptance of sociobiological theories results in a reification and naturalization of the ethnic unit which he suggests underlies modern national formation.
⁸⁷ There are numerous studies which focus on the historical development of the concepts of ethnic group

⁸⁵ While in essence this critique mirrors Reynolds' criticisms of the sociobiological approach to ethnic and race relations, Reynolds' paper contains one basic flaw: he fails to take the next logical step beyond arguing that instead of being a captive of his genes, man is capable of constructing the social and physical 'reality' around him. For if the conscious decisions of individuals are more important than their genes in determining how they relate to members of other ethnic groups, then it should follow that instead of being somehow biologically fixed, these decisions are flexible, being open to influence by changing social, economic and political circumstances.

⁸⁷ There are numerous studies which focus on the historical development of the concepts of ethnic group and nation which illustrate that the nation, and nationalism in particular, are relatively recent phenomena emerging in late eighteenth century Europe. Gellner, E. 1983. Handler, R. 1988. Hobsbawm, E.J. 1990 ⁸⁸ Connor, W. ERS 1(3) 1978: 380.

nation in the pristine sense of the word...[The] unfortunate habit of calling them a nation, and thus formally equating American with German, Chinese, English and the like, has seduced scholars into erroneous analogies. Indeed, while being proud of being a nation of immigrants, with a 'melting pot' tradition, the absence of a common origin may well make it more difficult, and conceivably impossible, for the American to appreciate instinctively the idea of the nation in the same dimension and with the same poignant clarity as do the Japanese, the Bengali..."

Aligned with this position is the ineffability attached to primordialism – that it is only comprehensible to 'insiders'. In short, 'you have to be one to know one'! Typical of this line of reasoning is Novak's statement that "Upper class Quakers think and feel in a way I cannot think and feel; Jewish intellectuals tend to live and breathe out of writers' concerns and experiences I can emulate as second nature but not as first; Irish Catholics exhibit emotional patterns I can follow, but not find native to me" Whilst there is a certain amount of truth to this assertion, since any individual, or group, is like no other individual or group, as Kluckhohn and Murray have illustrated, every individual, and group, is simultaneously like some, and all other, individuals and groups Adherence to this ethnocentric, solipsistic doctrine of 'insiderism' then, not only negates the possibilities of categorization, and generalization, but renders any historical enquiry invalid since, in essence, one would have to be Caesar in order to understand Caesar.

In summary then, whilst the main advantage of the primordial perspective is the attention it focuses on the strong emotions often associated with ethnic attachments as an explanation for the persistence of some groups over considerable periods of time, even when it appears to be to their own disadvantage, its psychological reductionism, renders it incapable of accounting for social change. That is, it cannot address the issue of *why* identity can, and indeed often does, change or fluctuate in its intensity, as well as be differentially distributed at any given moment of time throughout a single group. Indeed,

⁸⁹ Ibid. 1978:381. Connor's argument however embodies many of the flaws in the primordialist approach: the ignorance of the complexities of particular nationalisms coupled with a reinforcement of the notion of a pristine nationalism, thereby raising the scepter of 'deviance' from this seemingly natural unit of social life. ⁹⁰ Novak, M. 1973:38

⁹¹ Kluckhohn, C. and H. Murray in C. Kluckhohn and H. Murray eds. 1953:53.

it is this disregard of possible economic and political influences which severely inhibits the primordialists attempts to provide a comprehensive theoretical explanation of ethnic phenomena.

INSTRUMENTALISM IN ETHNICITY

In stark contrast to the claims of the primordialist perspective, which seeks to define ethnicity as a more or less immutable aspect of the social person, one of the central tenets of what can broadly be termed the 'instrumentalist' approach, is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity, and particularly its role in the mediation of social relations and the negotiation of access to economic and political resources. 92 For those who adopt this viewpoint then, of both a Marxist, and non-Marxist persuasion⁹³, renewed ethnic tension and conflict are not the result of any primordial 'need to belong', but rather the conscious efforts of groups and/or individuals to obtain access to social, political and economic resources. Indeed van den Berghe claims that this use of ethnic symbols for gaining access to economic and political resources constitutes an, 'ethnic game', being played out in all poly-ethnic societies⁹⁴. It is this line of reasoning which also leads Glazer and Moynihan to speak of the 'strategic efficacy of ethnicity'. Whilst some extremists within this dynamic perspective which stresses change, contextuality and competition amongst ethnic populations for scarce resources as the principal factors in 'bringing about' ethnic groups, maintain that ethnic groups are similar to classes in that they are rational interest groups devoid of any primordial significance⁹⁵, there are others who assert that ethnic groups, are in fact, classes⁹⁶. Nevertheless, despite the wide range of theoretical perspectives which are accommodated within this paradigm, most, if not all, of the research which focuses on the fluid and situational aspects of ethnicity can trace their origins to the pivotal works of Barth⁹⁷, and Cohen⁹⁸.

⁹⁴ Van den Berghe, P.L. Ethnicity 3 1976:248.

⁹² This theoretical transition has been put in fairly stark terms by Horowitz: 'in a fairly short time we have moved from metaphors of blood and stone to clay and putty.' Cited in McKay, J. ERS 5(4) 1982:399.

⁹³ This 'instrumentalist theoretical approach' does incorporate a wide range of theoretical perspectives ranging from Neo-Marxism (Hechter, M. 1976), through cultural ecology (Barth, F. 1969:9-38), to social interactionalism (Eidhem, H. in F. Barth ed. 1969:39-57).

⁹⁵ Vincent, J. HO 33 1974: 375-379. Vincent's comments can be readily contrasted with those of Enloe who argues that 'Ethnic groups are not irrational ...but they do grow out of custom and familiarity rather than out of calculation...they are unlike labour unions, peasant syndicates, corporations and other functional interest groups.' Enloe, C. 1973:39.

⁹⁶ Patterson, O. in Glazer, N. and D.P. Moynihan eds. '1975:312/347-348.

⁹⁷ Barth, F. 1969:9-38.

⁹⁸ Cohen, A. 1969. 1974:ix-xxiv.

The starting point for Barth's thesis was his forceful argument against cultural determinism and his insistence that ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact, or information, but rather they are often the very foundations upon which embracing social systems are built⁹⁹. That is, interaction between members of different ethnic groups does not, as previously maintained, always lead to a loss of cultural distinctiveness due to processes of acculturation. In fact, cultural diversity can, and often does, persist, despite inter-ethnic contact and inter-dependence. Thus, because ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction, much of Barth's argument is taken up with an exploration of 'boundary maintenance', the persistence of which, in the midst of social interaction and group interdependence, is explained as adaptation to a particular sociological or ecological niche.

On the basis of a rough typology, Barth argues that the inter-dependence of groups occupying such niches can take several forms, ranging from the occupation of distinct niches, or territories, in a natural environment by ethnic groups, which results in minimal competition for resources, to the co-existence of particular groups within the same niche, with a concomitant increase in resource competition. Although Barth does suggest that ethnic categories are a function of participation in particular social niches, he also maintains that changes in individual ethnic identity, which stems from a flow of personnel across what are negotiable boundaries, are related to the *economic* and *political* circumstances of the people concerned. For example, some of the sedentary hoe agriculturists amongst the Fur of Sudan, who rely mainly on the production of millet, have adopted the lifestyle and identity of the nomadic Arab cattle pastoralists, the Baggara. For both Barth, and Haaland, this shift in identity is explained as a function of the limited opportunities for capital investment provided by the Fur economy in contrast to the opportunities provided by Baggara cattle pastoralism 101. Whilst Barth's argument that individuals can pass from one categorical identity to another in order to advance their

⁹⁹ Barth, F. 1969:10.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 1969:19.

¹⁰¹ Haaland, G.in F. Barth ed. 1969:58-73.

personal economic or political interests, or minimize their losses, is certainly conducive to viewing ethnicity as an individualistic strategy¹⁰², its stress on 'individual rational choice' in a given situation reflects a marked contrast with the work of Abner Cohen.

While the concerns of both Barth and Cohen with the organization features of ethnicity identifies them firmly within the instrumentalist perspective, their different emphasis reflects two persistent positions within the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity, a distinction which Holy and Stuchlik describe as one between "approaches that study how societies, social systems or structures function, and approaches that study why people do the things they do" This distinction is sometimes described as one between a "Durkheimian" and "Weberian" view of social life, for it clearly reflects a general division within the human sciences between those who, adopting a more 'subjectivist' stance, emphasize the primacy of individual behaviour, and those whose focus on social structures, or cultural norms leads them to adopt a more 'objectivist' stance

Thus, in stark contrast to Barth's decidedly 'subjective' approach, with its emphais on individual freedom, Cohen, who also interprets ethnic groups as interest groups, has argued the necessity of taking into account the normative effects of culture and its constraining power on individual actions. As he argues, "An ethnic group is not simply the sum total of its individual members, and its culture is not the sum total of the strategies adopted by independent individuals. Norms and beliefs and values are effective only because they are the collective representations of a group and are backed by the pressure of that group" In contrast to Barth then, Cohen places a greater emphasis on the ethnic group as a *collectively organized strategy* for the protection of economic and political interests. While in the course of social life, changing economic and political contexts may create novel constellations of shared material interest, in order to pursue

¹⁰² As Calhoun argues, this approach can be seen as an extension of pre-existing social theories such as phenomenology and social interactionalism coupled with the classic emphasis on 'status' and 'role' from sociology. Calhoun, C. 1994:13.

¹⁰³ Holy, L. and Stuchlik, M. 1983:1.

¹⁰⁴ For a review of the influence of the Durkhemian and Weberian schools of thought on the discipline of biblical studies see, Mayes, A.D.H. 1989.

¹⁰⁵ Cohen, A. 1974:xiii.

those interests collectively, the group, or its leader, must generate 'basic organizational functions' in order to articulate its organization¹⁰⁶. In the absence of an ability to develop these organizational functions on a formal basis, Cohen argues that the group will articulate its organization by drawing upon, and manipulating, a series of existing cultural practices and beliefs such as kinship, ritual, ceremony and cultural values. It is this use of culture to systematize social behaviour as a weapon in the pursuit of collective economic and political advantage which, according to Cohen, constitutes the basis of ethnicity.¹⁰⁷

Following on from the works of Barth and Cohen, the instrumental perspective came to dominate research on ethnicity during the 1970s and 1980s. As research on the instrumental dimensions of ethnicity flourished however, it also diversified, focusing on various different aspects of ethnicity ranging from inter-ethnic competition¹⁰⁸, and the political mobilization of ethnicity¹⁰⁹, to the stratification of ethnic relations within multi-ethnic societies¹¹⁰. Furthermore, whilst the rapid growth of these 'instrumentalist' approaches to ethnicity have contributed to an understanding of the common processes and structures underlying the formation of ethnic groups, they did so by placing considerable emphasis on the fluid and situational aspects of both individual and group identity, dimensions which, to a large degree, were ignored by Barth.

Although it is true that Barth did underscore the importance of taking account of the cognitive categories of the actors themselves, and stressed the need for investigating the social enactment of ethnicity through flexible and negotiable boundary processes, his explicit definition of ethnic ascriptions as 'categorical ascriptions' which classify " a person in terms of his basic, most general, identity, presumptively determined by his

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These basic organizational features include, distinctiveness (boundary), communication, authority structure, decision making procedure, ideology and socialization. Cohen, A. 1974:xvi-xvii.

Despite their superficial differences however, there are a number of similarities in the works of Barth and Cohen: they both focus on the organizational features of ethnicity; they both regard ethnicity as constituting the shared beliefs and practices which provide a group with the organizational dimensions necessary to maintain and compete for, socio-economic resources.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Despres, L.A. 1975:87-117. Otite, O. 1975:119-130.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Bell, D. 1975:141-174. Roosens, E.E. 1989. Ross, J.A. 'in Cottrel, A.B. and J.A. Ross eds. 1980:1-30

¹¹⁰ Cf. Shibutani, T. and K.M. Kwan, 1965.

origin and background"¹¹¹, has led to accusations of promoting an essentially static view of ethnicity. Such is the charge of Cohen who, citing Barth's own description of ethnic categories as "organizational vessels which may be given varying amounts, and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems"¹¹², argues that, despite contact across boundaries, Barth is implying that ethnic categories are relatively fixed constants which may be called upon when the need arises. Nevertheless, Cohen's own implicit repudiation of subjective ascription as an important criterion of ethnicity, coupled with his emphasis on ethnicity as a reflection of shared norms, itself leads to reification of the group as an integrated, fixed entity.¹¹³

In an effort to avoid this pitfall, Vincent, amongst others including Cohen, have stressed the importance of exploring the perception, and negotiation of ethnicity by individuals in a number of different contexts of interaction¹¹⁴. In doing so, they have illustrated how the perception, and expression of a person's ethnic identity can vary in a variety of different situations, depending on the context and scale of interaction: from suppression in a situation where one's identity may possess some sort of social stigma¹¹⁵, to overcommunication in situations where one's identity needs to be emphasized in a striking way. In addition to its fluid and segmentary character, ethnicity is essentially a variable whose salience may fluctuate in various contexts depending upon its relevance in the structuring of social relations. Furthermore, recognition of the shifting, and segmentary nature of ethnicity has revealed the way in which both culture, and tradition are drawn upon in the construction of ethnicity, often being transformed in the process.

¹¹¹ Barth, F. 1969:13.

¹¹² Ibid. 1969:14.

As Vincent has argued, 'we tend to seek the embodiment of ethnicity in overly corporate forms. Possibly as we move further away from holistic, organismic, systems models – from descent to alliance, from group to non-group, from a 'cookie-cutter' concept of culture to a finer understanding of the ephemerality and inconsistency of social relations – this concept of ethnicity will be clarified.' Vincent, J. HO 33 1974:376.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Handelman, D. EG 1 1977:187-200.

¹¹⁵ Cohen, R. ARA 7 1978:395-397.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Eriksen, T.H. 1993:18-35.

Whilst overall the instrumentalist approach, and the wide variety of theoretical perspectives it accommodates, has contributed to the comparative analysis of ethnic groups and their relationship to economic and political interests, it does, nevertheless, exhibit one universal flaw, a penchant towards a reductionist mode of explanation whereby ethnicity is defined in terms of the observed regularities of ethnic behaviour in a particular situation. "Thus analysts' mental models are transformed into causal principles located in the (conscious or unconscious) minds of the people whose behaviour is being studied. In ethnicity studies this meant that if ethnic groups act in ways that appear strategically advantageous, then strategic advantage must be the raison d'etre of these groups"117 Though one of the major contributions of instrumentalists has been to highlight this sort of behaviour, as Epstein has observed, "to describe an ethnic group as having interests is one thing, to define it in these terms is something quite different"¹¹⁸. The ultimate implication of some instrumentalist approaches then, is the production of an overly deterministic argument, which implies that 'ethnicity' only comes into existence to serve the purposes of specific interest groups.

At another level, and largely as a consequence of Barth's conceptualization of ethnic categories as essentially 'empty vessels', this reduction of ethnicity to economic and political interests frequently results in either the total neglect of the cultural dimensions of ethnicity, or, more commonly, their reduction to a secondary role in the formation, and transformation ethnic identity. 119 Whilst the distinction made by Barth between culture and ethnicity, and the emphasis which he, and others, placed on the organizational aspects of ethnicity, has maintained a central position in subsequent theories, most instrumental approaches take the existence of group identity, and the cultural diacritia which symbolize that identity, for granted, and proceed to describe the socio-structural, and 'instrumental' dimensions of ethnicity. For instance, in an analysis of ethnic identity

¹¹⁷ Bentley, C.G. CSSH 29 1987:48.

Epstein, A. 1978:56. Furthermore, other scholars have found it necessary to ask whose interests are being pursued. Since ethnic groups are seldom in accord with regard to political, economic and moral issues the focus of a 'groups' interests tends to be oversimplified. Cf. Oppenheimer, J. EG 1 1977:221-240. Particularly Yinger, J. 1976:197-216 whose study illustrates how the 'Black Power' movement of the late 1960s in the United States, while greatly assisting better educated, high-status blacks, did virtually nothing for the millions of lower status ones.

¹¹⁹Cf. Deshen, S. in A. Cohen ed. 1974:281-284.

amongst migrant and urban born Mossi in Kumasi, Nigeria, Schildkrout claims that 'culture' is *irrelevant* to the persistence of ethnicity as a basis for personal and group identity and that ethnic categories are in fact maintained by structural factors¹²⁰. Consequently, ethnic identity, and cultural symbols become conceptualized as detatched attributes washed up on the tides of economic and political relations.

This reductionist mode of analysis, employed in many instrumentalist studies, also results in the neglect of the psychological dimensions of ethnicity, that is, precisely those factors stressed within primordial theories. While this is not to say that individuals, and ethnic groups, do not have any political and/or economic interests, explanations which deal exclusively with such factors tend to underrate the emotional power of certain ethnic attachments, whilst at the same time exaggerating the influence of materialism on human behaviour. Furthermore, as a result of this tendency to neglect the cultural and psychological dimensions of ethnicity, it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish ethnic groups from other 'collective interest' groups, most notably, class 121. Whilst this economic determinism has its cultural counterpoint in the work of Stein and Hill¹²², as Mc Kay points out, the relationship between 'class' and ethnic factors is exceedingly complex, and unlikely to be oversimplified theories of economic or cultural determinism. Finally, the assumption in many instrumental approaches that human behaviour is essentially rational, and directed towards maximizing self-interest, results in a drastic over-simplification of the perception of interests by culturally situated agents and the dynamics of both intra, and inter-group relations. Indeed, since members of ethnic groups are seldom in accord with regard to political, economic and moral issues, it cannot be assumed that members of a group will automatically agree as to what is in their interests.

¹²⁰ Schildkrout, E. 1974:187/216-217.

¹²¹ The relationship between class and ethnic factors is exceedingly complex and unlikely to be explained by oversimplified theories of economic and/or cultural determinism. Social actors have *multiple* social attachments (eg. class, religious, sexual, national, regional) which can coincide, contradict, or over lap with ethnic ties. For example in Ulster, Lebanon, South Africa and India, to cite but a few, communal differences have made it extremely difficult to forge classes with a pan-ethnic base, despite the objective economic advantages which all subordinate ethnic groups could gain from such an arrangement.

¹²² Stein, H. and R. Hill AS 46 1977:181-189.

Overall then, whilst instrumentalist approaches have contributed to the comparative analysis of ethnic groups – their relation to socio-economic and political relations, boundary maintenance, and inter-ethnic relations - they do tend to adopt a reductionist line of arguementation which ultimately fails to adequately explain the generation of ethnic groups. Moreover, like the proponents of the primordial perspective, instrumentalists do not provide an adequate theory of the relationship between culture and ethnicity. 123

¹²³ For instance, while Barth acknowledged there is no 'one-to-one' relationship between culture and ethnic groups, ethnic groups only persist as significant social units if they imply marked difference in behaviour, ie. persisting cultural differences. Moreover, he also defined ethnic identity as an ascriptive identity, 'presumptively determined by ...origin and background. How then, one may ask, do people such as the Fur adopt a Baggara lifestyle and identity to suit their economic aspirations when Baggara identity is presumably defined on the basis of origin and shared cultural knowledge?

FOUNDATION OF AN INTEGRATED THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: <u>PIERRE BOURDIEU</u>

In their search to provide an objective grounding for subjective identity claims then, not only have both approaches failed since they leave unexamined the micro-processes by which collectivities of interest and sentiment come into existence, but in the process of their evolution, both approaches have been positioned as diametric opposites by their adherents. The problem with the primordial approach, the instrumentalists argue, is that while it can explain the persistence of ethnic identity over time, it cannot address the issue of why this identity can, and often does change, or fluctuate in its intensity, as well as be differentially distributed at any given moment of time throughout a single group – a deficiency they believe is remedied by their focus on the social circumstances surrounding this identity, or rather, changing or differential social circumstances. That is, they argue a constant cannot explain a variable.

The primordialists for their part, counter that while the instrumentalists can explain why ethnicity fluctuates over time, they are less able to account for the fact that, despite these temporal fluctuations, ethnicity often persists, sometimes over centuries; changing circumstances may explain the fluctuations, but only primordial sentiments can account for its persistence. In other words, you cannot explain a constant with a variable. As Mc Kay has astutely pointed out, "we are told on the one hand, that the continued salience of ethnic factors is because they are deep seated, irrational, atavistic allegiances, incapable of being altered, and on the other hand, because they are peripheral loyalties which can be readily manipulated in a rational way for pursuing political and economic goals" 125. It would seem then that if ethnic attachments are primordial, they cannot be instrumental; if they are instrumental, they cannot be primordial.

¹²⁴ The problems raised by these apparently diametrically opposed perspectives is analogous to the debate in the 1960s between 'consensus' and 'conflict' theorists, who could not agree on which theory best explained the nature of social order. After considerable argumentation, theorists realized that *both* conflict and consensus were interrelated, dialectical aspects of social organization, a point that Schermerhorn notes is also relevant to ethnic relations. Schermerhorn, R. 1970:57-58.

¹²⁵ McKay, J. ERS 5(4) 1982:396.

While such a polar model of ethnic phenomena is useful for sensitizing us to the 'extreme' situations of both 'primordialism', and 'instrumentalism', the utility of such perspectives for empirically examining ethnic phenomena is limited by the fact that they feature 'zero-sum' categories 126. Despite the apparent disagreement over fundamentals however, there have been a few attempts to combine the primordial and instrumental approaches, recognizing that whilst they are each necessary to explain completely why ethnic solidarity exists, neither of them alone is sufficient as such an explanation. In other words, a sufficient explanation must include both approaches. Indeed, the need for this combined theoretical approach is recognized in Bell's succinct, yet oft quoted statement, "Ethnicity has become more salient because it can combine an interest with an effective tie"127. In an attempt to transcend the opposition between these two theoretical perspectives then, a number of scholars have attempted to incorporate both within a single theoretical framework. 128

Perhaps one of the best attempts to achieve a syntheses of the two approaches is that of Mc Kay, who, after a thorough review of the literature on 'ethnic phenomena' proposes a 'matrix model' which, combining both perspectives, concludes that "they are inter-related ethnic manifestations which combine in varying degrees depending on the situation" 129. At one end of Mc Kay's 'matrix model' of different types of ethnic interests lies what he refers to as 'symbolic ethnics' such as the 'Saturday' Italians of New York who make nostalgic pilgrimages from the suburbs to Little Italy on the weekends. 130 Other 'symbolic ethnics', that is, those whose "situations are characterized by low degrees of (ethnically based) political and economic interests, and minimal levels of primordial

¹²⁹ McKay, J. ERS 5(4)1982: 413.

¹²⁶ The 'Zero-Sum Game' holds that what one side loses, the other side gains, the result being equal in minuses in pluses, together you get zero. Myers, K. The Irish Times May 24th 2001. For a similar presentation of the 'zero-sum' approach, this time in relation to class see Parkin, F. 1974:1-18. ¹²⁷ Bell, D. in Glazer, N. and D.P. Moynihan eds. 1975:169.

¹²⁸ Cf. Doornbos, M. 'Civilizations 22 1972:263-283. McKay, J. ERS 5(4) 1982:395-428. Smith, A.D. 1981. Stack, J.F. 1986:1-11.

¹³⁰ McKay, J. ERS 5(4) 1982:407-408. Cf. Pileggi, N. New York World Journal Tribune January 15 1967.

attachment, include those of Scottish descent who infrequently attend clan festivals, and those of Irish ancestry who may occasionally march in St. Patrick's Day festivals¹³¹. At the opposite end of that model however, separated from the 'symbolic ethnics' by 'ethnic traditionalists', 'ethnic manipulators', and 'pseudo-ethnics', are 'ethnic militants', such as the Basque separatist groups whose primordial and instrumental interests are both extremely prominent¹³². While the major advantage of McKay's model is that it obviates the need to dichotomize the competing perspectives into logically exhaustive compartments, his model is an empirical, or inductive one, and is thus devoid of explanatory formulations. That is, it does not attempt to actually link the primordial and instrumental approaches causally, to explain how they influence one another so that the ethnic solidarity of the group is enhanced. Rather, it is simply a framework to be used in order to highlight which particular combination of the two manifestations exists in any given empirical situation of ethnic solidarity. In McKay's own words, "This matrix model does not explain why ethnic collectivities emerge, persist, or disappear, it only describes what combinations of interests they exhibit" of the group is enhanced.

Others, such as Smith, however, who also suggests that the intensity of ethnic behaviour varies along a continuum, attempt to develop an explanatory, rather than merely descriptive model. His theory, grounded in an analysis of the socio-historical contexts in which ethnicity is constructed, maintains that the economic conditions associated with modern industrial nation states have exacerbated ethnic movements, leading to greater intensity of sentiment and the mobilization of groups. Yet, because Smith claims that the importance of economic factors lies in their ability to activate *historically rooted* communities, his explanation of ethnicity remains within a primordialist framework, with the instrumental dimensions of ethnicity situated as secondary phenomena which emerge in particular social and historical situations, one being the development of

¹³¹ Cf. McKay, J. and F. Lewins, F. ERS 1978:412-427.

¹³² Cf. McKay, J. ERS 5(4) 1982:404-406.

¹³³ Ibid. 1982:408 (emphasis in the original)

¹³⁴ Smith, A.D. 1981.

industrialization¹³⁵. Whilst such an approach enables the analysis of primordial and instrumental aspects as variables, it does situate them as distinct, yet mutually influencing processes, along a temporal scale which progresses from seemingly natural, primordial entities in the misty depths of time, to the instrumental, and seemingly arbitrary, manipulation of ethnicity in pursuit of economic and political resources in modern society.¹³⁶

Alternative responses to the need to break down the opposition between instrumental and primordial perspectives, and incorporate both within a single paradigm, can also be found within the theoretical literature. Apart from van den Berghe's attempt to subsume both approaches within the all encompassing paradigm of socio-biology¹³⁷, it is perhaps Keyes' attempt to resolve the primordialist-instrumentalist dichotomy, not by leaping to a universal plane of explanation, but by placing both aspects of ethnicity, the psychological and the socio-structural into a dialectical relationship with each other within the context of social change, which is perhaps the most noteworthy¹³⁸. The basis of his analysis is the premise that a tension exists "between cultural meanings that people construct to differentiate their primordial identities from those of others, and the patterns that emerge in social interaction as individuals and groups seek to pursue their interests" 139. While in relatively stable social situations certain mechanisms, such as sanctions, may be maintained to resolve any tensions, a radical shift in the social context may bring about changes in the form and pattern of social interaction which results in the construction of new cultural meanings, and a reassessment of ethnic identities. In many respects, his is an approach which is similar to the 'psycho-cultural' approach advocated by de Vos, in that it identifies the locus of change as the tension which exists between the instrumental and

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¹³⁵ 'Economic deprivation, economic exploitation and economic growth, are all grist to the nationalist mill; but in themselves they do not generate ethnic sentiments or nationalist movements. The uneven development of industrialization, which roughly coincided with the development of nationalism, has undoubtedly sharpened ethnic tensions and contributed to a new store of national grievances; but the cleavages and antagonisms so accentuated, together with the aspirations and ideals based upon them, have their roots and inspiration elsewhere.' Smith, A.D. 1981:44.

¹³⁶ Cf. Douglass, W.A. ERS 11(2) 1988:192-206.

¹³⁷ Van den Berghe, P.L. ERS 1 1978:401-411. 1978.

¹³⁸ Cf. Keyes, C.F. Ethnicity 3 1976:202-213. See also C.F. Keyes ed. 1981:3-31.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 1981:14.

primordial dimensions of ethnicity.¹⁴⁰ Analogous to Smith's thesis however, it does imply some form of primordial basis for ethnicity which is then articulated in response to epiphenomenal social stimuli. As contexts change, so do relevant identities, "yet once evolved, these new identities are assumed to define for people who they truly are...Primordial entities continue to serve as gyroscopes for those buffeted by uncertainties as to the best way to pursue their interests." ¹⁴¹

Many of the attempts to develop an integrated theoretical framework are to be lauded, but it would seem that their eagerness to articulate an over-arching framework which accommodates both perspectives blinds them to the fundamentally different assumptions about human action upon which each is predicated. Whilst instrumentalists tend to view human action as rationally orientated toward practical goals, primordialists, on the other hand, tend to view it as value orientated. Indeed, many of the integrated theoretical approaches outlined tend to implicitly accept such a dichotomy as a baseline for their analysis and then proceed to identify the different forms of ethnicity which are engendered by these apparently conflictual modes of human behaviour. Hence, ethnic groups are considered to be the product of both the rational pursuit of economic and political interests, in the mode of 'Homo-economicus', and the forces of coercive and atavistic primordial affinities. In addition to this absence of a coherent theory of human action which can transcend the 'primordial'-'instrumental' dichotomy, both approaches share a critical gap in their explanatory logic. Whilst 'primordialists' stress the importance of cultural symbols, they simply claim that the enduring significance of particular aspects of culture in the ascription of ethnicity is due to the psychological importance of ethnic identity. Instrumentalists on the other hand, having dismissed the idea of a 'one-to-one' relationship between culture and ethnicity, reduce culture to an epiphenomenal set of symbols manipulated in the pursuit of changing group interests. Neither however adequately explains how people come to recognize their commonalities of sentiment, or interest, in the first place.

¹⁴⁰ DeVos, G. 1982:5-41.

¹⁴¹ Keyes, C.F. 1981:28.

Whether the impetus for the claim to be a particular kind of person, which is the basis of ethnicity, lies in an innate tendency to favour kin, real or fictive, ecological adaptation, shared positions in structures of production and distribution, or emotional sustenance, ethnic identity-claims "involve symbolic construals of sensations of likeness and difference",a distinction between 'us' and 'them', "and these sensations must somehow be accounted for" ¹⁴². In order to address such issues however, it is necessary to reconsider the relationship between ethnicity and culture, without resorting to either the teleological functionalism of the instrumentalists ¹⁴³, or the implicit determinism of primordialist theories. The 'theory of practice', as formulated by Pierre Bourdieu, furnishes one with a methodology for addressing this theoretical impasse since it explicitly concerns itself with the general relationship between the *objective* conditions of social life and the agent's *subjective* constructions of social reality.

Long a dominant figure in French social science ¹⁴⁴, Pierre Bourdieu became increasingly influential on the international stage, largely on the strength of the astonishing range of theoretical themes and empirical topics his publications have addressed. Whilst his early academic career, and anthropological fieldwork, were conducted within the structuralist tradition then dominant, he emerged as perhaps the foremost contemporary advocate of 'reflexive social science', and was a major figure in the development of 'practice', ¹⁴⁵ as an organizing concept in social research, contributing to attempts which seek to overcome such ubiquitous theoretical oppositions as 'objective-subjective', 'structure-agency', etc. Through his many important works which articulate an opinion on a diverse variety of topics which range from education, kinship, and law, to labour, religion, and

¹⁴² Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:27.

¹⁴³ Such teleological definitions of ethnicity do not facilitate the explication and analysis of the general processes involved in the formation and transformation of ethnic groups as they are restricted to the form that ethnic phenomena take in particular social and historical contexts. Furthermore, attempts to incorporate substantive content, such as specific cultural characteristics, or particular socio-structural relations, into the definition of ethnicity risk the reification of ethnic groups, and obscure the multidimensional, contested and situational nature of ethnicity.

¹⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu died in Paris on 23rd January, 2002.

On the notion of 'practice' as an organizing and explanatory tool in social scientific research see, Ortner, S.B. CSSH 26 1984:144-152.

science, Bourdieu developed, a distinctive approach to the production of sociological knowledge, one which amongst other things, unites profound theoretical knowledge with the constant challenge of empirical research and analysis.

While French intellectual life during Bourdieu's collegiate days was dominated by a seemingly binary choice between the towering figures of Jean-Paul Sartre and Lévi-Strauss, Bourdieu, though initially attracted to a more 'Lévi-Straussian' style structuralism, began relatively early to challenge its Neo-Kantian certainties, as had Foucault and Derrida in other intellectual fields. Yet, whilst his challenge to the objectivism implicit in structuralism drew its inspiration from Marxism 146, and particularly from phenomenological approaches which have as their center of gravity the beliefs, desires and judgements of agents who are seen as 'empowered to make the world and act according to their own light', he declined to identify himself exclusively with this position. Rather, influenced by the oppositions and dichotomies which have characterized classical social theory, 147 Bourdieu sought to formulate a theoretical approach which would grasp the complexities of social life in terms which would do justice to both the objective material, social and cultural structures, and to the constituting practices and experiences of individuals and groups – a theory of practice. As such, Bourdieu's project can be described as an attempt to overcome theoretically the oppositions which have characterized social theory and formulate a reflexive approach to social life. At the heart of this attempt to transcend existing social theories, and the limitations of vision which

Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:27. While Bentley is undoubtedly correct in positing this relationship between Marxist theory and notions of practice, as Ortner points out, '...to speak of a Marxist influence in all of this is actually to obscure an important aspect of what is going on: an interpretation, almost a merger between Marxist and Weberian frameworks. In the sixties, the opposition between Marx and Weber as 'materialist' and 'idealist' had been emphasized. In contrast, practice theorists draw on a set of writers who interpret the Marxist corpus in such a way as to render it quite compatible with Weber's views. As Weber put the actor at the centre of his model, so these writers emphasize issues of human praxis in Marx. As Weber subsumed the economic within the political, so these writers encompass economic exploitation within political domination. And as Weber was centrally concerned with ethos and consciousness, so these writers stress similar issues within Marx's work. Choosing Marx over Weber as one's theorist of reference is a tactical move of a certain sort. In reality, the theoretical framework involved is equally indebted to both.' Ortner, S.B. CSSH 26 1984:147. Cf. Avineri, S. 1971. Giddens, A. 1971.

¹⁴⁷ Alongside the standard 'objective-subjective' division, a whole series of associated oppositions such as 'individual' v 'society', 'conditioning' v 'creativity' and 'determinism' v 'freedom' have characterized classical social theory.

they entail, lies the concept of 'habitus', a term which Bourdieu, like Norbert Elias, reconstituted from classical scholarship. 148

"The structures constitutive of a particular environment (eg. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures, predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules." 149 For Bourdieu then, habitus is made up of a system of durable dispositions towards certain perceptions and practices, such as those relating to the sexual division of labour, morality, tastes and so on, which become part of an individual's sense of self at an early age, and which can be transposed from one context to another. As such, habitus involves a process of socialization whereby new experiences are structured in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, with early experiences retaining a particular weight. In this way, structures of power become embodied, resulting in certain dispositions (cognitive and motivating structures) which influence practice, often at an unconscious level. As Bourdieu argues, "...the practical evaluation of the likelihood of the success of a given action in a given situation brings into play a whole body of wisdoms, sayings, commonplaces, ethical precepts ('that's not for the likes of us') and, at a deeper level, the unconscious principles of the ethos which, being the product of a learning process dominated by a determinate type of objective regularities, determines 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' conduct for every agent subjected to those regularities." 150

While the dispositions of *habitus* are generated by the conditions constituting a particular social environment, such as modes of production or access to certain resources¹⁵¹,

¹⁴⁸ The concept of the habitus was explicitly formulated with the aim of breaking away from both 'objective' intellectual traditions such as structuralism, and its subjective counterpoint embodied in such theoretical positions as phenomenology. Bourdieu, P. and L.J.D. Wacquant 1992:120-121.

¹⁴⁹ Bordieu, P. 1977:72.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 1977:77.

¹⁵¹Cf. Bourdieu, P. 1977:77-78. While Bourdieu uses the notion of 'objective social conditions' to refer to the conditions of existence encountered by any particular social actor or group of actors, he has been

Bourdieu's theory differs from normative and structural theories of culture where the practices produced with relation to certain conditions are assumed to involve the mechanistic enactment of a system of rules existing outside the individual or group. Rather Bourdieu argues that such structural orientations only exist in the form of embodied knowledge and the dispositions of *habitus*, indeed their very substance, depends on the practices and representations of human agents which in turn contribute to the reproduction and transformation of the objective conditions constitutive of *habitus*. ¹⁵² Consequently, the dispositions of *habitus* are "at once 'structuring structures' and 'structured structures'; they shape and are shaped by social practice." ¹⁵³

The structural orientations making up habitus then are essentially dialectic in that they both structure, and are structured by, social practice: they are both the medium and the outcome of social practice. Such an approach then provides one with a theoretical framework with which to resolve the dichotomy between functionalism and structuralism. For while human behaviour can still be considered to achieve certain functional ends, to provide for basic needs, desires and goals, such needs and interests are defined and negotiated by people within a culturally structured situation, as are the functions that particular practices perform. So conceived, *habitus* is the dynamic intersection of structure and action, the individual and society. As such, it enables Bourdieu to analyze the behaviour of agents as objectively coordinated and regular, without being the product of either 'rules' or 'conscious rationality'. It is meant to capture the practical mastery which people have of their social situation, whilst at the same time grounding that mastery itself socially.

In this respect, Bourdieu's theory of practice bears more than a passing resemblance to other 'practice theories' developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as Marshall

criticized in this respect for failing to operationalize his own argument that 'objective conditions' are only objective in as much as they are perceived as such and confirmed through the practices of social actors. Cf. Jenkins, R. Sociology 16(4) 1982:270-281.

¹⁵² Bourdieu, P. 1977:76-78.

¹⁵³ Postone, M., E. LiPuma, and C. Calhoun 1993:4

¹⁵⁴ Bourdieu, P. 1977:76.

Sahlins' exploration of 'cosmological dramas' and Anthony Giddens' 'theory of stucturation, 156, which seek to locate the existence, and therefore the reproduction and transformation of social or cultural structures in the domain of 'practice'. In the theory of structuration, Giddens employs a 'space-time continuum' as the framework within which structured actions of human agents can be observed reproducing the institutionalized form of the social system. "All human action is carried on by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is also conditioned or restrained by the very world of their creation." 157 Rather than seeing action and structure as counter-acting elements of a dualism then, Giddens, like Bourdieu, proposes that this seeming dualism actually disguises a complementarity, and that this dualism should actually be regarded as a 'duality', the 'duality of structure'. By the duality of structure, Giddens writes "I mean that social structures are both constituted by human agency and at the same time are the very medium of this constitution."158 Every act of production is at the same time an act of reproduction; the structures that render an act possible are, in the performance of that act, themselves reproduced. This intimate connection between the production and reproduction is what Giddens' refers to as the recursive character of social life, and his theory of structuration is a sustained attempt to tease out the threads woven into this apparently unproblematic fact.

It has been argued that Bourdieu's conceptualization of the processes involved in the reproduction of social structures and the relationship between social structure and human agency is conservative and deterministic 159, however his account of cultural reproduction does accommodate the possibility of social change in terms of continuous transformations in the structural dispositions of the *habitus* within changing contexts of social practice. Furthermore, he also explores the possibility of active resistance to

155 Cf. Sahlins, M. 1981.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Giddens, A. 1989:1-40/280-288. 1981.

¹⁵⁷ Giddens, A. 1981:54.

¹⁵⁸ Giddens, A. 1976:121.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Jenkins, R. Sociology 16(4) 1982:272-273/278. DiMaggio, P. AJS 84(6) 1979:1470. While an emphasis on changing, and sometimes novel contexts of social practice is more prominent in the work of Sahlins then in Bourdieu, Bourdieu tends to place greater emphasis on the emergence of a consciousness of alternative ways of viewing the world and the possibility of critique and direct political action which such a consciousness enables. Cf. Ortner, S.B. CSSH 26 1984:155-156.

prevailing modes of domination as a result of exposure to the arbitrariness of taken for granted, subconscious (*doxic*) knowledge within the context of radical social and economic change. ¹⁶⁰

Although Bourdieu's writings are of themselves not directly concerned with ethnicity, the capacity of his theory to provide an objective grounding for subjective identity claims has been forcefully advocated by G. Carter Bentley. Taking as his point of departure the mutual deficiencies of the 'primordial' and 'instrumental' perspectives, Bentley proceeds to harness the durable, subliminal dispositions of Bourdieu's *habitus* as a basis for the shared sentiments and interests which ethnicity entails: "...according to the practice theory of ethnicity, sensations of ethnic affinity are founded on common life experiences that generate similar habitual dispositions...It is this commonality of experience and of the preconscious *habitus* it generates which gives members of an ethnic cohort their sense of being both familiar, and familial to each other" Thus employed, the concept of *habitus* articulates the way in which subjective ethnic classifications are grounded in the social conditions and cultural practices characterizing particular social domains.

Unlike the assumptions of traditional normative, or indeed primordial approaches then, ethnicity is not a passive reflection of similarities and/or differences in the cultural practices and structural practices in which people are socialized. Nor is it, as some instrumental approaches imply, produced entirely in the process of social interaction whereby epiphenomenal cultural symbols are consciously manipulated in the pursuit of economic and political interests. Rather, extrapolating from Bourdieu's theory of practice, as Bentley has done, it can be argued that the subjective construction of ethnic identity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of the *habitus* which shape, and are shaped by, commonalities of practice. As Bentley himself puts it "...shared *habitus* engenders feelings of identification amongst people similarly endowed. These feelings

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¹⁶⁰ Bourdieu, P. 1977:168. Cf. below.

¹⁶¹ Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:24-55. See also Bentley, G.C. CSSH 33 1991:169-175.

¹⁶² Bentley, G.C CSSH 29 1987:32-33.

are consciously appropriated and given form through existing symbolic resources" ¹⁶³. Moreover, these 'symbolic resources' are not essentially arbitrary. The cultural practices and representations which become objectified as symbols of ethnicity are, of necessity, derived from, and resonate with, the habitual practices and experiences of the people involved, as well as reflecting the instrumental contingencies and meaningful cultural idioms of a particular situation. As Eriksen has argued, the symbolic representations of ethnicity are "…intrinsically linked with experienced lived worlds containing specific, real meanings which, on the one hand contribute to shaping interaction, and on the other hand limit the number of options in the production of ethnic signs". ¹⁶⁴

Furthermore, whilst such a practice theory of ethnicity facilitates the analysis of the relationship between ethnic consciousness and social structures, thereby revealing its potential to transcend the 'objectivist-subjectivist' divide, the appropriation of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* also provides a means of integrating the 'antagonistic' primordial and instrumental dimensions of ethnicity within a coherent theory of human action. As the recognition of ethnicity is, to some extent at least, derived from commonalities of *habitus*, it can be argued that the strong psychological and emotional attachments often associated with identity and ethnic symbolism are generated by the critical role of the *habitus* in ascribing an individual's sense of social self¹⁶⁵. This is not to suggest however that ethnic identifications and/or associated symbolic representations of that identity, are either fixed, or determinative. Rather as Bentley argues, "...since ethnic identity derives from situationally shared elements of a multi-dimensional *habitus*, it is possible for an individual to possess several different situationally relevant yet nonetheless emotionally authentic identities and to symbolize all of them in terms of shared descent." ¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, whilst instrumentalists have demonstrated the continuous transformation and reproduction of ethnic identity within different contexts as individuals act

¹⁶³ Bentley, G.C. CSSH 33 1991:173

¹⁶⁴ Eriksen, T.H. 1992:45.

¹⁶⁵ Bourdieu, P. 1977:78-93.

¹⁶⁶ Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:35.

strategically in the pursuit of economic and political advantage, such 'manipulation' does not, as they imply, take place within a vacuum. Rather, drawing on Bourdieu, such processes are structured by the principles of the habitus which engender perception of the possible, and the impossible. What is commonly interpreted, and presented, as rational interest seeking behaviour then, is, in fact, largely habitual, an acting out of objective constraints encoded in unexamined assumptions about what is, and what is not reasonable ¹⁶⁷. In such a way, the theory of practice avoids the finalist fallacy of teleological causation, that is, identifying an event's consequences as its cause. As Bourdieu himself adduces, human agency, rather than advancing unrestrained, is defined by the intersection of the "socially constituted system of cognitive structures (which make up the habitus) and the socially structured situation in which agents' interests are defined, and with them, the objective functions and subjective motivations of their practices". ¹⁶⁸

Such an appropriation of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to the study of ethnicity is surely innovative, providing one with explanations for the cultural differences between groups of differing ethnic identity, and how particular practices, or modes of living can engender a particular 'ethnic culture' 169; as it stands however, there are two significant, and related limitations to Bentley's practice theory of ethnicity – limitations which have been perceptively highlighted by Yelvington. 170

First of all, in linking ethnicity to *habitus*, Bentley, who suggests that *habitus* embodies "a consciousness of affinities of interest and experience that embodies subliminal awareness of commonalities in practice" seems to go too far. Such a perspective is problematic because 'an awareness of commonalities in practice', in this instance must

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¹⁶⁷ Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:28.

¹⁶⁸ Bourdieu, P. 1977:76.

A similar theoretical argument is developed by Eriksen who utilizes Bourdieu's concept of habitus and Wittgenstein's concept of language games as a way of conceptualizing the system of internalized orientations of thought and behaviour that constitute particular modes of practice and thus provide the basis for the construction of ethnic categories. Cf. Eriksen, T.H. 1993:33-34/47

See Yelvington, K. CSSH 29 1987.
 Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:27

surely refer to a common culture in which ethnicity is directly related to culture as the expression of a particular and specific identity. In other words, Bentley sees ethnic identity as deriving from the *habitus* of the group, and this identity is characterized by a preconscious awareness of likeness with others of similar *habitus*. Such an understanding of the relationship between culture, or *habitus*, and ethnicity then is not far removed from the traditional equation outlined previously wherein ethnicity is seen as a passive reflection of the normative behaviour of a discrete group of people. Although Bentley's project may differ from such traditional models because of his introduction of *habitus*, which constitutes a separation between surface cultural expressions and deep structural dispositions, his theory of the relationship between *habitus* and ethnicity does nevertheless result in a partial resurrection of the idea that ethnic groups constitute bounded social entities generated with reference to commonalities rather than difference – an idea central to traditional models of the ethnic group. ¹⁷²

Although Bentley attempts to defend his position against Yelvington's claim that his argument is based upon an unsupportable correlation between ethnicity and culture by reiterating his argument that "structured habitual practice represents a deep structure which can produce an infinite variety of surface expressions ...personal styles if you will" appears that Bentley does in fact hold ethnic identity to be a *direct* reflection of the *habitus* of the group and that this identity is generated by a subliminal awareness of 'likeness' with others of similar *habitus*. The logical implication of Bentley's argument then is that each ethnic group is theoretically defined by practices which are intrinsic only to that group – an argument which leads him to neglect a number of important insights of

¹⁷² Cf. Barth, F. 1969:11-12. 'If one chooses to regard the culture-bearing aspect of ethnic groups as their primary characteristic, this has far reaching implications. One is led to identify and distinguish ethnic groups by the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they are the bearers. This entails a prejudged viewpoint on (1) the nature of the continuity in time of such units, and (2) the locus of the factors which determine the form of the units. Given the emphasis on this culture-bearing aspect, the classification of persons and local groups as members of an ethnic group must depend on their exhibiting the particular traits of the culture...Differences between groups become differences in trait inventories; the attention is drawn to the analysis of cultures, not of ethnic organization.'

recent research, most notably the organizational and contrastive dimensions of ethnicity – that is, that ethnicity is essentially a consciousness of difference vis-à-vis others. ¹⁷⁴

Thus, in this respect, Bentley does not push his analysis far enough as he fails to take into account the activity of particular 'ethnic others' in the social construction of ethnicity. Although he does garner considerable insight from the works of Barth, and particularly Moermann, ironically it is one of Moermann's central points which serves to further expose the limitations of Bentley's position. In his study of ethnic relations in Northern Thailand, and with an explicit focus on the *Chiengkham Lue*, Moermann wrote that: "To themselves and their neighbours, the *Lue* are an ethnic entity despite the triviality of their 'distinctive traits' and the total destruction of the political state that once defined them...in order to call themselves by an ethnic label, villagers are semantically required to use, or imply a contrastive label for others. To phrase the issue somewhat more generally and accurately, using one member of a set of identifications provides the context which makes other members of that set appropriate. Using the label 'Negro' provides the context which makes labels like 'White', or 'Mexican' appropriate...the contemporary tribalism (in the sense of ethnicity) of the Chiengkham Lue depends upon contrast with equivalent ethnic entities" 175.

This point about one's ethnic identity depending upon contrast within the context of interaction with others is forcefully stated by Eriksen who maintains that, "The first fact of ethnicity is the application of systematic distinctions between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', between 'Us' and 'Them'. If no such principle exists there can be *no* ethnicity, since ethnicity presupposes an institutionalized relationship between delineated categories whose members consider each other to be culturally distinctive. From this principle, it follows that two, or several groups who regard themselves as being distinctive may tend to become more similar and simultaneously increasingly concerned with their distinctiveness if their mutual contact increases. Ethnicity is thus constituted

¹⁷⁴ Ever since Barth's assertion that ethnic groups are a product of contact rather than isolation, *difference* has been privileged over *similarity* in the analysis of ethnic phenomena. Barth, F. 1969:10 . C.F. Eriksen, T.H. 1993: 1-35.

¹⁷⁵ Moermann, M. 1974:57.

through social contact"¹⁷⁶. The fact then that ethnicity is not primarily constituted by a subliminal recognition of *similarities*, but is essentially a consciousness of *difference*, requires further consideration of the relationship between *habitus* and the construction of ethnicity.

¹⁷⁶ Eriksen, T.H. 1992:18.

A PRACTICE THEORY OF ETHNICITY

According to Bourdieu, the workings of habitus are such that the subjective principles of organization, and associated modes of knowledge, such as the systems of classification relating to gender and class, tend towards a correspondence with the conditions of existence. This correspondence results in a level of social experience called 'Doxa', which, according to Bourdieu, entails a misrecognition and naturalization of the real divisions within the social order leading to a reproduction of that order and consequently, the modes of domination inherent in it... "systems of classification which reproduce in their own specific logic, the objective classes ie. the divisions by sex, age or positions in the relations of production, make their specific contribution to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are a product by securing the misrecognition of the arbitrariness on which they are based: in the extreme case...the natural and social world appears as self evident. This experience we shall call doxa...". 177 Indeed, as Bourdieu points out, the more stable the objective structures, and the more fully they reproduce themselves in the agents' dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of doxa. Owing to this quasi-perfect fit then between the 'objective' and the 'internalized' structures which results from the simple logic of reproduction, the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary (as one possibility amongst others) but as a self evident and natural order which goes without saying, and therefore, unquestioned. The agents' aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are a product.¹⁷⁸ As Bourdieu acknowledges however, this doxic mode of knowledge is not the only form of social knowledge.

Rather, when the field of doxa "that which is beyond question and which each agent tacitly accords by the mere fact of acting in accordance with social convention" is brought into question practically, for example, as a result of 'culture contact', or by political and economic crisis, the field of *doxa* undergoes a transformation. As Bourdieu points out, "...the critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion, the

¹⁷⁷ Bourdieu, P. 1977:164.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ibid. 1977:165-167.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 1977:169.

unformulated into formulation, has as the condition of its possibility objective crisis, which, in breaking the immediate fit between the subjective structures and objective structures, destroys self evidence practically. It is when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon that the question of the natural, or conventional character...of social facts can be raised" 180. The result of this practical questioning of the theses implied in a particular way of living then is the establishment of orthodox, or heterodox forms of knowledge – both of which involve an awareness, and recognition of possible alternatives. 181

Although Bourdieu develops this distinction between doxic and other forms of social knowledge (orthodox and heterodox) within the context of an analysis of the emergence of class consciousness, such a distinction may also be fruitfully applied to an analysis of ethnicity. Whilst a recognition of the shared sentiments and interests which ethnicity involves, may, in part, be derived from doxic experience in certain spheres of habitus, the emergence of ethnic consciousness and the categories and symbols it entails, involves a critical break with doxic knowledge. That is, the kind of social experience and knowledge involved in the emergence of a consciousness of ethnicity, and the formulation of ethnic categories, is founded on a fundamental break with the kind of experience and knowledge which constitutes a substantial part of habitus. It is social interaction between agents of differing cultural traditions which not only engenders this reflexive mode of perception, exposing the arbitrariness of certain cultural practices which, hitherto had been mastered in the doxic mode, but furthermore permits, and requires a change in the level of discourse so as to rationalize and systematize the representation of those cultural practices and more generally, the cultural tradition itself¹⁸². It is at such a discursive level that ethnic categories are produced, reproduced and transformed through the systematic

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Bourdieu, P. 1977:168-169. As Bourdieu continues out however, 'this practical questioning is not the purely intellectual operation which phenomenology designates by the term epoch, the deliberate, methodical suspension of naïve adherence to the world.'

Whilst 'orthodoxy', straight, or rather 'straightened', opinion, attempts to deny the possibility of alternatives at a conscious level through a restoration of the primal state of innocence of doxa, 'heterodoxy' on the other hand acknowledges the existence of a choice between different forms of knowledge and the possibility of their evaluation through explicit critiques. ¹⁸² Bourdieu, P. 1977:233.

communication of cultural difference in relation to the cultural practices of particular 'ethnic others'. In effect, a set of cultural practices and beliefs which had previously formed part of the domain of doxa, become reified as a coherent, and concrete object in opposition to specific ethnic others.

Indeed, this process can be illustrated with reference to a specific ethnographic example – that of the construction of Tswana ethnicity within the context of European colonialism. ¹⁸³ In the process of interaction and communication between the Tswana people of southern Africa and evangelist European missionaries, both groups began to recognize certain distinctions between them; "to objectify their world in relation to a novel other; thereby inventing for themselves a self-conscious coherence and distinctiveness – even while they accommodated to the new relationship that enclosed them" ¹⁸⁴. This objectification of culture however, is not an entirely instrumental construction as it is based on the perception of certain commonalities of practice and experience in 'Setswana' that is, Tswana ways of life, in opposition to 'Sekgoa', that is European ways. Thus, as a result of the interaction between the Tswana and members of the colonial society, Tswana tradition was *objectified* as a coherent body of knowledge and practice uniting the Tswana people as an ethnic group in relation to particular 'ethnic' others.

While one must note however that the form Tswana self-consciousness takes within this context is different from the cultural identities which prevailed in pre-colonial times when the Tswana were divided into political communities based upon totemic affiliations, ¹⁸⁵in both pre- and post- colonial times, the construction of identity involved

¹⁸³ Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff, 1992:235-263.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 1992:245.

¹⁸⁵ In addressing the forces that produce totemism and ethnicity and their associated modes of consciousness, Comaroff and Comaroff state that while *totemism* emerges with the establishment of symmetrical relations between structurally similar groupings – groupings which may or may not come to be integrated into one political community – *ethnicity* has its origins in the asymmetric incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy. While the substantive features of both are explored in great detail, it is enough to state that while ethnicity may differ from totemism in its content, there is, beneath this difference, a common denominator – both are ultimately modes of social classification and consciousness, markers of identity and collective relations. Cf. Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff 1992:49-67.

the marking of contrast – the opposition between selves and others. Indeed there are many other cases from the ethnographic literature which illustrate similar processes, for example, the formation of Tsonga ethnicity in southern Africa¹⁸⁶, and pan-Aboriginal ethnicity in Australia¹⁸⁷. Despite variations in the particular socio-historical conditions in which ethnicity is constructed, and in the particular form which ethnicity takes, it can be argued that similar, though in some cases, less radical, processes of objectification are involved in the construction of a consciousness of ethnicity.

Although this objectification of cultural difference in the construction of ethnicity involves the opposition of disparate cultural traditions - an opposition of selves and others - the particular form such oppositions take is the product of the intersection of the habitus of the people concerned with the conditions making up a particular context of interaction. Such conditions include the prevailing modes of domination and the relative distribution, between the different groups, of the material and symbolic means necessary for imposing dominant modes of ethnic categorization. For example, the asymmetric incorporation, albeit to differing degrees and with varying rapidity, of indigenous African populations into the political economies of Europe during the colonial era, in many instances yielded novel ethnic affiliations and groupings 188. For instance, as Greenburg has observed, "The Kikuyu...whose coherence is now so important to understanding Kenyatta and nationalism in Kenya, had no certain identity before the imposition of British rule, and the alienation of the land to the settlers; distinctive groups like the Sikhs in India, and the Malays in Malaysia were barely conscious of their 'sameness' one hundred years ago." 189 As Cohen has argued however, such 'categories' are not arbitrary but rather reflect the imperialist and expansionist tendencies of colonialism and the

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¹⁸⁹ Quoted in Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff 1992:57.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Harries, P. in L. Vail ed. 1989:82-117.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Jones, D. and J. Hill-Burnett in M.C. Howard ed. 1982:214-246. Tonkinson, M.E. 1990:191-309. See also, Turner, T. 1991:285-313.

While European colonialism undoubtedly provided a context, and one that is particularly prominent in the theoretical literature, in which new forms of ethnic self-consciousness were inscribed, there is no reason why 'ethnicity' should be restricted to the context of European colonialism, or any other macro sociohistorical development for that matter. Cf. Chapter 5.

associated dichotomization of the world into uncivilized and civilized, the raw and the cooked of human historical experience. 190

In contrast to Bentley's unadulterated consumption of Bourdieu then, it seems not only that a group's habitus does not wholly determine ethnic identity, but furthermore, that the extent to which ethnicity is embedded in any pre-existing cultural realities represented by a shared *habitus* is highly variable. Because cultures tend to be transformed as the groups who 'bear them' come into contact with one another, the degree of contiguity between habitus and the emergence of ethnic consciousness is dependent upon the cultural transformations bought about by those processes of interaction and the nature of the power relations between the interacting groups. For example, within colonial situations, where ethnic groups are formed within the context of large-scale urban migration and associated social and cultural dislocation, the newly subordinated underclass is likely to be composed of people of diverse origin. "In such circumstances, the substance of their identities, as contrived from both within, and outside, is inevitably a bricolage, fashioned in the very historical processes which underwrite their subordination." 191 Yet, even when ethnicity is as much a product of specific historical processes and relations of inequality between groups, as it is a reflection of pre-existing cultural realities, the reproduction of these emergent forms of cultural difference and relations of inequality will, over time, lead to their incorporation as part of the structural dispositions of the *habitus*.

As Comaroff and Comaroff point out, "...ethnic consciousness enters a dialectical relationship with the structures that underlie it: once ethnicity impinges upon social experience as an (apparently) independent principle of social classification and organization, it provides a powerful motif for collective activity. And this, in turn, must

¹⁹⁰ Cohen, R. ARA 7 1978:380. Indeed this encounter between global forces and the diverse social orders of Africa and elsewhere established new, multi-leveled structures of inequality both within Africa itself and between Africa and Europe. In doing so it laid the basis for what might be termed 'segmentary ethnicity', that is, a nesting hierarchy of ethnic identities. While the exact hierarchy of groupings yielded by the confrontations between the populations of Africa and the various agencies of colonial domination does of course vary, the overall structure of nesting, opposed identities – of 'tribe', 'nation' and 'race', each a particular refraction of ethnicity – manifests itself with remarkable frequency. Cf. Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff 1992:55-59. See also Ranger, T. 1983:211-262.

perforce an everyday world dominated by ethnic groups and relations, thereby reproducing the very social order that gave rise to ethnic consciousness in the first place." Ethnicity then may take on the natural appearance of being an autonomous factor in the ordering of the social world, as a result of which ethnic identities regularly assume for those who share them a pervasive functionality in everyday social, economic and political life. What is more, this functionality may itself seem to sustain the practical relevance of that identity. Yet, as the Comaroffs argue, "behind it...there lies a subtle relationship between social experience and the exigencies of collective and individual practice." ¹⁹³

Since it is cultural indices which are perceived to underlie inequalities in systems where 'ascribed' cultural differences rationalize structures of inequality, it follows, in the very nature of social experience, that if the signs and principles which apparently mandate such relations were no longer to apply, then the inequality itself would be removed – or so it seems from the actors perspective. That is, the asymmetric relationships which pervade the social order would be eliminated, and 'upward mobility' made possible if the relevant cultural markers could be reversed or relinquished. As such, such systems present themselves, not as fixed and inert, but as potentially navigable – their internal lines of division more or less porous to the extent that socio-cultural differences may be negotiated. This in turn establishes the appropriate terms in which social action is to be joined, and interests to be pursued, at the levels of both individual and collective enterprise. ¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff 1992:60.

¹⁹³ Ibid. 1992:61

¹⁹⁴ At the level of collective action, the logic of common interest is, for the dominant, plain enough. It lies in the authoritative protection of their exclusive cultural identity and, with it, their material position. In ideological terms such protectionism entails a stress upon the contrasts between themselves and others; although the creation of alliances with particular groupings, the internal segmentation of the underclass and the admission of individuals into their ranks may become strategic admissions in the defense of privilege. For the subordinate however, the issue is not so clear cut. If, and indeed when, any cohesive response to the common predicament is perceived as possible, two options present themselves. Either they can engage in some form of concerted direct effort – usually, but not always, political – to remove the structures of inequality. Or they can seek to negate cultural differences by 'proving' that these have ceased to be relevant, for example like the efforts of American Blacks to claim their civil rights by establishing that they had 'become' sufficiently like those who had oppressed them.

Thus, whilst manifestations of ethnicity are the product of an ongoing process involving the 'objectification' of certain cultural differences, and the embodiment of those differences within the shared dispositions of the *habitus*, the actual manifestation of any particular identity may itself vary in different social and historical contexts. Because the communication of cultural difference which ethnicity entails depends upon the particular cultural practices and historical experiences activated in any given context of interaction, "ethnicity, as a source of cultural meaning and as a principle of social differentiation is highly distributive within any society, or set of social contexts involving the same personnel." It is then the *particular social context* of an act of communicating difference which accounts for the varying semantic density and/or relative importance of that phenomenon we call ethnicity. Indeed, as Eriksen points out in his detailed analysis of ethnicity and ethnic relations in Trinidad and Mauritius, it is often up to the agents themselves to decide upon its particular significance.

In order to distinguish this 'qualitative variation' in the communication of identity, Eriksen employs the Wittgensteinian concept of 'language games' - a principle similar to Bourdieu's habitus in that both involve the production, and reproduction of shared meaning structures. ¹⁹⁶ Employed as an analytical tool in the delineation of this variation then, the concept of 'language games' yields a classification of three basic kinds of context characterized by 1) shared language games or meaning systems, 2) overlapping language games, 3) incommensurable games or schemes of meaning. As an example of a shared language game, that is, one which involves tacit agreement between the agents over constituting and strategic rules of interaction, Eriksen cites the case of ethnicity as activated in routine institutional politics. That is, whilst extensive documentation has shown institutional politics on both Trinidad and Mauritius to be organized largely along ethnic lines, a situation which pertains both to voting and the internal organization of political parties, there is a shared understanding of the meaning of ethnicity, coupled with a wide consensus over values and modes of discourse and interaction.

¹⁹⁵ Eriksen, T.H. 1992:31.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. 1992:31-46.

Cultural differences then within the realm of institutional politics are, according to Eriksen, "...in themselves unimportant; their importance lies in the creation of options for politicians and parties to draw upon such differences in their quest for popularity and power. The formal congruence of ethnicity among politicians of different ethnic membership is complete: the political culture or language game is homogenous as it is being confirmed in ongoing institutionalized political life; there is no relevant cultural difference informing the pattern and meaning content of institutionalized interaction between politicians." ¹⁹⁷ In other words, agents taking part in institutional politics in both Trinidad and Mauritius are obliged to follow the rules of a shared language game, and in so far as ethnicity is relevant in these contexts of politics, it is communicated through a shared cultural idiom; a shared language game. ¹⁹⁸

Whilst Eriksen presents the 'labour market' as a social domain characterized by 'partially overlapping language games', that is, contexts where there is agreement as to the form and content of only some relevant aspects of the interaction, in other social domains, such as those of family life and sexual relations, the recognition and articulation of ethnicity may be characterized by discrete, even incommensurable habitual dispositions and systems of meaning which inform the social practices of people in different groupings. For instance, in both societies, cultural differences, particularly those between Blacks and Indians, are strongly articulated in relation to matters of gender and sexuality. Whilst the sexual ideologies of Black men in Trinidad and Mauritius encourages promiscuity, the open proclomation of which serves to affirm black identity, by contrast, in the ideology of 'Indianness', great value is placed on both the sexual purity of women and the sacred character of matrimony. Within the Indian 'language game' then, the supposed sexual prowess of black men is coupled with the widespread notion that women are unable to resist sexual advances. In this way then, black men, and their promiscuous ways are seen to represent a threat against the domestic supremacy of Indian men. Indeed, as Eriksen notes, stories of faithless Indian women eloping with black men are so widespread in both societies as to be almost proverbial.

¹⁹⁷ Eriksen, T.H. 1992:36

¹⁹⁸ The example cited by Eriksen however merely illustrates a type of context and should not be taken to imply that politics as such presupposes a shared language game.

In contrast to the domain of institutionalized politics then, which was characterized by a shared, or unitary language game, in this, the most personal of social fields, the representation of ethnicity is based upon the reproduction of discrete, even incommensurable schemes of meaning. While these ethnographic examples serve to illustrate Eriksen's main theoretical point, namely, that ethnicity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon characterized by different forms of institutional agency and different regimes of domination and resistance, the communication of ethnicity within these different social domains is neither isolated nor static. Rather, as Eriksen argues, because "ethnic distinctions are rooted in perceptions of difference in lifestyles", in order to fully understand why ethnicity can be fashioned into such a powerful political force within the unitary language game of politics, one must comprehend the reproduction of discrete, socially discriminating language games in other social domains. Nevertheless, his analysis does indicate that the kinds of communication involved in the reproduction and transformation of ethnic categories may vary qualitatively as well as substantively in different social domains characterized by different forms of individual and institutional agency, and by different regimes of domination and resistance.

In this brief, and necessarily selective review of the literature on ethnicity then, an attempt has been made to illustrate how the construction of ethnicity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of social agents which shape, and are shaped by, subjective commonalities of practice – *habitus*. Furthermore, while such subliminal dispositions may provide the *basis* for the recognition of commonalities of sentiment and interest, they also transcend the dichotomy posited by advocates of the 'primordial' and 'instrumental' perspectives. Nevertheless, whilst such an approach was considered of marked value, providing one with explanations of how particular cultural practices, or modes of living, can engender particular ethnic cultures, we also perceived via Bentley's ethnographic study, how, in a slightly veiled form, it inherited some of the very difficulties it sought to overcome. That is, contrary to Bentley's assumptions, ethnicity is not directly congruent with either *habitus*, or the cultural practices and representations

which both structure, and are structured by, *habitus*. Rather, the communication of ethnicity involves the dialectical opposition, and objectification, of *situationally relevant* cultural practices and experiences associated with different traditions. Hence the extent to which ethnicity is embedded in any pre-existing cultural reality represented by a shared *habitus* is highly variable, and contingent upon the particular cultural transformations engendered by the nature of the interaction, and the power relations between the participants. Consequently then, there is rarely a one-to-one relationship, as previously predicated, between representations of ethnicity and the entire range of cultural practices and social conditions associated with a particular group. Rather, the resulting pattern will be one of overlapping ethnic boundaries constituted by representations of cultural difference which are at once transient, but also subject to reproduction and transformation in the ongoing process of social life. As Eriksen points out, "ethnic oppositions are segmentary in character, the group created through a common cause expands and contracts situationally, and it has no absolute existence in relation to unambiguous principles of inclusion or exclusion." 199

Overall then, the theoretical approach formulated in this chapter seeks to undermine conventional methodological approaches to ethnicity which telescope various spatially, and indeed, temporally distinct representations of ethnicity onto a single plain for the purpose of analysis whilst forcing the resulting incongruities and contradictions into an abstract conceptualization of the 'ethnic group' as a discrete, internally homogenous, entity characterized by a continuity of tradition. To the contrary, what the approach developed here suggests is that rather than being constituted by the legacy of some primordial, essentialist identity, the formation, reproduction and transformation of ethnicity is contingent upon particular historical structures which impinge themselves upon human experience and condition social action. As Devalle points out, ethnicity is an historical process as "time provides the necessary ground on which styles are maintained (recreated) and collective identities formed." Furthermore, being firmly grounded in

¹⁹⁹ Eriksen, T.H. 1992:46.

²⁰⁰ Devalle, S.B.C. 1992:184.

the history of a particular social reality, an ethnic style cannot simply be understood as the immutable, and intangible essence of a given people, or a fixed sociological idealized type.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHNICITY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

MATERIAL CULTURE AND ADAPTIVE CHANGE	174
STYLE AS AN INDEX OF ETHNIC ORIGIN IN NEW ARCHAEOLOGY	178
STYLE AS ACTIVE COMMUNICATION	185
BEYOND NORMATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS IN ARCHAEOLOGY	194
MATERIAL CULTURE AND ETHNICITY	201

MATERIAL CULTURE AND ADAPTIVE CHANGE

For the 'culture-historical' archaeologist of the early twentieth century, material culture items were seen as the mute products of internalised traditions; 'ways of doing things' that were passed down from generation to generation largely unchanged. What changes did occur in the form and appearance of artefacts was generally considered to be the product of contact between communities, or the actual displacement of entire populations. In essence, 'pots' equated almost directly with 'peoples'. In much of the archaeological literature which post-dated the mid 1960's however, the notion of material culture as more or less directly relating to either specific groups of people, or the cognitive structures they collectively held, was challenged or abandoned by many.

Though it had been prefigured by earlier calls for increased conceptual sophistication and problem-orientation, the demise of culture-history as the dominant paradigm, at least in Anglo-American archaeology, was bought about by the establishment of *processual archaeology* with its emphasis on the functionalist explanation of social process and cultural evolution. For while traditional archaeology had largely satisfied itself with tracing *what* had happened in pre-history in terms of the definition of cultures and their movements across the globe, archaeologists of the 1950s and 1960s became increasingly concerned with *how*, or even *why*, cultural change occurred. As a consequence of the vigorous polemics in which various scholars engaged in an effort to popularise what, since the 1960s has been recognized around the world as the *New Archaeology*, the understood significance of material culture was radically altered.

As part of their 'manifesto' these New Archaeologists launched a scathing attack on the normative conception of culture which had long dominated archaeological interpretation. Rather than a set of undifferentiated cognitive structures collectively held and transmitted over generations by a particular group of people, culture, it was argued, constitutes an integrated system, "an intercommunicating network of

¹ Cf. Childe, V.G. PPS I 1935:1-15. LM 24 1942:341-343. SWJA 2 1946:243-251. 1956. See also Clarke, D.L. 1968. Taylor, W.W. 1948. For a historical over-view of this period in archaeological debate and theory, see Trigger, B.G. 1989:244-326.

attributes or entities forming a complex whole."³ The analytical consequence of this re-conceptualisation of culture as an 'adaptive mechanism'⁴ then was that there were behavioural, and thus material, that is *archaeological* correlates of the various adaptive responses made to alterations in the natural environment. What traditional archaeologists took as representing ethnicity they argued may instead, within this paradigm, refer to functional variability in the types of activities undertaken in response to such alterations. Indeed it was precisely this point, the relative significance of *tradition* and *function* in assemblage variation, which provided the essence of the debate between Lewis Binford⁵ and Francois Bordes⁶. Focusing upon the middle palaeolithic, or Mousterian complex as it was defined by Bordes, the argument revolved around whether the four assemblage types making up this complex represent four distinct cultural traditions or whether, regardless of what temporal or geographic clustering may be involved, they instead represent the recurring, activity-sensitive expressions taken by a single tradition. Indeed, it is hard to conceive of a more ideally clear-cut problem.

Without wishing to downgrade either the intrinsic complexity of this debate, or the relative value of the various contributions made by its protagonists, it was Binford's

² For instance it was argued that the correlation of a distinct cultural break in the archaeological record with migration does not always explain the particular social processes involved. Instead it was deemed necessary to examine *why* migration occurred in the first place, and *how* it operated on past societies.
³ Clarke, D.L. 1968:42.

⁴ It was Emile Durkheim who defined the 'function' of a social institution as the correspondence between it and the needs of the social organism. Durkheim, E. 1895 [1964]. In the same way that a stomach provides a function for the body as a whole and allows it to survive, so any aspect of a past society can be assessed in terms of its contribution to the working of the whole society. On the basis of this 'organic analogy' then, because a society can only survive if its various inter-related parts are seen to be well adjusted, a concern with harmonious working together of these constituent elements becomes a major focus for the functionalist paradigm. Because of this stress on the maintenance of equilibrium, human socio-cultural systems can be described as if they were continually adapting to the total social and environmental milieu. It is in this vein that Renfrew speaks of the 'essential coherence and conservatism of all cultures...the society's adjustment or adaptation to its natural environment is maintained: difficulties and hardships are overcome.' Renfrew, C. 1972:25-25. A similar view is expresses bt Binford in his statement that 'change in the total cultural system must be viewed in adaptive context both social and environmental' Binford, L.R. 1972:22. Indeed, Binford's definition of culture as 'the extrasomatic means of adaptation' for the human organism is one of the main tenets of systems archaeologists. 'Culture, from a systemic point perspective, is defined,...as interacting behavioural systems. One asks questions concerning these systems, their interrelation, their adaptive significance.' Plog, F. 1975:208.
⁵ Binford J. P.

⁵ Binford, L.R. and S.R. Binford AA 68(2) 1966:238-295. Binford, L.R. in C. Renfrew ed. 1973:227-255.

⁶ Bordes, F. and de Sonneville-Bordes D. WA 2(1) 1970:61-73. Bordes, F. in C. Renfrew ed. 1973:217-226.

vision of material culture as an 'extrasomatic' means of adaptation which served to undermine the interpretive basis of the meaning of material culture provided by traditional archaeology. Archaeological distributions it was argued could not be equated in any simplistic manner with ethnic groups because within such a framework, functional variations could be mistakenly interpreted as ethnic differences. Consequently, the primary meaning of material culture was no longer its supposedly direct reflection of ethnicity, rather it was reduced to function, as an adaptive interface between people and the environment. Should ecological and/or environmental changes occur, people would, or at least could, change their material culture in order to accommodate to new conditions. In short, the single explanatory frame of reference provided by traditional archaeology was undermined. Indeed, as the paradigms of the New Archaeology gained increasing acceptance throughout Europe and the United States, the concept of ethnicity as understood within traditional archaeology, was greeted with an equally passionate scepticism. 8 The impact of this brave new world of processual dynamics which Binford and his disciples initiated was overwhelmingly welcome in a discipline where research had all too often atrophied into descriptive, particularizing approaches, occasionally enlivened by imaginative but poorly documented and unverifiable flights of literary insight that passed for interpretation. In contrast to the ideographic concerns of traditional archaeology then, Binford sought to make archaeology a nomothetic science whose ultimate objective would be the generation of law-like statements concerning human social and cultural development.

The key to this procedure, and one entirely consistent with the philosophy of science of the time, was to use analogies from the present as hypotheses against which the

⁷ Following the neo-evolutionary theory of Leslie White, Marvin Harris and others New Archaeologists characterised human behaviour within an adaptationist framework. Within this perspective it was assumed that cultures adapted to their environments through changes in their technologies, social organization and ideology. Material culture then, as the means by which adaptation to that environment was secured, was thus labelled by Binford as mans extra-bodily, that is, extra-somatic means of adaptation.

At exactly the same time as archaeologists were busy legitimising the rejection of ethnicity as a proper archaeological topic by referring to its links with Kossinna and political racism however, a new approach to ethnicity was being developed within the anthropology an irony which is made all the more poignant when one considers that the opening salvo in Binford's critique of traditional archaeology was entitled 'Archaeology as Anthropology'. Cf. Binford, L.R. AA 28 1962:217-225.

material remains of the past can be tested. Binford saw this as a promising approach to understanding the past, since as a neo-evolutionist he believed there was a high degree of regularity in human behaviour which comparative ethnographic studies could reveal. These regularities could then be used to infer many aspects of prehistoric cultures which were not directly observable in the archaeological record. It was *only* when a specific behavioural trait could be shown *always* to correlate with a specific item of material culture however that such behaviour could be inferred from the occurrence of that item in the archaeological record. To achieve this level of rigour, archaeologists had to adhere to certain deductive canons as outlined by Carl Hempel in his covering-law model of explanation. It was in the rigorous application of this positivist approach then that all subjective elements would be eliminated, and the basis for an objective, *scientific* interpretation of archaeological data established.

⁹ Binford, L.R. AA 32 1967:1. Indeed Binford took his own advice to heart in his intensive studies amongst the Nanamiut, an Alaskan Ininuit group. In these and less intensive studies elsewhere, Binford sought to use specific observations on butchery techniques around a hearth to interpret Palaeolithic remains, making the assumption that in *all* cases, people would behave in a functionally efficient manner, and not be influenced by culturally specific attitudes to dirt in depositing their rubbish around the hearth. By positing an emphasis on 'efficient function', Binford sought to come up with a series of cross-cultural generalisations which would allow an understanding of the specifics of the past. ¹⁰ Hempel, C.G. 1962:98-169. 1965.

Indeed, Binford viewed archaeologists' efforts to explain particular historical events as inductive behaviour as dooming archaeology to remain a particularist, non-generalizing field. In line with such an approach, Binford also denied the relevance of psychological factors for understanding prehistory. He identified the use of such factors with Boasian idealism and the culture-historical approach which, he argued, had no explanatory value for an ecological interpretation of culture and culture change. This invidious dichotomy between history and evolution, which paralleled the distinction that American anthropologists drew between history and evolution, was reinforced by Taylor, (1948) and Willet and Phillips, (1958) who regarded culture-historical integration as an objective that was inferior to the formulation of general rules of cultural behaviour. On the anti-historic attitude of New Archaeology in general see Trigger, B.G. 1989:312-319.

STYLE AS AN INDEX OF ETHNIC ORIGIN IN NEW ARCHAEOLOGY

As will become apparent however, despite the strong proclamations against the normative conception of culture which Binford initiated in almost messianic tones in the mid 1960s, 12 certain aspects of 'normativism' were retained. Indeed for some, the retention of a normative culture concept was entirely justified, as processual archaeologists continued to accept the notion that some bounded archaeological distributions, if only in the realm of non-functional stylistic variation, continue to correlate with such cultural/ethnic groups. 13 Cultures and ethnic groups then remain firmly located at the empirical descriptive level of archaeological research whilst other aspects of society are seen as components making up a dynamic cultural system.

The conceptualisation of culture as a differentiated system within New Archaeology, and the emphasis on functionalism in the explanation of the different aspects of that system led to the definition of different *kinds* of artefact and assemblage variation. Binford for example, following Leslie White's view of cultures as adaptive systems composed of three inter-related subsystems: technology, social organisation and ideology, specified three correspondingly distinct classes of artefact variation – *technomic*, *sociotechnic* and *ideotechnic*, each of which related to the kind of social domain in which they had their primary function. ¹⁴ Technomic aspects of artefacts reflect how they were used to cope with the environment; sociotechnic ones have their primary context in the social system; and ideotechnic ones relate to the ideological realm. Cross-cutting these functionally defined artefact classes, however, was style... "formal qualities which are not directly explicable in terms of the nature of the raw material, technology of production, or variability in the technological or social subsystems of the total cultural system." Though Binford did attribute a certain functional role to such attributes in terms of promoting group solidarity, in essence

¹² Describing how he conceived, and ran, the first field season consciously conceived as the New Archaeology in 1958, and how he and Mark Papworth carried the *Good News* to the traditionalists throughout the United States, Binford describes how he suffered the pillorying and disbelief which seems to be the common fate of all those who preach a *new creed*. Cf Binford, L.R. 1972:133.

¹³ Many people however adopted a pragmatic approach arguing that the archaeological culture and the

¹³ Many people however adopted a pragmatic approach arguing that the archaeological culture and the typological method were still necessary for the basic description and classification of 'the facts' prior to the process of explanation. Cf. Renfrew, C. 1972:17. See also, Hodson, BIA 17 1980:1-10.

¹⁴ Binforf, L.R. AA 28 1962:219.

¹⁵ Binford, L.R. 1972:25.

stylistic variation was regarded as a passive product of a particular cultural/ethnic milieu.

In a later paper, Binford went on to outline three potential sources of assemblage variability: 'tradition', that is spatio-temporal continuity in stylistic variability derived from received knowledge about certain ways of doing things; 'interaction sphere', that is the distribution of a particular artefact or group of artefacts derived from regular and institutionally maintained contact between societies; and 'adaptive area', that is a distribution of common artefacts arising from their use in coping directly with the physical environment. 16 Basically however, these different classes of artefact and sources of variation which Binford delineated, reflect a distinction between the 'functional' characteristics of artefacts, whether they are utilitarian or non-utilitarian, and 'stylistic' characteristics which cross-cut functional categories and are regarded as residual formal variation, as for example decoration on pottery vessels. Though it is true that Binford did attribute a functional role to such formal variation in terms of providing a symbolically pervasive artefactual environment promoting group solidarity, it is clear from his discussion of these different classes of variation that he regarded stylistic variation in terms of normative variation, and ultimately, ethnic differences. Indeed Binford was quite explicit on this point stating that as an index of certain culturally prescribed ways of doing things, spatial and temporal continuity in stylistic variation "is most fruitfully studied when questions of ethnic origin, migration and interaction between groups are the subject of study."¹⁷

Thus, with respect to stylistic variation, ethnic entities, though rarely an explicit focus of analysis within a decidedly materialist framework orientated towards the functionalist explanation of past socio-cultural systems, are still equated with received normative tradition. The main distinction is that in contrast to most culture-historical analysis, this normative tradition is assumed to be located *only* in certain dimensions of artefact variability, namely that formal variation referred to as style. Furthermore, because analytical priority was accorded to the *functional* role of material culture as an extra-somatic means of adaptation, style, because it has no adaptive importance or functional significance, is considered to be peripheral – opposed to the asserted

¹⁶ Binford, L.R. AA 31 1965:206-209.

primacy of utilitarian function. In short, studies such as Binford's simply assume that ceramic form is determined primarily by utilitarian function whilst decoration constitutes additional, non-functional variation, and that it is in the domain of such variation that social information such as 'ethnic iconography' will be expressed. *Style* then becomes separated from *function* - a perspective frequently adopted in much of the subsequent literature. ¹⁸

Underlying much of this discussion are two related assumptions, namely that style can be separated out from the utilitarian aspects of material culture, and that style functions in social as opposed to utilitarian areas of life. In a series of articles spanning fifteen years however, James Sackett has been specifically concerned to stress the inseparable nature of style and function, challenging the Binfordian assumption that stylistic aspects of artefacts merely constitute a residue, something left over once function has been accounted for 19. Contrary to the prevailing idea that style and function are distinct, self-contained and mutually exclusive realms of form in themselves, Sackett has argued that style and function are complementary aspects or dimensions of variation that *co-exist* within the same form. Thus, because the two dimensions of artefact variability are inextricably intertwined, there is no way in which one can meaningfully measure and determine what proportion of a vessels shape performs some utilitarian end, with the remainder being assigned to a stylistic realm. The pursuit of one in material culture patterning, necessarily calls for grappling with the other.

Yet, while Sackett's cogent critique of the 'style' – 'function' dichotomy promoted by the New Archaeology betrays a welcome sensitivity to the omnipresence of style in *all* aspects of artefact variability, he unfortunately adopts the same basic premise as these New Archaeologists, and indeed, proponents of culture-history concerning the relationship between normative processes and style, a position worth quoting at some length:

¹⁷ Binford, L.R. AA 28 1962:220.

¹⁸ Cf. Shanks, m. and C. Tilley 1987:86-92.

¹⁹ Sackett, J.R. AA 42(3) 1977:369-380. JAA 1 1982:59-112. AA 50 1985:154-160. AA 51(3) 1986:628-634. in M.W. Conkey and C.A. Hastorff eds. 1991:32-43.

²⁰ Sackett, J.R. 'AA 42(3) 1977:371. AA 51(3) 1986:630.

"Although the form of any given object may be entirely appropriate to its function...there exists nevertheless a great range of alternative forms that would be more or less equally appropriate. In other words, there usually is a variety of functionally equivalent means of achieving a given end, whether these concern the design of a weapon with which to kill reindeer, or the manufacture of a chisel-ended burin. The seemingly equally valid and feasible options we may regard as functional equivalents with respect to a given end constitute a spectrum of what I choose to term isochrestic form...The artisans in any given society tend to choose but one, or at most, but a very few of the isochrestic options that at least in theory, are potentially available to them from this spectrum...Given the large number of options that are at least, potentially available, chance alone dictates that any single one is unlikely to be chosen by two societies which are not ethnically related in some fashion; and chance would appear to exclude altogether the possibility that the same combinations of several such choices in different spectra of isochrestic form could be made by two unrelated societies... Since material culture is largely the product of learned behaviours that are socially transmitted, there exists a strong, and direct correlation between the specific choices a society makes and its specific position in the stream of culture-history". 21

In this formulation then, style, referred to by Sackett as 'isochrestic variation', is, in essence, a product of habitualized practices and the socialization process specific to a given culture. Thus, because similarity in the isochrestic dimensions of material culture are assumed to be the product of acculturation within a given group, and because each such group tends to 'select' and consistently express its own distinctive style, isochrestic variation in material culture that is socially bounded in this way is, consequently, diagnostic of ethnicity. The likelihood of unrelated groups making similar combinations of choices is as remote as the number of potential options is great. Hence each social group, or unit of ethnicity, tends to possess its own distinctive style, and the overall degree of similarity represented by the material culture of two or more groups can be regarded as a direct expression of their ethnic

²¹ Sackett, J.R. JAA 1 1982:72-73 (emphasis my own)

relatedness. So Sackett claims, "style is no more than function writ small"²², that is, function as it happens to be expressed within a historically specific, ethnically meaningful segment of the archaeological record.

Whilst Sackett's claim then that style and function share equal responsibility for the finished product certainly succeeds in exposing the artificial dichotomy engendered by New Archaeology's desire to identify the different processes involved in the creation of the variation witnessed in the archaeological records, his isochrestic variation, that 'choice' imposed upon the artisans by the technological traditions within which they are enculturated, amounts to a substantive definition little different from that advocated by Binford. Style is little more than a habitualized and passive reflection of ethnicity, and as such neither suggests nor requires any further explanation – *it just happens*!²³

New Archaeology certainly promoted a more sophisticated, and in many ways, more productive view of material culture.²⁴ Instead of distinct cultures and their particular interactions, the object of archaeology was to become 'culture systems', behavioural and adaptive, in terms of which variability in the archaeological record could be explained. In contrast to the pessimism of traditional 'normative' archaeology then, which despaired of being able to specify supposedly non-material aspects of society, it was argued that a fully *social* archaeology was now possible.²⁵ As such, the New Archaeology represented a unified programme for the renewal of the discipline.²⁶ Yet, while the optimism of the New Archaeology with regard to the object of archaeology

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²² Sackett, J.R. JAA 1 1982:75.

²³ Sackett, J.R. AA 50 1985:157.

²⁴ For critical perspectives on the New Archaeology see, Trigger, B.G. 1989:289-329. See also the contributions in Hodder, I. ed. 1982. 1986. Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1992.

²⁵ It was Christopher Hawkes who, in 1954 first postulated that there was an ascending scale of difficulty in interpreting data in terms of human activities: technology was the easiest category, whilst economy, social and political organisation, and ideology exhibited escalating difficulties for the archaeologist. While many archaeologists continued to debate whether this hierarchy was inherent in the nature of archaeological data themselves, it was Binford who inspired a whole generation by his assertion that failure to infer the higher levels of 'Hawke's Ladder' results from the methodological shortcomings of archaeologists. For Binford, *all* aspects of past socio-cultural systems are reflected in the archaeological record. Cf. Hawkes, C.F. AAnt 56 1954:155-168. See also Binford, L.R. 1972:93-94.

While there were certainly disagreements amongst the 'New Archaeologists', some of them acrimonious, the New Archaeology can legitimately be identified as a unitary project precisely because its practitioners believed there was *a single truth* about the past that could be accessed once one had the right approach, and did the right kind of science. Cf. Thomas, J. 2000:1.

did lead to an extensive interest in reconstructing past societies within a decidedly materialist framework, in some respects it was guilty of perpetuating some of the same problems as its predecessor, albeit in a different guise.

For while the reconceptualization of culture as a means of adaptation to the natural environment, with human behaviour constituting the instrument of such adaptation, led to the important realization that the manifestation of material culture in *any* particular context is the product of a variety of past processes and not solely a reflection of past ideational norms, New Archaeologists failed to fully address the relationship between variation in material culture and ethnicity. As Shennan points out, many of the difficulties, which previously revolved around the nature of archaeological cultures and the particular entity which they represented were merely transposed to the realm of 'style' Thus while Binford stressed that there may be considerable variation in ideational norms within any given socio-cultural system spatial and temporal continuity in stylistic attributes continued to be explained in terms of cultural tradition and consequently, regarded as a passive reflection of past ethnic groups.

As we have seen however, it has been widely recognized in both sociology and anthropology that the assumption of a direct, unproblematic relationship between ethnic identity and cultural similarities and differences simply cannot be sustained. While prior to the 1960s virtually *all* anthropological reasoning rested on the premise that cultural variation was discontinuous²⁹, the bankruptcy of this position was exposed with the publication of Barth's seminal collection of essays.³⁰

Barth's major theoretical position was seen to consist of his emphasis on the fact that ethnic groups are primarily categories of ascription and identification by the *actors* themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organising interaction between people.

²⁸ Binford, L.R. AA 28 1965:205.

²⁷ Shennan, S.J. 1989:18.

²⁹ 'Namely that there existed aggregates of people who essentially shared a common culture, and interconnected differences that distinguished each such culture from all others and that geographic and social isolation have been the critical factors in sustaining such diversity.' B. Olsen and Z. Kobylinski AP 29 1991:6

³⁰ Barth, F. 1969:9-38/117-134. See also Leach, E. 1964. Moermann, M. AAnt 67 1965:1215-1230. 1968:153-169. See also, Chapter Three.

While such categories may take cultural differences into account, we can however assume no one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences: only those which the actors *themselves* regard as significant. While Barth's definition of ethnic groups based primarily on categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves was, of itself not entirely new³¹, his reiteration of the subjective aspects of ethnicity within a programmatic framework was widely regarded as constituting a real turning point in the analysis of ethnic groups³². Indeed a large body of recent anthropological research has placed increasing emphasis on the self-identification of the actors concerned, the particular processes involved in the construction of group boundaries, and the inter-relationships between socio-cultural groups³³. In light of such developments then it appears that the New Archaeology which Binford launched with such high expectation was already old at birth since its theorising on the issue of ethnic identity remained trapped by the very typological approach it sought to overcome.

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³³ Cf. Chapter Three.

³¹ As early as 1947 Francis had argued that the ethnic group constitutes a community based primarily on a shared subjective 'we-feeling' and that 'we cannot define the ethnic group as a plurality pattern which is characterized by a distinct language, culture, territory, religion and so on.' Francis, E.K. 'The Nature of the Ethnic Group' American Journal of Sociology 52 1947:397. Cf. Moermann, M. 'Who are the Lue?' American Anthropologist 67 1965:1215-1230. Shibutani, T. and K.M. Kwan 'Ethnic Stratification: A New Approach' 1965.

³² As Olsen and Kobylinski have stated, 'In this respect it is maybe not at all inappropriate to see the publication of Frederik Barth's collection *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* as the beginning of the modern anthropological study of ethnicity' Olsen, B. and Z. Kobylinski AP 29 1991:6

STYLE AS ACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Indeed the majority of archaeologists continued to remain indifferent to the theoretical advances within anthropology. Yet there is some evidence of a leaning towards this direction, particularly with regard to the growing appreciation of style as 'communication-information', which emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s.³⁴ following the publication of Martin Wobst's theory of information exchange.³⁵ According to Wobst style is a form of communication because, in certain contexts and in certain highly visible artefacts, it makes social interaction more predictable, and less stressful by serving to summarize the economic, social, or religious situation of an individual,³⁶ broadcasting the potential advantages, or disadvantages to be realized from an encounter between individuals who may, or may not know each other intimately before such an encounter has taken place.³⁷ As such, style becomes of particular importance when sending messages to socially distant receivers, that is, those beyond the immediate kin, or residence group. Concomitantly, the effectiveness of such stylistic messaging is deemed to decrease the closer the 'sender' and potential 'receiver' are acquainted, but also with increasing social distance, since beyond a certain point, the ability of others to either encounter, or decode, a particular message cannot be ensured. Thus, within Wobst's thesis, it is only the most highly visible, the most overt, most obvious artefacts that are the most appropriate for signalling 'stylistic messages' since they are the most accessible.³⁸

Although Wobst's theory of information exchange was considerably more sophisticated than contemporary hypotheses on stylistic variability,³⁹ in many respects it was Polly Wiessner who was largely responsible for the development, and

^{&#}x27;This new approach to ethnicity in anthropology does not seem to have been noticed by archaeologists before the end of the 1970s, while 1977 seems to have been somewhat of a turning point, at least in the Scandinavian milieu. In this year the Norwegian scholars Randi Haaland and Else Johansen Kleppe published two extensive papers in the Norwegian Archaeological Review, both applying this new theoretical framework.' Cf. Olsen, B. and Z. Kobylinski AP 29 1991:10. Beyond the specific concerns of Scandinavian research however, some of the main proponents of this approach, which was particularly prevalent in the analysis of Palaeolithic art included Conkey, M.W. in C.L. Redman, J. Berman, E. Curtin, W. Langhorne, N. Versaggi and J. Wasner eds. 1978:61-85. Gamble, C.S. Man 17 1982:92-107. Jochim, M.A. in G.N. Bailey ed. 1983:212-219. Wobst, M. APUM 61 1977:317-342.

³⁵ Wobst, M. APUM 61 1977: 317-342.

³⁶ Cf. Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:258. Hantman, J. and S. Plog in J. Ericson and T. Earle eds. 1982

³⁷ Wobst, M. APUM 61 1977:327. Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:258.

³⁸ Wobst, M. APUM 61 1977:350.

popularization of this perspective on style as a form of active communication through her ethno-archaeological research on stylistic variation amongst the projectile points manufactured by the San bushmen of the Kalahari desert. 40 Drawing on the vast socio-psychological literature on the subject of social identity⁴¹ she argues that both individual and group identity is ultimately based on a universal human cognitive process of comparison "through which the self is differentiated from others and the in-group from the out-group."42 By comparing themselves with similar 'others' people evaluate, though not in any absolute terms, their respective characteristics and abilities against those of others surrounding them, and thereby develop a self-image which they attempt to present positively. The value of this process is of course, easy to grasp intuitively: in order to be socially competent and proficient, people must know where they stand, relative to social others, and, to a certain extent, must have this position accepted, or at least recognised by those 'others'. Of course, while this social identification via comparison appears to be a basic human cognitive process, the content of this identity, and the dimensions chosen for comparison are recognised to be culturally, and historically determined.⁴³ Thus, by comparing themselves to others, people evaluate their abilities in relative terms, and, in the process, develop a self-image.

As one of several means of communication through which people negotiate their personal and social identity vis-à-vis others, style, Weissner argues, will be affected by the processes of social comparison, and determined by the outcome of that comparison in terms of the expression of similarity and difference. Because 'stylistic comparison mirrors social comparison,' then, style may be actively employed in the disruption, alteration and creation of social relationships. Moreover, it can be actively used in order to project a certain identity, to mask an aspect of that identity, or even to raise questions about a persons identity.⁴⁴ While stating that style deals largely with

³⁹ Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1992:141-142.

⁴⁰ Cf. Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:253-276. JAA 3 1984:190-234. AA 50 1985:1-22. I. Hodder ed. 1989:56-63. M. Conkey and C. Hastorf ed. 1991:105-112.

⁴¹ Cf. Lemaine, G.J. EJSP 4 1974:17-52. Tajfel, H. 1978 H. Tajfel ed. 1982:1-11. Turner, J. EJSP 5

⁴² Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:191-192/257. I. Hodder ed. 1989:57.

⁴³ Wetherell, N. in H. Tajfel ed. 1982:207-240.

⁴⁴ 'For instance, in choosing a dress for certain occasions, people make stylistic decisions by comparing styles with others, and correspondingly comparing themselves with the people with whom they associate those styles. Then, knowing the context of the occasion and the that they would like to

projecting aspects of relative identity may seem to be a very limited view of style⁴⁵, it does nevertheless overcome some of the weaknesses of Wobst's thesis, particularly his conception of style as reflecting and communicating individual ethnic identity. For as Weissner has shown it is quite possible that precisely the opposite may be the case, that style may be actively manipulated to invert, disguise, or even misrepresent social practices.⁴⁶

Whilst in Weissner's terms then 'style' may indeed refer to the essentially active, symbolic role of particular characteristics of material culture in the mediation of social relations, and social strategies, she suggests that style has, in fact, two distinct aspects, emblemic, and assertive. These are differentiated, not merely on the basis of the specificity of their referents, but also by the kinds of information which they contain, the conditions which generate them and the different kinds of variation which they produce. The first aspect of style then, which Weissner terms emblemic style constitutes "formal variation in material culture that has a distinct referent, and transmits a clear message about conscious affiliation or identity such as an emblem or a flag." According to Wiessner the referent of this emblemic style will be a particular social group and the norms, values, goals or properties associated with that group. In this respect emblemic style will most frequently be used to express objective social attributes of identity. Emblemic style would thus tend to be an 'all or nothing occurrence' which is most fruitfully used when dealing with ethnic boundaries.

Assertive style on the other hand constitutes that "formal variation in material culture which is personally based and which carries information supporting individual identity by separating persons from similar others as well as giving personal translations of membership in various groups. It has no distinct referent as it supports, but does not directly symbolize, individual identity and may be employed consciously

project, they chose a style that would communicate relative identity, whether consciously or unconsciously.' Weissner, P. 1989:57.

⁴⁵ As Weissner herself admits, 'it should be noted that other forms of non-verbal behaviour, such as facial expressions and spatial behaviour, also serve almost exclusively to communicate relationships of relative identity.' Ibid. 1989:57.

⁴⁶ 'The possibility of inversion, disguise or distortion of social reality in burial practices seems adequately documented: Church of England burial in modern society expresses an ideal of equality, humility, and non-materialism which is blatantly in contrast with the way we live our lives in practice' Hodder, I. 1982:201.

⁴⁷ Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:257.

or unconsciously."⁴⁹. Unlike emblemic style then, which, because it has a distinct referent in terms of a particular social group and the norms and values associated with it, carries information with regard to group boundaries, assertive style, because it has *no* distinct referent, is likely to diffuse with acculturation and enculturation. As such, it provides archaeologists with information concerning interpersonal contact and an index of interaction across such boundaries, as opposed to any information concerning such boundaries themselves. Moreover, because it carries information about group boundaries, emblemic style is likely to have a distinct and discrete distribution, "in contrast to the random or clinal distribution of assertive style".⁵⁰

It is precisely this emphasis on the active, symbolic, as opposed to passive, refletive role of style, and material culture in general, in the negotiation and manipulation of ethnic categories which constitutes the main thrust of Ian Hodder's ethnoarchaeological investigations.⁵¹ Elaborating on a thesis introduced in 'The Spatial Organization of Culture', Hodder's examination of the ethnic boundaries in the Baringo District of Kenya repeatedly seeks to emphasize two highly significant features of material culture. First, and similar to Wiessner, Hodder suggests that the use of material culture by situated agents in distinguishing between self-conscious ethnic groups will result in certain discontinuities in material culture distributions which may enable the archaeologist to identify such groups. For despite the fact that interaction does occur across tribal boundaries, clear material culture distinctions were being maintained across a wide range of artefact categories, including the most mundane of utilitarian items such as pots, stools and hearth positions. Certain items of material culture then it seems are actively employed in the representation of clear and distinct cultural boundaries. Although Hodder maintains that such material culture distinctions are, in part, maintained in order to justify and symbolize, between-group competition and negative reciprocity, especially in the border regions where there exists the highest levels of competition and relative hostility, he dismisses any

⁴⁸ Wiessner, P. AA 48 1983:257.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 1983:258.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 1983:259.

⁵¹ Conducted in the North Central District of Kenya, the results of Hodder's investigations were published in 'Symbols in Action: An Ethno-archaeological Study of Material Culture' 1982.

explanation of such material culture distinctions solely in terms of such factors as insufficient and overly simplistic, if not tautological.⁵²

For while particular material culture items may be actively involved in the adaptive strategies of certain groups when faced with periods of economic and political stress, this concern with the active use of material symbols leaves much unanswered. In particular, why are particular material symbols chosen to be employed in this, or that, strategy? What factors affect the non-utilitarian form of artefacts, which artefacts are decorated and with what styles of design? What decides the over-all form of the cultural patterning and how it varies from group to group? If material culture is used as part of ideologies to mask contradict or even exaggerate social relations, what decides the form of these ideologies and transformations? It is in the analysis of such questions that Hodder is led to his second conclusion: that each material trait is produced in relation to a set of symbolic schemes, and in relation to general principles of symbolic meaning which are built into particular arrangements as part of social strategies. That is, it is through the internal organisation of social relations that particular external strategies of economic competition are chosen, and it is in terms of this within group organisation that, ultimately, between group relations must be understood and assessed.

Thus, while it may certainly be stated that material culture is *actively* involved in the adaptive strategies of certain groups, it is now clear that the explanation of these strategies, and the way in which material culture is implicated in them, is dependent upon certain *internally* generated symbolic schemes. As such, *any* ecological or behavioural view which expects straightforward relationships between material culture boundaries and competition, interaction or ethnicity is inadequate, as the nature of *any* such relationship is dependent on the intervention of other factors: intentions, strategies, personal attitudes and ideologies. Rather than being merely 'active' then, material culture within this scheme is seen to be '*meaningfully* constituted': it is produced in relation to specific symbolic schemes, and structured

⁵² Cf. Hodder, I. 1982:169ff. Contra Olsen and Kobylinski however, who, though finding Hodder's hypothesis regarding social and economic stress and material culture patterning of particular interest, dismiss it because of what they view as Hodder's tendency to expect a relatively predictable or law-like reflection. Cf. Olsen, B. and Z. Kobylinski. AP 29 1991:19-21. For another critique of Hodder see Mcguire, R.H. JAA 1982:159-178.

according to the systems of meaning present within particular social groups. Indeed virtually all of the situations highlighted by Hodder's case study are concerned to illustrate how the extent to which cultural similarity relates to interaction depends upon the strategies and intentions of the interacting groups, and on how they use, manipulate and negotiate material symbols as part of those strategies.

For example, in the Baringo District, it is the internal social tensions which revolve around the efforts of older men to consolidate their rights to young wives, over and against the efforts of younger men to demonstrate their physical and sexual prowess through cattle raids which play a significant part in promoting and maintaining distinct and competitive tribal boundaries.⁵³ Indeed Larick's ethno-archaeological research amongst the Loikop of Kenya further supports Hodder's thesis, illustrating that items of material culture that are significant in terms of ethnicity are constantly appropriated in the signification of age differentiation amongst the male population.⁵⁴ For while at the most exclusive level possession of certain distinctive material items, such as spears, constitutes being 'Loikop', the intensity of competition between age cohorts within the group and the expression of this competition in terms of stylistic variation in spears, is greater than that which exists between ethnic groups.⁵⁵ Thus whilst certain material styles may well express and justify ethnic differentiation, an acceptance of the notion that culture, which includes material culture, is meaningfully constituted means that the manner in which they perform this function can only be understood through an examination of the internal organization of social relations, concepts and symbols.⁵⁶

The above observations of Wobst, Weissner, and Hodder, amongst others, are representative of a significant new perspective in the archaeological investigation of both style and material culture in general, wherein its role in symbolizing identity and negotiating social relations is emphasized. In contrast to the normative positions explored earlier in this chapter, and the 'isochrestic model' proposed by Sackett, material culture in general, and stylistic variation in particular, is no longer regarded

⁵³ Hodder, I. 1982:Chapter 5. See also chapter eight of this study wherein the structure of meaning associated with purity and boundedness amongst the Nuba provide the framework in terms of which the regional distributions of material culture and regional boundary maintenance were too be assessed. ⁵⁴ Cf. Larick, R. WA 18 1986:269-283. JAA 1991:299-331.

⁵⁵ Larick, R. JAA 10 1991:317-318.

as playing an essentially passive role in the social world, merely reflecting, alternatively, types of adaptation to the natural environment, enculturation within distinct ethnically bounded contexts, or relative degrees of social interaction. Rather within this framework material culture, is actively produced, maintained and manipulated in the process of communication and the mediation of social relationships. The most notable effect of this conceptual expansion with regard to the active use, and strategic manipulation of material culture has been to expose the inadequacy of the conventional argument proposed by archaeologists in relation to perceived cultural differences, namely lack of group contact. In fact, analogous to the anthropological investigations initiated by Barth, which focused on the constitution of ethnic groups and the nature of the boundaries between them, the research of Hodder in particular, has illustrated how the manipulation of material culture by different 'tribes', and 'groups' in the pursuit of a particular economic strategy is likely to "result in discontinuous, non-random distributions of material culture which are often the foci of interaction rather than relative social isolation and distance"⁵⁷. Because cultural differences then do not depend on the absence of social contact, mobility or information, archaeologists can no longer assume that degrees of similarity and difference in material culture provide a straightforward index of interaction.⁵⁸ As Hodder points out in his own analysis, "to break prehistoric Europe up into blocks of material culture which are discussed in isolation in terms of origins, assimilation and movements of people is to miss the central issue: what form of social and economic strategies led to boundary maintenance?"59

Although the nature of ethnicity is itself never explicitly discussed in any of these studies, each of which, in its own way, is concerned with expounding the active, symbolic role of particular characteristics of material culture in the mediation of

⁵⁶ Hodder, I. 1982:188.

⁵⁹ Hodder, I. 1982:188.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 1982:188. See also Barth's statement in relation to the character of ethnic boundaries: 'In other words, ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations upon which embracing social systems are built. Interaction in such a social system does not lead to its liquidation through change and acculturation; cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence.' Barth, F. 1969:10.

⁵⁸ Cf. the arguments presented in chapter two.

social relations and social strategies⁶⁰, their combined insights do represent a number of significant developments in the analysis of ethnicity within the discipline. Unlike the assumption of traditional, normative approaches which have long dominated the archaeological literature, ethnicity is no longer considered as merely a passive reflection of similarities and differences in the cultural practices and structural conditions in which people are socialized. Rather within the context of the observations noted above, which bear no small resemblance to the instrumental approaches to ethnicity developed within anthropology, ethnic groups appear as self-conscious identity groups constructed through the process of social and cultural comparison vis-à-vis others wherein epiphenomenal cultural symbols are consciously manipulated in the pursuit of economic and political interests.⁶¹

Nevertheless, whilst the enthusiastic efforts of these archaeologists to underscore the importance of the fluid and situational nature of both boundary maintenance and ethnic identification, and their relationship to socio-economic and political interests, are certainly constructive when viewed against the essentially static and naturalistic perspective promoted by the normative paradigm, they too, lamentably, exhibit one mutual flaw, none of them provides an account of how ethnic identity is produced, reproduced, and transformed. How, indeed why, do particular attributes of material culture become attached to the active conscious expression of identity, ethnic or otherwise? What are the processes involved in the objectification of ethnicity? What these studies lack both collectively and individually then is an adequate conception of the social production of style.⁶²

Although to a certain degree the 'contextual approach' developed by Ian Hodder, now recognised as the principal challenge and rival paradigm to processual archaeology, is exempt from what would otherwise be a sweeping criticism as he *continually* emphasises the importance of the symbolic structures permeating, and informing *all* aspects of cultural practice and social relations in the differentiation of ethnic groups, the functional explanations of style as *communication* offered by both

⁶⁰ Cf. Hodder, I. 1979a, 1982a. Larick, R. 1986, 1991. Kimes, G. et al 1982. Wiessner, P. 1983, 1984, 1985

⁶¹ For an over-view and assessment of instrumentalism in ethnicity see chapter three.

Wobst, and Weissner, display the same penchant towards reductionist modes of explanation which limited the efficacy of some instrumental approaches to ethnicity. ⁶³

Whilst in its revelation of the dynamic and situational aspects of ethnic organization the instrumental approach provided a welcome antidote to the biological and psychological determinism of primordialism, many instrumentalist approaches were seen to fall into a reductionist mode of analysis where ethnicity was defined in terms of the observed regularities of ethnic behaviour in a particular situation. As Bentley points out, "in ethnicity studies this means that if ethnic groups act in ways that appear to be strategically advantageous, then strategic advantage must be the raison d'etre of these groups."64 Such teleological functionalism is equally implicit in the archaeological theses of Wobst and Weissner where it is suggested that distinctive styles of material culture come into existence in order to serve certain ends, such as the communication of ethnic difference in times of economic stress. Though they may possess, like the normative theories they attempted to supplant, an appealing simplicity, in effect the arguments advanced are little more than tautologies. A certain set of material culture traits, or design configurations are explained as relating to the need for an efficient exchange of information between, or within groups, therefore, the existence of these traits is explained.

62 'There is no adequate conception of the social production of style and active human involvement in its form and use, in the negotiation of structures of meaning within the contexts of definite social practices and social strategies.' (emphasis in the original) Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1992:146
 63 As Shanks and Tilley add, 'in the frameworks advocated, content tends to be overlooked and, in

As Shanks and Tilley add, 'in the frameworks advocated, content tends to be overlooked and, in practice, the arguments advanced become little more than tautologies, e.g. a certain set of stylistic traits or design configurations are 'explained' as relating to the need for an exchange of information in an efficient manner between or within groups, therefore the existence of these traits is explained.' Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1992:146.

⁶⁴ Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:48. On the limitations inherent within the instrumentalist perspective in general see chapter three of this study.

BEYOND NORMATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS IN ARCHAEOLOGY

The celebrated 'escape' of archaeology from the increasingly sterile preoccupations of descriptive, empiricist culture-history is often associated with the 'New Archaeology' of the 1960s and 1970s. However its detailed critique of the received assumption that the meaning of material culture was its supposedly direct relationship to the cognitive structures collectively held by, and transmitted within, distinct ethnic groups led this 'new' paradigm to adopt a decidedly functionalist conceptualisation of culture as 'mans extra-somatic means of adaptation'. The meaning of culture including material culture was, in effect reduced to an epiphenomenal adaptive mechanism harmonizing 'systemic needs' with the realities of the physical environment. Moreover, while one of the more attractive contributions of this paradigm was its attempt to think systematically about, and then secure, unambiguous relationships between human behaviour and material culture, this shift in methodological emphasis failed to address the 'normative question' which has preoccupied archaeological enquiry, namely what social entities do these material artefacts relate to?

Although functionalist argumentation, with its emphasis on the processual definition of cultural variation, may have eroded the significance of such considerations, the normative dimension of culture did not disappear entirely, since such normative properties were held to be evident in stylistic traits. The result, as Hodder points out,

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⁶⁵ Although functionalism, and specifically ecological functionalism were mainstays of the theoretical framework of an earlier generation of archaeologists such as Gordon Childe and Grahame Clarke, they were to become more widely important as a result of the New Archaeology of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, as Leach has pointed out, processual and systems archaeology is almost by definition, a functionalist archaeology. Leach 1973a:761-762. Cf. Renfrew, 1972:24.

⁶⁶ The degree to which archaeology had adopted a functionalist conception of culture and society is apparent in the writings of the major figures of the 'new' discipline. Although the archaeological contributions of these writers differ, the notions of organic wholes, inter-related systems, equilibrium and adaptation are all clearly identifiable. For example, in Flannery's systems model for the growth of complex societies, the job of self-regulation within the socio-cultural system is to 'to keep all the variables in the sub-system within appropriate goal ranges –ranges that maintain homeostasis and do not threaten the survival of the system.' Flannery 1972:409. According to Binford, 'we can...expect variability in and among components of a system to result from the action of homeostatic regulators within the cultural system serving to maintain equilibrium relationships between the system and its environment.' Binford, L.R. 1972a:107. Cf. Clarke D.L. 1968, Hill, J.N. 1971.

is a pervasive dichotomy between functional utility and normative culture as modes of interpretation of variation in material remains.⁶⁷

Though based on radically different epistemological premises, there are, as intimated previously, major shortcomings with both the normative conception of culture as a set of prescriptive ideational norms governing human behaviour, and its functionalist antithesis, culture as an adaptive mechanism, limitations which seriously undermine the efforts of either to develop a satisfactory interpretation of the relationship between material culture and ethnicity within archaeology. Indeed what was most striking about the New Archaeology was its unwillingness to accord human consciousness or volition *any* role in bringing about change within the system. Explanation is sought only in terms of *adaptation* and *function*. Just as in traditional, normative approaches then where individuals are presented as culturally determined dupes mechanistically obeying normative rules or structures, within a decidedly functionalist approach human action is effectively curtailed, if not entirely determined by specific environmental factors and systemic forces. Individual human beings become little more than the means to achieve the needs of society.

Furthermore, by ignoring the potential of individual creativity and intentionality in favour of the generation of law-like models based on abstract notions of efficiency and adaptation, functionalist approaches are unable to account for the cultural diversity so clearly manifest in the varied responses of particular societies to similar environmental and social conditions.⁶⁹ As soon as any human choice is involved, behavioural and functional laws appear simplistic, if not inadequate since human behaviour is rarely entirely mechanistic. Rather, *all* human actions take place within specific cultural frameworks and their functional value is assessed in terms of the concepts and orientations which surround them. As such all daily activities, from

⁶⁷ Hodder, I. 2000:37

⁶⁸ For a more general discussion of the problems associated with this dichotomy within archaeology see Hodder, 1982b, 1986. Shanks and Tilley 1987, 1992. Tilley 1982.

⁶⁹ After an initial phase in which ethno-archaeology was used, largely to provide cautionary tales, or 'spoilers', (Cf. Yellen, 1977) New Archaeology has largely concerned itself with the provision of cross-cultural statements of high predictive value. Because of the preferred hypothetico-deductive nature of explanation, it became important to identify rules of behaviour and artefact deposition which could be used regardless of cultural context. Such an approach however was only feasible as long as the particular historical and cultural dimensions of activity were denied. As such the resulting

eating to the removal of refuse take place within a cultural framework, a particular set of ideas and/or norms, and we cannot adequately understand the achievement of any society or individual without reference to the cultural schemes which structure that reality.⁷⁰ Function and adaptation then, whilst of fundamental importance as explanatory frameworks do not of themselves offer a final explanation.

While Hodder has identified the 'omnipresence of particular cultural schemes of meaning in the mediation of all social practices and social relations⁷¹, such structuring principles are neither abstract cognitive rules of behaviour as normativists maintain, nor, as some functionalist positions assume, are they determined by the systemic forces of the natural environment. Rather, following the observations made earlier in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's perspective on 'reflexive social science', such structuring principles constitute habitus, "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures, predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles of the generation and structuring of practices which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules."72 For Bordieu, habitus is made up of a system of durable dispositions towards certain perceptions such as those relating to the sexual division of labour, morality, tastes, and so on, which become part of an individual's sense of self at an early age, and which can be transposed from one context to another. As such, habitus involves a process of socialization whereby new experiences are structured in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, with early experiences retaining a particular weight.⁷³ In this way, structures of power become

generalisations, which were limited to mechanical or physical aspects of human life, were either too simplistic or were devoid of any content. Cf. Hodder, I. 2000:36-41.

⁷⁰ Indeed many traditional archaeologists such as Childe, Clark and Daniel saw material items as being structured by more than mere functional necessities. They saw artefacts as expressions of culturally framed ideas specific to each historical context. As Childe noted, 'the achievements of societies are not automatic responses to environments, and that adjustments are made by specific societies as a result of their own distinctive histories. The social traditions and rules, shaped by the community's history, determine the general behaviour of the societies members. But these traditions can themselves be changed as men meet new circumstances. Tradition makes the man, by circumscribing his behaviour within certain bounds; but it is equally true that man makes his traditions, so that man makes himself' Childe, V.G. 1936:238.

⁷¹ Cf. Hodder, I. 1982. 1986. See also the contributions in J. Thomas ed. 2000.

⁷² Bourdieu, P. 1977:72.

⁷³ As Bourdieu argues, 'the practical evaluation of the likelihood of the success of a given action in a given situation brings into play a whole body of wisdoms, sayings, commonplaces, ethical precepts, ('that's not for the likes of us') and, at a deeper level, the unconscious principles of the ethos which, being the product of a learning process dominated by a determinate type of objective regularities,

embodied, resulting in certain dispositions (cognitive and motivating structures) which influence practice, often at an unconscious level.⁷⁴

In contrast to both normative and functionalist theories, the structural orientations which make up Bourdieu's habitus do not have an existence of their own outside of human actions, but rather, depend for their existence upon the actions and representations of social actors within the context of which they are produced, reproduced and transformed. Such structural orientations then are essentially dialectical in that they both structure, and are structured by social practice. As Postone points out, the orientations of habitus "are at once structuring structures, and structured structures, they shape and are shaped by social practice"75. So conceived, habitus enables Bourdieu to analyse the behaviour of agents as objectively coordinated and regular, without in any way being the product of either 'rules' or 'conscious rationality'. Such an approach then provides one with a theoretical framework with which to resolve the dichotomy between functionalism and structuralism. For while human behaviour can still be considered to achieve certain functional ends, to provide for basic needs, desires, and goals, such needs and interests are negotiated by people within a culturally structured situation which infuses all aspects of cultural practice, however mundane.⁷⁶

While abstract theory serves little purpose within archaeological research unless it can be operationalized, the concept of *habitus*, and its implications for a 'post-processual' archaeology have long been championed by Ian Hodder. 77 For him, the concept of habitus incorporates "all schemes of categorisation and perception" providing the individual with a "practical mastery "necessary to comprehend and act in a social world⁷⁸. More significantly, Hodder notes, "the central position of processes of

determines reasonable and unreasonable conduct for every agent subjected to those regularities' Bourdieu, P. 1977:77.

⁷⁴ That is, while these cultural dispositions may well structure people's decisions and actions, they often lie beyond their ability to describe and thus formalize their behaviour in the realm of discursive

⁷⁵ Postone, M., E. LiPuma, and C. Calhoun eds. 1993:4

⁷⁶ Bourdieu, P. 1977:76. It is the significance of the particular material conditions within which social practices are situated which remains an under developed feature of Giddens' theory of structuration. Cf. Barrett, J.C. 2000:21-33.

⁷⁷ Cf.Hodder, I. 1982a. 1982b. 1982c. AAMT 8 1985:1-26. 1986.On the theoretical persuasions of post-processual archaeology in general see, Trigger, B.G. 1989:329-367. Hodder, I. 1986:71.

enculturation in Bourdieu's theory is of importance for archaeology because it links social practices with the 'culture-history' of a society. As the habitus is passed down through time it plays an active role in social actions and is *transformed* in those actions." Grounded in unconscious logic then, and derived ultimately from common experience, the concept of *habitus* has the potential to transcend the perceived inadequacies of other structuralist approaches whilst simultaneously moving one beyond a quandary of functionalist materialism where all behaviour, no matter how seemingly illogical, must be objectively explained as an adaptation to an effective environment.⁸⁰

As a conceptual framework, the principles of which are reproduced in all practice, including the way material goods and the built environment are manifested on the archaeological landscape, Bourdieu's habitus provides an entry point for the examination of the role of material culture in the ideological representations of social relations. As Hodder argues, "Structures of meaning are present in all the daily trivia of life and in the major adaptive decisions of human groups. Material culture patterning is formed as part of these meaningful actions..."81 Because they occur within meaningful cultural contexts then, the social practices and social structures involved in the production, use and consumption of material culture become embodied by it.⁸² Thus the daily use of material items within a specific context recreates from moment to moment the framework of meaning within which people act. However, material culture is not merely a repository of accumulated meanings inscribed in it by its production and use. Rather, each use of an artefact, through its previous associations and usage has a significance and meaning within society such that the artefact is an active force in social change. That is, material culture plays an active role in the structuring of cultural practices because the culturally specific meanings with which material culture is endowed as a result of former practices, influence successive practices and interpretations. Moreover, this 'power' of material symbols in social action derives not only from the transformation of structures between different contexts, or from the associations evoked by particular items or

⁷⁹ Ibid 1986:72.

⁸⁰ Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992:10

⁸¹ Hodder, I. 1982a:213.

⁸² Cf. MacKenzie 1991:191-201. Miller, 1985:11-12.

forms, it also resides in the ambiguous meanings of material items. Because material culture may operate simultaneously in any number of social fields then, its meaning is not fixed, but subject to reproduction and transformation in terms of both material curation and interpretation throughout its social life. Material culture is polysemous, and its meaning(s) may vary through time depending on its particular social history, the position of particular social agents, and the immediate context of its use. Because of this emphasis on 'context' then, and the continual process of change which is implicated in material practices and symbolization, archaeological enquiry is necessarily of an historical nature. Artefacts and their organization only come to have *specific* cultural meanings as a result of their use in *particular* historical contexts.

In her own comprehensive review of the salience of ethnic identifications within archaeological analysis, Jones cites MacKenzie's detailed analysis of the cultural construction of telefol string bags, as an illustration of the dialectical relationship that exists between the meaning of a particular item of material culture and the reproduction and transformation of social relations in the spheres of gender, age differentiation, kinship relations, ethnic identity, ritual and myth⁸⁴. Through their use in ritual symbolism, and in everyday practice, MacKenzie effectively demonstrates how the particular meanings attributed to such string bags play an active role in the construction of an individual's social and cultural identity. Moreover, through their role in the mediation and justification of social relations, such as those between men and women, they are involved in the structuring of social practices and social interaction.

For instance, the bird-feather *bilum* (string bag), when worn by older, men is an expression of sexual differentiation, which signifies both opposition/separation, and dependency/integration between genders. When this particular *bilum* is introduced to young boys at the beginning of male initiation however, the ideas associated with it

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84 Jones, S. 1997:118. Cf. MacKenzie 1991.

⁸⁴ In this light the severe and absolute rejection by some new archaeologists of many traditional emphases can be seen to have hampered, rather than promoted, the development of a mature discipline. In particular, the dichotomies set up by Binford and various of his associates between culture and function, norm and adaptation, history and process, altogether impeded an adequate understanding of the very aim of their enquiry – social and economic adaptation and change.

play a role in the internalisation of notions of sexual differentiation and masculinity. Thus, the bird-feather *bilum* is polysemous, meaning different things to different people in different social contexts. Furthermore, it is involved in the mediation and legitimation of social relations and the structuring of activities between genders in different contexts, and at different stages of its life cycle. ⁸⁵ Indeed this focus on the active, constitutive role of material culture in the construction of social identities and the mediation of social relations is further supported by Miller's sophisticated analysis of pottery from Dangwara village in the Malwa region of India ⁸⁶ and Taylor's analysis of Kunwinjku bark paintings from Western Australia. ⁸⁷

The primary significance of such studies then, and their respective observations, is that the legitimacy of any culture/function, static/dynamic dichotomy is denied since meaning and ideology are inextricably tied to daily practices. It is structure which provides the framework through which function is defined. As such, any assumption that material culture merely constitutes either a passive reflection of rule governed behaviour, or a particular adaptive technique within the cultural system can no longer be maintained. The dichotomy between normative and processual archaeology is thus bypassed through the recognition that all material culture is active in the process of social production, reproduction, and transformation. Moreover, because the effective link between human behaviour and material culture lies within the 'structural orientations' of habitus which manifest themselves in different ways, in different contexts and in relation to various sets of social relations, the meaning of material culture is not fixed. As such, it is necessary to adopt a contextual and historical approach to the analysis of archaeological remains in order to comprehend the social practices and social relations which extended beyond the mere structure and content of material culture distributions.⁸⁸ Having suggested a broad theoretical framework for the interpretation of material culture which transcends certain limitations of vision entailed in both normative, and functionalist approaches, it is now possible to reconsider the interpretation of ethnicity within archaeology.

⁸⁵ MacKenzie 1991:192-192, 204-205.

⁸⁶ Miller, D. 1985.

⁸⁷ Taylor, L. 1987.

⁸⁸ Cf. Hodder, I. 1982b. 1986.

MATERIAL CULTURE AND ETHNICITY

Following on from the work of Barth, research on ethnicity during the 1970s and 1980s came to be dominated by what has been broadly termed the 'instrumentalist approach' wherein considerable emphasis was placed on the organizational, and dynamic nature of ethnicity, not only historically, but in different social contexts according to the interests and positions of particular social actors. The recognition that ethnic groups are fluid, self-defining systems represented an important contribution to our understanding of the maintenance and transformation of ethnicity, since most significantly in terms of this discussion, such an approach was to reveal a critical break between ethnicity and culture. Though it was still assumed within the instrumentalist perspective that a certain relationship existed between ethnicity and culture, it was generally accepted that there is rarely a straightforward correlation between cultural similarities and difference and ethnic groups and boundaries. Hence, recent theories of ethnicity mark a significant departure from the notion of ethnic groups as 'culture-bearing entities', a notion central to nationalist discourses as well as traditional social scientific theory.

While ethnographic research supported this distinction between culture and ethnicity, the precise nature of the relationship between ethnicity and culture remained a neglected area of research within the instrumentalist perspective. Having dismissed the idea of a one-to-one correlation between culture and ethnicity, instrumentalists tended to focus on the *organizational* aspects of ethnicity, taking the cultural differences on which it was based for granted. Within this framework then, 'culture' was reduced to an epiphenomenal and arbitrary set of symbols randomly selected from existing practices and beliefs, or even brought into being in order to justify certain instrumental ends, ⁹⁰ the ultimate implication being that ethnicity comes into existence merely to serve the purpose of some interest group. Thus, while a focus on

⁸⁹ 'It is important to recognize that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of objective differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant.' Barth, F. 1969:14.

⁹⁰ 'The most common (tacit) reduction of culture has consisted in showing how ethnic signifiers may change due to changes in context, thereby indicating that the signifiers themselves are really arbitrary, and that the fundamental aspect of ethnicity is the very act of communicating and maintaining cultural difference.' Eriksen, T.H. 1992:129. Cf. Bentley, G.C. 1987:26/48.

social process, as opposed to 'group characteristics' certainly enabled scholars of ethnicity to "discard unsatisfactory strategies of empiricist 'butterfly collecting', to replace substance with form, statics with dynamics, property with relationship and structure with process", 91 it simultaneously retarded their ability to recognise how it was that people come to recognise their commonalities of interest and sentiment in the first place. 92 What then is the nature of the relationship between ethnic identities and the cultural practices and symbols associated with them? In short, what is the nature of the relationship between culture and ethnicity?

It was argued in chapter three that sensations of ethnic affinity, that which gives members of an ethnic cohort their sense of being both familiar and familial to each other, is provided for by the recognition at both a conscious and subconscious level of similar habitual dispositions which are embodied in the cultural practices and social relations in which people are engaged. Such structural dispositions were seen to provide the *basis* for the perception of ethnic similarity and difference when people from diverse cultural traditions come into contact with one another. Critically however it was also argued that it is this *social interaction* between agents of differing cultural traditions which engenders a reflexive mode of perception, in the course of which the arbitrarness of these, often subliminal, taken for granted modes of behaviour are exposed, thereby permitting and requiring a change in the level of discourse so as to rationalize, and systematize the representation of such cultural practices, and more generally, the cultural tradition itself.

It is within such contexts then, and at such a discursive level that the particular cultural practices, and beliefs, which to some extent embody the underlying structures of *habitus* become objectified, and rationalized in the representation of *ethnic* difference⁹³. Ethnicity then, is neither a direct reflection of, nor wholly determined by, those shared, subliminal dispositions which constitute Bourdieu's *habitus*, ⁹⁴ but

⁹¹ Erikesn, T.H. 1992:28

⁹² CF. Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:27

⁹³ As Eriksen, amongst others has pointed out, 'For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact with each other, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is *no* ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, *not* a property of a group. This is a key point.' Eriksen, T.H. 1992:12. (emphasis my own) See also Yelvington, K. CSSH 33 1991:168.

⁹⁴ Contra the thesis presented by Bentley wherein he argued that ethnic identity is a direct reflection of the *habitus* of the group, and that this identity is generated by a subliminal awareness of *likeness* with

neither is it an empty vessel into which, in the pursuit of individual or group interests, various aspects of culture may be poured.⁹⁵ Rather, ethnicity is constructed; it entails an objectification of cultural difference as a product of the intersection of peoples habitual dispositions and the concrete social conditions characterizing any given historical situation. As such ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not the property of a group.

Material culture, itself an active constitutive element of social practice, is frequently implicated in the self-conscious signification of identity and the justification and negotiation of ethnic relations. As a result certain forms and styles may be maintained and withheld in the process of signalling ethnicity, thereby supporting competition and between group interaction, whilst other forms and style may cross-cut such ethnic boundaries.⁹⁶ However, in contrast to some instrumentally oriented theories, particularly that of Martin Wobst, the approach developed here suggests that the 'choice' of distinctive forms and styles used in signalling ethnic boundaries is not arbitrary. Rather, somewhat analogous to Hodder's assertion that the explanation of particular strategies, and the way in which material culture is involved in them is dependent upon internally generated symbolic schemes⁹⁷, the self conscious expression of ethnicity manifested through particular material culture items is linked to the structural dispositions of the habitus, which, as stated, infuse all aspects of the cultural practices and social relations characterizing a particular way of life. 98

Moreover, because of the degree to which such orientations infuse all aspects of social life, there is, of necessity, a correlation between those dimensions of material culture which are not part of the *overt* signification of ethnicity, such as the positions

others of similar habitus. As Yelvington points out, such a theory of ethnicity ignores the fact that 'sensations of ethnic affinity and common experience are not necessarily covariant: Similarities in habitus do not guarantee ethnic sensations, and differences in habitus do not preclude identification.' Yelvington, K. CSSH 33 1991:168. Indeed, there are many examples where it seems highly implausible that the people bought together by the expression of a common ethnic identity share equally in a common habitus; for example Bentley's own example of black American ethnicity.

⁹⁵ Contra Barth's assertion that '...ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems...' Barth, F. 1969:14 For a critique of this position see Williams, F. 1989:409.

⁹⁶ Cf. Barth, F. 1969. Hodder, I. 1982a.

^{97 &#}x27;...we must acknowledge culture as being meaningfully constituted in the sense that each material trait is produced in relation to a set of symbolic schemes, and in relation to general principles of symbolic meaning which are built up into particular arrangements as part of social strategies.' Hodder, I. 1982b:186.

of hearths within a hut, but which, by their continued reproduction and repetition, reinforce and 'naturalize' tribal distinctions, and the self-conscious signification of ethnicity in other aspects of material culture such as items of dress: a correlation which directly contradicts Wobst's hypothesis that ethnic difference is most profitably expressed in clearly visible items⁹⁹. As Hodder observes, "tribal distinctions become acceptable and 'naturalized' by their continued repetition in *both* public and private spheres", and furthermore that there is "a continued interplay between these different spheres and types of material culture." Indeed, the practice theory of ethnicity advocated here provides one with a fresh standpoint from which to re-evaluate the debate between Sackett and Wiessner about the nature of stylistic variation and the way in which 'ethnic markers' are manifested in the material remains.

On the basis of her accumulated data on San Arrowhead morphology, particularly the way in which stylistic variation is articulated in terms of group differentiation, Weissner argued that in terms of *emblemic style*¹⁰¹, San projectile points exhibit clear stylistic differences at the level of the language group, distinguishing the !Kong, !Xo and G/wi who speak mutually unintelligible tongues and occupy distinct territories. "...for the San, the emblemic style carries a clear message to members of a linguistic group as to whether arrows come from their own group or from a foreign one. In the former case it signals that the maker also holds similar values. In the latter case, the stylistic difference may either signal another set of values or practices if the two

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⁹⁸ Cf. Burley, D.V. et al 1992:6-7.

⁹⁹ 'Some doubts concerning Wobst's hypothesis were encountered in chapter three where intimate and everyday domestic aspects of material culture such as hearth positions reflected ethnic identity as much as did items of dress and decoration. Whereas the latter items could be said to concern information exchange between socially distant communicators, the same can hardly be said for hearth position, nor for many of the other humdrum aspects of daily life which are distinctive of ethnic groups in the Baringo area. The fact that Baringo 'styles' vary equally in both the public and private domains suggests that a functional view which utilises concepts drawn from information theory may be inadequate.' Hodder, I. 1982a:205.

¹⁰⁰ Hodder, I. 1982a:56.

This, the first aspect of style identified by Weissner constitutes 'formal variation in material culture that has a distinct referent and transmits a clear message about conscious affiliation or identity such as an emblem or a flag.' Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:57.

an emblem or a flag.' Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:57.

102 Cf. Wiessner, P. AA 48 1983:268. That no clear cut stylistic variation was apparent at the band level of social organization is explained by Shanks and Tilley by the fact that bushmen bands have no coherent social basis in terms of individual membership and therefore as bands have no ongoing social basis but are characterized by fusion and flux of social relations. As such there is no distinctive identity to either symbolize, or suppress. Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1992:145-146.

groups are known to one another, or if not, that its maker is foreign and his behaviour is unpredictable." 103

Sackett, however, in his critique, disputes both Weissner's theoretical approach, and her interpretation of stylistic variation in San projectile points, suggesting that the formal variation which she observes is more accurately explained in terms of 'isochrestic variation' which, although signalling ethnicity, is not purposively intended to do so. 104 For Sackett then, the variation which Weissner observes in San projectile points constitutes little more than a product of habitualized practices and the socialization process within a bounded ethnic context. In contrast, Sackett argues for the primacy of a narrower, more active view of style called 'iconological variation' which he defines as conscious purposive signalling. That is, style which constitutes ethnic messaging generated by what is essentially self-conscious, deliberate, and premeditated behaviour on the part of artisans, primarily with the intent of identifying and maintaining boundaries between groups.

While in essence their debate on both the nature of stylistic variation and the way in which 'ethnicity' is manifested in material culture seems to revolve around a somewhat arbitrary distinction between style which occurs *because* it is embodied in the consciousness of artisans at an essentially non-discursive level, and style which has *intended effects* in terms of specific social strategies and social relations¹⁰⁵, in many respects both Sackett and Wiessner simply talk past each other, remaining somewhat unaware of the relative potentialities of each other's contributions for their own work.

While the fact that San do not live in the vicinity of linguistic boundaries, and hence, are only vaguely conscious of linguistic differentiation would appear to offer little support for Weissner's claim that projectile points are produced in a certain form with

¹⁰³ Weissner, P. AA 48 1983:269.

¹⁰⁴ Sackett, J.R. AA 50 1985:156.

¹⁰⁵ This point was recognised by Sackett in his statement that 'it would seem that our positions are in fact closer than her original article and my critique of it might suggest. For one thing, if I understand it correctly, her reply appears to adopt what is essentially an isochrestic position with respect to the question of where style resides' Sackett, J. 1991:39. And by Wiessner who in a later article admits, '...the dividing line between Sackett's isochrestic and iconological variation may become blurred once it is recognized that isochrestic patterns of variation may be due to the fact that the artefact plays a very minor social and symbolic role in society.' Wiessner, P. 1989:58.

the *intentional* desire of signalling distinct linguistic boundaries to a specific target group, it is quite clear that in certain contexts, such as the ethnographic situation triggered by her own case study, there does in fact appear to be a recognition amongst the San of stylistic differences in projectile points at the level of the language group, and at this level it is an 'us'-'them' kind of recognition. Thus, it seems the variation which exists in San projectile points has the unintended consequences of *becoming* 'iconic', or identifying style in certain contexts of social comparison. What in most contexts then may constitute Sackett's isochrestic variation, *can*, in other contexts, become involved in the recognition of ethnic difference, and thereby *become* active in signalling ethnicity, the point recognised by Weissner.

Although to a large degree one must concur with Sackett's view that *much* of what we term 'style' exists as a result of local patterns of enculturation, that there is in fact, a normative component to style, the weakness of his argument lies in his assumption that 'isochrestic variation' can in fact be correlated with ethnicity. On the contrary, isochrestic variation, although constituting a transformed, and somewhat congealed representation of its generative structures, is more usefully compared with Bourdieu's *habitus*. As such, while isochrestic variation, 'that choice imposed upon the artisans by the technological traditions within which they work,' may provide the resources for the generation of ethnic identity, and indeed, 'for emblemic and assertive uses of style in general', neither isochresticism, nor *habitus*, is of itself equivalent to ethnicity. Thus, in the case of San projectile points, habitual modes of arrowhead production provide the basis for the generation of ethnicity, or at least, a we/they consciousness, in contexts where the arbitrary nature of particular modes of arrowhead production have been exposed through processes of cultural comparison. ¹⁰⁶

If such contexts of interaction and comparison occur repeatedly, and social action and interaction are expressed and mediated in categories of cultural difference, then these categories may become increasingly institutionalized. Though in some situations,

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¹⁰⁶ As was argued in chapter three, while the recognition of shared sentiments and interests which ethnicity involves may be derived, at least in part, from *doxic* experience and knowledge in certain spheres of *habitus*, the emergence of an ethnic consciousness, and the categories and symbols it entails, involves a break with *doxic* knowledge due to the objectified representation of cultural difference involved in the expression of ethnicity. In effect, a set of cultural practices and beliefs, which had previously formed part of the domain of *doxa*, becomes reified as a coherent and concrete object in opposition to specific others. Cf. Bourdieu, P. 1977:233.

such as inter-group conflict, or competition over scarce resources, such categories may be more fixed, whilst in others they may be more fluid, in *all* instances they will vary in different spatial and temporal contexts. Moreover, while particular ethnic categories may persist, the particular items of material culture involved in the conscious signification of such categories may change, and likewise, whilst the ethnic referent of particular styles of material culture may change, the styles themselves may remain same. Thus, the relationship between material culture and ethnicity, *is never*, as is frequently assumed, fixed, but rather is constantly shifting according to time and place.

Such an approach then has of necessity a number of important implications with regard to the meaning and significance of the variation which is almost universally apparent in the archaeological record. Chief amongst those, and in stark contrast to the assumptions of traditional culture-history, and the many guises through which it has persisted throughout the 20th century, is the suggestion that whether or not spatially and temporally bounded distributions of material culture are the product of a similar enculturative milieu or, of a common habitus, they do not necessarily 'map' the extent and boundaries of self-conscious ethnic groups in the past. Rather, ethnicity, because it refers to self-conscious identification with a particular group of people as opposed to some abstract, natural phenomenon explained on the basis of 'human nature', must be distinguished from mere spatial continuity and discontinuity. 107 For while it has been argued that ethnic consciousness is, in part, based on the recognition and awareness of objective commonalities of practice, the point made by Bentley, it is also, and perhaps more importantly, a product of the intersection of peoples' habitus with the prevailing social conditions in any particular historical context.

Thus, it seems not only that a group's *habitus* does not wholly determine ethnic identity, but furthermore, that the extent to which ethnicity is embedded in pre-existing cultural realities represented by a shared *habitus* is highly variable, and contingent upon the particular cultural transformations brought about by the process of interaction and the nature of the power relations between the 'interacting

¹⁰⁷ Shennan, S.J. 1989b:19.

groups' 108. From an archaeological perspective, such processes may lead to a variety of different scenarios. In some instances, as in Hodder's ethno-archaeological study of the Baringo District, there may be a high degree of homology between the structuring principles of the *habitus* and the signification of ethnicity in both material and non-material culture. In many other instances however, there may be a dislocation of such homologous relationships between the structuring principles of the *habitus* and the generation and expression of a common ethnic identity resulting in the incorporation of a bricolage of different cultural traditions. Whilst the former situation will lead to a high degree of homology between so-called 'isochrestic style' and the signification of ethnicity, the latter will prompt a much smaller degree of commensurability between the two.

Yet it must be emphasized, that whatever the degree of homology between the *habitus* and ethnicity, archaeologists may not be able to find 'ethnic entities' reflected in material culture distributions. ¹¹⁰ Indeed, it is possible to question the very existence of bounded, homogenous ethnic entities, except at a conceptual level in the abstract cultural categories employed in a people's discursive articulation of ethnicity. As Bourdieu has pointed out such conceptual categories are based on the methodological reification or objectification of transient cultural practices taking place in different spatial and temporal contexts and the 'group' only exists in the context of interpretation where it justifies and explains past practices and modes of interaction, and structures future ones. In contrast, the *praxis of ethnicity*, and this is what is most likely to be represented in the archaeological record, results in multiple, transient, yet often repeated, realizations of ethnic difference in particular contexts. While these realizations of ethnicity are both structured, and structuring, involving in many instances the production and consumption of distinctive styles of material culture, they are a product of the intersection of the perceptual and practical dispositions of

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¹⁰⁸ It is this 'critical break' between ethnicity and *habitus* which serves to distinguish the approach set out in this study from that of Burley et al. who, following on from Bentley's work, argue for a much more direct relationship between ethnicity and *habitus*.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Rowlands, M. 1982:164.

As Miller has argued in relation to caste 'The use that has been made of established classifications of society – in particular, caste – as a basic characteristic against which the variability in pottery has been analysed should not be construed as an intention to find a reflection, or representation of caste in ceramics. Nor has it been demonstrated that an archaeologist may directly use material variability as a symbolic rendering of an equivalent social classification.' Miller, D. 1985:202.

social agents and the interests and oppositions engendered in particular social contexts rather than any abstract category of difference.

Hence, configurations of ethnicity, and consequently the styles of material culture involved in the signification of and structuring of ethnic relations may vary in different social contexts and with relation to different forms and scales of social interaction. From an archaeological point of view then, the multidimensional nature of ethnicity may result in a complex pattern of overlapping material culture distributions relating to the repeated realization and transformation of ethnicity in different social contexts rather than any discrete monolithic cultural entity. Patterns in the production, and consumption of material culture involved in the communication of the 'same' ethnic identity may vary qualitatively, as well as quantitatively in different contexts. Furthermore, items of material culture that are widely distributed and used in a variety of social and historical contexts may become implicated in the generation and signification of a variety of expressions of ethnicity.

Thus, while the relationship between material culture and ethnicity appears to be somewhat ephemeral if not intangible, prompting some archaeologists with a degree of familiarity with recent anthropological theories of ethnicity to adopt an extremely sceptical stance towards its place in archaeological enquiry, the approach advocated here suggests that the investigation of these contextual representations of ethnicity and ultimately, the manifestation of ethnicity in the past is a legitimate object of scholarly enquiry. 111 Primarily what is required is a reconsideration not only of the interpretation of the phenomenon of ethnicity itself, but also of the various assumptions which underlie the explanation of the demonstrable variation which exists across both space and time in material culture distributions. While the recognition that material culture constitutes an active constitutive dimension of social practice played a large part in exposing the inadequacy of traditional, normative assumptions that material culture is a passive reflection of enculturation within an ethnically bounded context, it also revealed that degrees of similarity and difference in particular material culture distributions does not provide a relatively unproblematic index of the degree of, or intensity of, interaction between particular 'groups'.

Rather, because, material culture is both actively structured, and structuring throughout its social life, its meaning is never fixed but subject to constant reproduction, and transformation. Indeed, as Shanks and Tilley have indicated, while a particular material form may remain the same, its meaning will, of necessity, alter in different contexts: "it will be consumed in different ways, appropriated, and incorporated into various symbolic structures according to the prescriptions of each particular historical tradition and social context" On this basis then, one can no longer assume, apriori, that similarity in material culture necessarily reflects the presence of a particular group of people in the past, an index of social interaction, or indeed, more fundamentally, a shared normative framework: a rationale which has, and continues to inform the majority of archaeological interpretations within biblical studies, even amongst the more enlightened of its practitioners!

¹¹² Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1987:97.

The means by which such an endeavour are to be undertaken will be explored in full in later chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

ETHNICITY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL AN OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF RECENT APPROACHES

ETHNICITY AND ARCHAEOLOGY	212
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT	223
ARCHAEOLOGY AND ISRAELITE IDENTITY	233
ISRAEL IN THE MERNEPTAH STELE	247
ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY	258

ETHNICITY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Having worked out the extended theoretical framework which underwrites this study¹, and examined its general implications for the analysis of ethnic phenomena in the archaeological record², the present chapter seeks to re-engage the specific issue of Israelite ethnic identity. Because the hunt for the Israelites of antiquity has existed since the inception of the discipline however, it is worth reflecting briefly on some of the reasons why scholars are now calling this task 'a search for an Israelite ethnicity', instead of continuing to reference social identity with such well established terms as 'culture', 'tribe' or indeed 'nation'. We are drawn to this question because, as shown, the analytical emphasis on 'ethnic identity' as opposed to other forms of social identity is a relatively recent phenomenon.

At one level this new emphasis has emerged as a by-product of a sustained critique, and re-evaluation of such comfortable concepts as 'scientific objectivity' and the authority of the ethnographer. This critical task, outlined previously, resulted in the demolition of any easy confidence in the assumed normalcy as to the boundedness and fixity of social groups. It increasingly came to be recognized that what had previously been understood and presented as isolated, independent life-ways – the 'primitive', the 'other', representatives of simpler systems or 'stages' – were in fact societies powerfully shaped by their unavoidable submergence in regional, even global, systems of power. What used to be called 'tribes' became 'ethnic groups', a distinction which reflected not a mere terminological sleight of hand, but a new view of human groups as interwoven and interconnected, as products of modern conditions, not mere relics of past evolutionary stages. Furthermore, as Friedman³ and others have shown, this decidedly intellectual maturity was both encouraged by, and further stimulated the crumbling confidence in the project of modernization being expressed both within, and outside of academia. That is,

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³ Cf. Friedman, J. 1989:246-260.

¹ This theoretical framework was expounded in chapter three of this study with reference to the 'theory of practice' as put forward by Pierre Bourdieu.

² Beginning with an analysis of the impact of the New Archaeology upon the then dominant mode of archaeological analysis, chapter four followed the evolution of archaeological theory as it attempted to come to grips with developments in the discipline of anthropology.

where, as a by product of the expansion of rationality and individualism, modernization was once expected to eliminate the various sub-national divisions which fractured the modern world, now ethnicity has been newly mobilized to mediate valid structures on which to promote, and secure, political legitimacy. Given such currents then, it is small wonder that the classical concept of an 'ethnos' underwent the profound transformation which heralds the modern notion of 'ethnicity'. So what then does this modern understanding of ethnicity consist of?

Whilst difficulties in the modern study of ethnicity can be attributed to a variety of factors already discussed at length, underlying these problems was the complexity of the concept itself. While this complexity has spawned a plethora of attempts, within both anthropology and sociology, to develop a coherent theoretical model, a dichotomy of positions was seen to emerge regarding the formation and maintenance of ethnic groups: 'Primordialist' y 'Instrumentalist'.

Primordialists tend to emphasize the stabilizing elements of shared cultural origins and traditions within an ever-changing social world as critical factors underlying the durability of ethnic collectivities⁵. In their view, 'ethnicity' provides the individual with a knowable, consistent and regulated social environment within an otherwise complex, and often pluralistic, cultural setting. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, have tended to argue for the primacy of external and competitive forces in ethnic group formation and recognition.⁶ In their view ethnic groups bring together a variety of individuals holding common interests who, in the face of numerical and/or political inferiority, seek a competitive advantage. In both cases however, ethnic group formation was seen as a form

⁴ These two theoretical positions, discussed at length in chapter three, are not actually theories in the strictest sense of the word. In fact it is only in recent years through the efforts of scholars such as Despres, Kuper and van den Burghe that tentative explanations have been put forward. It is for this reason that both 'primordialism' and 'instrumentalism' have been presented as 'perspectives', 'approaches' or 'viewpoints' since no particular 'primordialist' or 'instrumentalist' would include all of the characteristics recounted in chapter three in their respective point of view.

⁵ Though the literature on this topic is vast, useful insights can be gained from, Bell, D. 1975, Isaacs, H. 1974. Isajiw, J.W. 1974.

⁶ Again, despite the vast literature on the topic, insights can be gained from the works of, Barth, F. 1969. Cohen, A. 1969. 1974. Patterson, O. 1975. Despres, L.A. 1975.

of functional adaptation to complexity in social, economic and political conditions, especially as they have occurred in the Post-Industrial Revolution era.⁷

Despite the relative insights of each however, both perspectives were seen to represent extremes, and neither, in or of itself, could account for the full range of common interests, sentiments and behaviours underlying ethnic identity.⁸ Rather than merely seeking to integrate the two diametrical perspectives within a single over-arching framework however, it was argued that one must advance beyond the mere surface representations and rationalizations for ethnic behaviour, to examine ethnic identity within the cognitive dimension. 9 To facilitate this mode of analysis, this study, whilst aware of possible theoretical alternatives, promoted the acceptance of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, with its integral concept of 'habitus'. 10 While the majority of Bourdieu's writings are of themselves not directly concerned with the topic of ethnicity, the capacity of his theory to integrate the so-called 'primordial' and 'instrumental' dimensions of ethnicity within a coherent theory of human agency which adequately addresses the question of how people initially come to recognize their 'commonalities of interest' has been advocated by many. 11

Indeed, extrapolating from Bourdieu's theory of practice, G. Carter Bentley has argued that it is the subliminal dispositions of habitus which, derived from the conditions of existence, provide the basis for the perception of shared sentiment and interest which ethnicity entails. "According to the practice theory of ethnicity, sensations of ethnic affinity are grounded in common life experiences that generate similar habitual dispositions...it is commonality of experience and of the preconscious habitus it

⁷ Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992: 9

Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:26

⁸ For a critique of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each see Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:24-58. McKay, J.ERS 5(4) 1982:395-420. Scott. G.M. ERS 13 1990:147-171.

¹⁰ Bourdieu calls the totality of disposition habitus. The habitus lies in the subconscious where it is intermediate between underlying structure and external practice. It forms a subliminal conceptual order that produces regular practices and representations without constant reference to either overt rules or conscious rationalizations. As Bourdieu himself claims, the habitus is founded upon history that, unconsciously, has been turned into nature. Cf. Bourdieu, P. 1977:78.

¹¹ Amongst those to argue for the potency of Bourdieu's thesis in relation to this issue are Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:24-58. Yelvington, K. CSSH 33 1991:169-175. Eriksen, T.H. 1992. Jones, S. 1997.

generates that gives members of an ethnic cohort their sense of being both familiar and familial to each other." Ethnicity then is neither a passive reflection of similarities and differences in the cultural practices and structural conditions in which people are socialized, as traditional normative and primordial theories assume. Nor, as some instrumentalist positions imply, is it produced entirely in the process of social interaction whereby epiphenomenal cultural symbols are consciously manipulated in the pursuit of some political and/or economic advantage. Rather, drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice as Bentley has done, it can be argued that the construction of ethnic identity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of the habitus which both shape, and are shaped by, objective commonalities of practice: "shared habitus engenders feelings of identification amongst people similarly endowed. These feelings are consciously appropriated and given form through existing symbolic resources." ¹³ Moreover, these 'symbolic resources' are not essentially arbitrary but are derived from, and resonate with, the habitual practices and experiences of the people involved, as well as reflecting the instrumental contingencies and meaningful cultural idioms of a particular cultural situation. Thus just as ethnic sentiments and interests are derived from similarities in habitus, so too the recognition of certain cultural practices and historical experiences as symbolic representations of ethnicity are drawn from that realm.

Such a 'practice theory of ethnicity' then affords the explanation of a number of different dimensions of ethnicity which had been rendered incompatible through their opposition as causal explanations of ethnic behaviour. 14 Nevertheless, despite the benefits accrued by grounding ethnicity in a coherent theory of cultural production and reproduction, Bentley's particular version of this thesis was seen to ignore a number of important insights derived from recent research on ethnicity, most importantly its organizational and contrastive dimensions. That is, that ethnicity is essentially a consciousness of

¹² Bentley, G.C. CSSH 29 1987:32-33.

¹³ Bentley. G.C. CSSH 33 1991:173.

¹⁴ The major advantage of this approach is that it obviates the practice of dichotomizing the competing perspectives into logically exhaustive compartments. Instead of asking which approach - primordial or instrumental – has more explanatory power, it is now possible to inquire about the extent to which both are operative.

difference vis-a vis others.¹⁵ Thus while the construction of ethnicity may indeed be grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of social agents which both shape, and are shaped by objective commonalities of practice, ie *habitus*, ethnicity is directly congruent with neither habitus nor the cultural practices and representations which both structure and are structured by it.

Crucially, ethnic identification was seen to involve an objectification of those cultural practices (which otherwise constitute subliminal modes of behaviour) in the recognition and signification of difference in opposition to others. The particular form such 'objectifications' of cultural difference take then, is thus constituted by the intersection of habitus with the prevailing social conditions at any given moment. Hence, the extent to which ethnicity is embedded in any pre-existing cultural realities represented by a shared habitus is highly variable and contingent upon the cultural transformations engendered by the nature of that particular interaction and the power relations which exist between the interacting peoples. As a result of such contingency then, the cultural practices and representations involved in the signification of the same identity may vary, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in different social contexts characterized by different social conditions. As such, there is rarely any 'one-to-one' relationship between the entire range of cultural practices and/or social conditions associated with a particular group and ethnic identity.

Rather, the resulting picture will be one of 'overlapping' ethnic boundaries produced by context specific representations of cultural difference which are at once transient, but also subject to reproduction and/or transformation in the ongoing process that is social life. Such an approach to ethnicity then marks a significant departure from the traditional assumption that ethnic groups reflect discrete, homogenous cultures characterized by certain objective traits – a notion central to a number of disciplines within the human sciences, particularly archaeology.

¹⁵ As Eriksen has pointed out, 'It takes at least two somethings to create a difference...Clearly each alone is – for the mind and perception – a non-entity, a non-being. Not different from being, and not different from non-being. An unknowable, a Ding an sich, a sound from one hand clapping. Eriksen, T.H. 1992:1

Because ethnic groups are no longer understood as bounded, objective entities whose reality can be taken for granted, but dynamic sets of relations constantly produced, reproduced and transformed through social structure and practice, this new theoretical paradigm¹⁶ presents some important challenges to traditional techniques for identifying ethnic groups in the archaeological record. Despite the profound implications such a theoretical revision entails for the employment of archaeological data however, it is first reasonable to ask whether this modern discourse on ethnicity has any relevance to our ancient subject matter.

As Eric Wolf has observed in his magisterial 'Europe and the People Without History' 17, ethnic categories express the ways in which particular populations come to relate themselves to given segments of the labour market within the modern world, "they are historical products of labour market segmentation under the capitalist mode" 18. Since that mode of production was effectively absent from ancient Near-Eastern political economies, perhaps ethnicity was too.¹⁹ Others however have taken a different point of reference, preferring to locate the 'emergence' of ethnicity within the context of European colonialism which resulted in the fragmentation of pre-existing forms of cultural identity and the imposition of new categories of difference and relations of power.²⁰ Indeed, moving even deeper into the past, it has been further suggested that 'ethnic groups' are the product of quite specific transformations in social organization which took place towards the end of the European Bronze Age.²¹ Whilst the proliferation of arguments concerning the specific socio-historical contexts of 'ethno-genesis' are potentially infinite, and to some extent purely a question of whether one adopts a highly specific, or highly general definition, such 'historical models' do require some further exploration, particularly if one intends to utilize such contemporary theories and concepts in the analysis of past societies. To what extent then can it be assumed that the processes

¹⁶ On the specific issue of paradigm change within the social sciences see Kuhn, T.J. 1979.

¹⁷ Wolf, E. 1982.

¹⁸ Ibid. 1982:31

¹⁹ On ancient Near-Eastern political economies see, Silver. M. 1985.

²⁰ Cf. Clifford, J. 1988, Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff, 1988, Friedman, J. 1992:837

²¹ Cf. Renfrew. C. 1987.

involved in the construction and maintenance of ethnic groups in the contemporary world resemble those which took place in the past?

It cannot be denied that the so-called 'ethnic revival' has been associated with a number of different, yet in many instances, interconnected macro socio-historical developments which have contributed to the disintegration and subsequent reconfiguration of relations of power and identity. For example, the process of European colonialism has undoubtedly provided a context (one particularly prominent in contemporary theoretical discourse) within which new forms of ethnic self-consciousness have been inscribed. Furthermore, within the context of the demise of these colonial regimes, coupled with the evaporation of the homogenizing presumptions of Western Liberalism, emergent 'ethnic groups' have drawn upon the existing ideologies of nationalism and cultural relativism in the articulation of their economic and political rights, and the legitimation of their 'new found' sense of identity.²³ Yet, whilst such recent developments may have bought about some important transformations in the in the manifestation of ethnicity, with the emergence of new styles of ethnic consciousness, there is no reason why the concept of ethnicity should be restricted to the context of European colonialism, or any other major socio-historical development for that matter. What has changed, and is always changing, are the particular historical conditions and idiomatic concepts in which ethnicity is embedded.

Thus, while ethnicity may have a *particular* expression generated by the emergence of the working classes in the modern era, the imposition of colonial regimes or indeed the development of mass education and communication, when viewed as a concept which merges social interaction, historical contingency and a 'world view' into a coherent strategy of social identity, 'ethnicity' can be generalized to facilitate the analysis of a variety of contexts, and societies, which are otherwise radically different. That is, whatever the particular socio-historical context under investigation, an unashamedly

²² Cf. Smith. A.D. 1981.

²³ It is generally felt that the most important elements within this ideological complex are the right to cultural autonomy, of 'ethnic self respect, and...the continued experience as a people', and the right to political and economic self-determination, many aspects of which are now enshrined in international law. See Roosens, E.E. 1989:150.

broad definition of ethnicity can be employed as an analytical tool to explicate the general processes involved in the formation, and transformation of ethnic groups.²⁴

Because the concept of ethnicity then carries such powerful connotations of self-awareness, it is easy to see why, contra Lynn Meskell, 'ethnicity' has come to the fore within Biblical studies, and particularly the archaeological dimension of that discipline. For if we accept that ethnicity is essentially based on processes of self-identification this would appear to support the argument that archaeologists are dependent upon those historical sources which provide access to peoples self-conscious reflections on ethnicity. Yet because the biblical accounts of early Israel's social and political identity have been subject to a series of widely divergent interpretations, some source of *material evidence* confirming a self-constructed identity is sought. The danger however is that biblical archaeologists see as unproblematic the relationship between the material distributions which their spades uncover, and the meanings which they understand to be implicit in those distributions. It is just such a difficulty which underlies much of the debate over the so-called 'ethnic markers'.

Within the broad discipline of archaeology, ethnicity has frequently been viewed as an *explicit category*, rooted in perceived differences in national origin, language, religion and/or physical characteristics.²⁶ Importantly, this definition, implicit in most archaeological applications, treats ethnicity as a discrete, and objective unit, one which can readily be identified through the recognition of certain highly visible criteria, or

²⁴ Such a broad definition then meets the requirements set out by Eriksen in an earlier chapter. 'If we first know what we mean by ethnicity, we can then use the concept as a common denominator for societies and social contexts which are otherwise very different. In this way the concept of ethnicity can teach us something not just about similarity, but about difference.' Eriksen. T.H. 1992:12-13.
²⁵ "During the 1990s a burgeoning corpus of literature has arisen devoted specifically to ethnicity,

²⁵ "During the 1990s a burgeoning corpus of literature has arisen devoted specifically to ethnicity, nationalism, cultural identity and politics as they impact on our field of archaeology. The majority of these volumes deal with issues of nationalism and constructions of identity in times past, (Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Layton 1989; Shennan 1989) - many situated in the nineteenth century... To date one major area of the globe has been overlooked by archaeologists – one which played a formative role in the birth of archaeology as a discipline – namely the eastern Mediterranean and Middle east. This omission seems inexplicable not only on these grounds, but also given that the *materiality* and *practice* of archaeology in that region is inextricably linked to the political and cultural realities faced by their respective peoples." Meskell, L. 2000:1-2

'markers'. That is, certain types of artifacts, or artefactual variations, are interpreted as a direct reflection of a specific ethnic group with differences and/or similarities between these artifacts seen as the most important evidence when attempting to distinguish between such groups. Working with this perception of ethnicity then, biblical scholars have almost exclusively focused their research on a search for particular 'ethnic markers'- ranging from collared rim pithoi²⁷, to supposedly unique dietary practices²⁸ – as correlates of specific ethnic groups, most notably the Israelites.

While such assumptions have been subject to a number of important critiques, both within the framework of culture-historical archaeology, and the various theoretical evolutions of the discipline, at precisely the same time as archaeologists were busy legitimizing the rejection of ethnicity as neither an appropriate nor accessible phenomenon for archaeological analysis²⁹, a 'new approach ' to ethnicity was being developed within anthropology – one which has a number of important implications for the discipline as a whole.

In contrast to the traditional 'culture concept', it has been suggested that whether or not spatially and temporally bounded distributions of material culture are the product of a similar enculturative milieu, they do not necessarily map the extent and boundaries of self-conscious ethnic groups in the past. Consequently, archaeologists *cannot* continue to consider such variation in the archaeological record as a passive measure of physical and/or social distance between supposedly discrete, homogenous groups. Nor can they assume that any contact between such groups, or the incorporation of one group by

²⁷ For a review of the significance of this, and other material artifacts such as house-type and site layout see, Edelman D. 2000:25-55.

²⁸ On the significance of this intriguing feature see, Hesse, B. 1990:195-225. Hesse, B. and Wapnish, P. 1997:238-270

²⁹ 'While still in common use in other parts of the world, a decreasing interest in the concept of ethnicity was noticeable in the English speaking world after the 1940-50s. In the works of Grahame Clarke and Gordon Childe, cultures were considered rather an instrument for ecological adaptation. Differences and discontinuities in material culture were interpreted as different adaptive, strategies rather than ethnic differentiation. This change became clearer with the emergence of the New Archaeology in the 1960s and 70s where this ecological functionalism became a dominating paradigm. The idealist approach, interpreting cultural variability in terms of *e.g.* ethnic groups, now became rare, and was associated with archaeologists who were considered old-fashioned or reactionary, or who were ridiculed as the last gasp of a misguided humanism obstructing the advance of science.' Olsen, B. and Z. Kobylinski. AP 29 1991:10.

another, through invasion or migration, will necessarily lead to a gradual and uniform process of acculturation. Rather, because it refers to 'self-conscious' identification with a particular social group, ethnicity must be distinguished from mere spatial continuity and discontinuity.³⁰ As such, it can no longer be assumed a priori, that similarity in material culture reflects either the presence of a particular group of people in the past, an index of social interaction, or a shared normative framework.

Indeed related research on the role of material culture in the generation and expression of ethnicity has further undermined the assumption that degrees of similarity and/or difference in material culture provides a relatively straightforward indicator of the intensity of interaction between past groups. 31 Because material culture is no longer understood as merely a passive reflection of socialization within supposedly bounded, homogenous ethnic units, but rather serves as an active, constitutive dimension of social practice in that it both structures human agency and is a product of that agency, the meaning of any item of material culture is never fixed, but subject to constant reproduction and transformation.³² That is, material culture is polysemous, its 'meaning(s)' varying through time, dependent upon its particular social history, the position of particular social agents and the immediate context of its use.³³ Thus while ethnic groups undeniably do use certain 'markers' to actively express social identity, because the boundaries of such groups, and hence the identification of individuals with such groups, may and indeed does change through time and from place to place, there are no artefactual remains which can consistently be employed to comprehend a groups' identity.

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³⁰ Cf. Shennan, S.J. 1989:19

³¹ See in particular, Hodder, I. 1982

³² Cf. Hodder, I. 1986:74. Indeed in their critiques of functionalist orientated archaeological interpretation, a number of archaeologists have argued that material culture, rather being a direct, indirect or distorted reflection of man's activities, is in fact an active, constitutive element of social practice. For example see, Barrett, J.C. 1989. M.W. Conkey and C.A. Hastorf eds. 1991. Miller, D. 1985.

³³ As Shanks and Tilley have indicated, 'while a particular material form may remain the same, its meaning will alter in different contexts and will be consumed in different ways, appropriated and incorporated into various symbolic structures according to historical tradition and social context.' Shanks, M. and C. Tilley. 1987:97.

While the meaning of ethnicity in ancient societies, and particularly its material expression, has been the focus of analysis for a number of scholars in recent years, all of whom have emphasized the fluidity and 'situatedness' of ethnic affiliation, concluding that no straightforward reflection of ethnicity should be expected from material culture.³⁴ very few, if any, have been sensitive to the more radical conclusions of recent anthropological research. That is, whilst the efforts of Dever, Finkelstein and others have cast doubt on some of the more celebrated examples of 'pots and people' in the archaeology of Palestine, even in the face of the most revealing cautionary statements, the assumption that the label 'Israelite' can be used to designate and identify a homogenous ethnic group of settlers, whose existence is reflected in the archaeological record of Iron I Palestine, is silently accepted.³⁵ Thus whilst recent research on ancient Israel may have bought us to a new understanding as to the significance of certain longterm socio-economic and/or demographic factors during the Late Bronze - Early Iron Age transition, attempts to address the vexed question of the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of the highland and marginal sites of this period has resulted in little more than the increasingly sterile reproduction of long held convictions.

³⁵ Cf. Skjeggstaad, M. SJOT vol. 6 no.2 1992:162

³⁴ Particularly worthy of mention in this respect are the contributions of, Whitelam, K.W. 2000: 376:402. JSOT 63 1994:57-87. Edelman, D. 1996:22-55. Finkelstein, I. JSOTS 237 1997:216-237.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

While the question of the emergence of Israel has been in the eye of the storm of biblical, historical and archaeological research for well over a century, the last two decades have witnessed a veritable explosion of new material and intensity of debate which have led to some astonishing shifts in basic perceptions about one of the foundational periods of Israelite history. Indeed, by calling attention to some of the more important shared assumptions within works as diverse as those of Lemche, ³⁶ Thompson, ³⁷ Ahlström, ³⁸ and Finkelstein, ³⁹ Robert Coote felt confident enough to refer to the rapid and radical nature of this shift as a 'new horizon'. ⁴⁰ Beyond mere semantics however, one must ask what are the major underlying shifts in intellectual orientation and methodology which have nurtured this new perspective.

While a comprehensive review of the independent insights of various scholars is beyond the scope of this study, because of their relevance to the present discussion it is nevertheless highly beneficial to sketch some of the more salient points of consensus to emerge from recent debates. Aside from the occasionally unpleasant rhetoric which has marred some of the more recent exchanges, ⁴¹ one of the more important points of consensus to emerge has been the recognition of considerable cultural continuity between the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages coupled with the largely indigenous nature of the settlement shifts in the highland and marginal regions of Palestine. It is important not to lose sight of this basic agreement across a range of scholars, biblical specialists and archaeologists who are often presented as adherents of the 'diametrically opposed' camps of 'Maximalism' and 'Minimalism'. Indeed as Whitelam has recently pointed out, "the almost nonchalant way in which scholars now accept that the settlement shifts in the highlands and margins of Palestine during the Late Bronze – Iron Age transition are the

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³⁶ Lemche, N.P. 1985. 1988. 1991. SJOT 8 1994:165-190.

³⁷ Thompson, T.L. 1992. SJOT 6 1992:1-13.

³⁸ Ahlström, G.W. 1986. JSOTS 146 1993.

³⁹ Finkelstein, I. 1988. Finkelstein, I. and N. Na'aman eds. 1994.

⁴⁰ Coote, R. 'Early Israel. A New Horizon' 1990:viii

⁴¹ In particular see the most recent offering of W.G. Dever (2000) which is almost entirely comprised of a highly polemical engagement with those 'minimalist' scholars, predominantly from the University of Sheffield, whose writings he dismisses as 'nihilistic', even 'anti-semitic'.

result of largely indigenous processes stands in stark contrast to the catalogue of complaints which accompanied the first attempts by Mendenhall, Gottwald and Chaney to challenge the prevailing assumption that socio-political changes in the region were the result of external invasion and/or infiltration."⁴² The sheer speed with which previous models have collapsed, and prior understandings shifted, is the result of the complex interaction of a variety of different, yet inter-related factors.

Principal amongst these is the marked shift in the nature of archaeological investigation in that region from an almost exclusive interest in large urban tells⁴³ to a more balanced concern with large scale regional surveys of small rural sites in an effort to provide settlement data which allows for the observation of the patterns and rhythms of Palestinian life over the centuries.⁴⁴ While such extensive surveys have provided us with an invaluable amount of data on a number of sites including their size, the number of their inhabitants, their location and the socio-economic factors which dictated their distribution, in effect their major achievement has been to undermine one of the classic assumptions of biblical scholarship – that the emergence of 'Israel' constituted a unique event in the history of Palestine.⁴⁵ Rather, analyzing the results of these surveys and excavations within the context of the extended chronological framework afforded by Fernand Braudel, the 'emergence of Israel' is seen to constitute but one phase, one chapter in the long term, cyclic socio-economic processes which have shaped that region⁴⁶. Indeed, to use concepts popularized by Braudel himself, the emergence of Israel

⁴² Whitelam, K.W. 2000:382

⁴³ While the reasons for an earlier preoccupation with urban tells is well documented elsewhere, such an approach also happened to coincide with the interests of an emergent 'biblical archaeology' which sought to illuminate the biblical traditions by tying them to the material realities of the past. Cf. Moorey, P.R.S. 1991. Mazar, A. 1990. King, P.J. CBQ 45 1983:1-16.

⁴⁴ The earliest, and still one of the most insightful works to engage this mode of research is that of Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam, 1986. Their long-term historical approach however has since been advocated by a number of other scholars, particularly Finkelstein and Dever.

As Finkelstein has pointed out, '...all three classic models describe the emergence of Early Israel as a unique event in the history of Palestine; consciously or unconsciously, all three have followed the basic theological construct of the biblical narrative.' Finkelstein, I. 1998:8

⁴⁶ 'As far as I can judge, the rise of Early Israel was not a unique event in the history of Palestine. Rather it was one phase in long term cyclic socio-economic and demographic processes that started in the 4th millennium BCE.' Ibid. 1998:8

is but a surface event, "mere foam, exciting but epiphenomenal, on the surface of a sea below which runs unperturbed the deep currents of history."47

While the burgeoning body of data which has emerged as a result of this shift away from single site excavation allows for considerable debate and disagreement amongst scholars as to the relative importance of the various factors and processes which contributed to the transformation of Palestinian society, 48 as Whitelam points out it is this very debate which offers a greater understanding of the multifarious aspects of the history of Palestine in this period, the lacunae and zones of silence which were absent from standard biblical histories concerned with the event and the personality. 49 It is this revolution in understanding and approach that constitutes the 'new horizon' to which Coote refers

Yet, while the revolutionary understanding of these highland settlements and their material culture as largely indigenous responses to a complex and gradual process of social and economic change within Palestine certainly constitutes a significant contribution to modern scholarship, it does raise some serious challenges to the assumption that this period constitutes the earliest, and most formative period within which the distinctive entity known as 'Israel' can be recovered historically. For while it was an attempt to redefine the nature of the historiographic task which inspired, and motivated these regional surveys, and much of the archaeological investigations of the last twenty years, it is one of the central ironies of Coote's 'New Horizon' that it has failed to locate the object of its search: foundering upon the very archaeological evidence in which it placed such faith. As Israel Finkelstein has noted, "since there is no clear difference in material culture between the various groups which settled in the highlands during Iron I, any effort to distinguish between 'Israelite' and 'non-Israelite' hill country settlements during the twelfth – eleventh centuries according to their finds is doomed to

⁴⁷ Braudel, F. 1972 Vol. 1:21

⁴⁸ These factors range over, the nature and importance of regional and interregional economic decline and stagnation, various climatic factors, particularly episodic periods of drought, the socio-economic background and location of the inhabitants of the highland sites, whether they were pastoral nomads in the process of sedentarization, or displaced groups from the urban centres in the wake of economic disruption.

49 Whitelam, K.W. 2000:381-385

failure."⁵⁰ Indeed such views have been reinforced by amongst others, Thomas L. Thompson who, recognizing that it is *continuity* and not discontinuity which is the striking feature of the Late Bronze – Iron Age transition, maintains that to speak of the term 'Israelite' in an archaeological context is exceedingly misleading. Such concessions then are highly significant since they appear to confirm the growing recognition that the archaeological evidence from these surveys, whilst it may be explicable in terms of the various socio-economic, climatic and environmental difficulties facing the inhabitants of these marginal settlements, does not allow *one* site to be labeled 'Israelite'.

Despite their critique of 'text based' approaches to the history of ancient Israel however, and the insistence that this 'new horizon' has freed the Late Bronze – Iron Age transition from the constraints of the periodization and characterization of the biblical traditions, the essential assumptions which underlie the archaeological investigation of this period have not changed significantly. For while the failure to distinguish a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture would appear to "undermine the very foundations on which this period has been viewed as the bulwark against the progressive removal of starting points for the history of Israel" one of the more fundamental, though less overt shared assumptions of virtually all recent scholarship is that the proliferation of highland settlements seen to emerge during this transitional period can in fact be identified with 'Israel'. Despite their appearance of radical critique then, most, if not all of the studies which shelter under the umbrella that is 'the new horizon', merely perpetuate the biblically inspired assumption that during the Late Bronze – Iron Age transition, 'Israel' inhabited particular areas of Palestine, namely the central hill country of Palestine. It is the resolute failure to resolve this paradox, evident in a number of key works, to which we now turn our attention.

One of the most notable trends to characterize recent research has been an appeal to the potential of this growing body of archaeological data to provide a greater understanding of the multifarious aspects of Palestinian history, coupled with an equally forceful questioning of the reliability of the biblical materials as sources for the early history of

⁵⁰ Finkelstein, I. and N. Na'aman, 1994:17

⁵¹ Whitelam, K.W. 2000:381

Israel, particularly in the pre-monarchic period. Yet while Finkelstein has referred to such developments as a 'veritable revolution' in research on the question of the emergence of early Israel,⁵² it would appear that his 'revolution, like Coote's 'new horizon' is more apparent than real. For while studies such as Finkelstein's would appear to give methodological priority to the archaeological data, their conclusions, even the focus of their investigations and surveys are dependent upon factors external to those data namely the biblical traditions. Indeed, while it is certainly a testimony to the tenacity of such ideas that they have managed to survive in a period in which so many of the basic assumptions which have underpinned biblical scholarship for much of this century have been bought into question, it is the implications of this 'enduring vigour' which constitutes the essence of our paradox, namely, that while the analysis of the archaeological data, often from a 'Braudellian' perspective, has opened up the possibility for a novel understanding of the history of the entire region, scholars continue to force that data into a historical framework derived exclusively from the biblical traditions.⁵³ Indeed the 'circularity of reasoning' which stems from the failure to resolve this paradox is evident in a number of highly influential and representative monographs and reports on the archaeology of early Israel.54

In many ways it is instructive to begin with Israel Finkelstein's major publication of the results of his 'Land of Israel Survey' and accompanying excavations at Izbet Sartah and Shiloh.⁵⁵ This is now widely regarded as the most complete review and interpretation of the archaeological data pertaining to the 'emergence of Israel' and one which will certainly constitute the starting point for many historians for the foreseeable future.⁵⁶ Yet, while this work may constitute a model of clarity in its *presentation* of the archaeological

⁵² Finkelstein, I. 1988:12

As Whitelam has pointed out, 'The analysis of the archaeological data, often from a Braudellian perspective, has opened up a new horizon for understanding the history of the region while at the same time continuing to force that data into a framework derived from the biblical traditions.' Whitelam, K.W. 2000:387

Though this section rests largely upon the various insights developed by Keith Whitelam in his many studies, it also attempts to expand upon his critiques with reference to the anthropological studies of ethnicity carried out in previous chapters.

⁵⁵ Finkelstein, I. 1988

⁵⁶ As Thompson has pointed out, 'Finkelstein's book establishes a firm foundation for all of us to begin building an accurate, detailed and methodologically sound history of Israel.' Thompson, T.L. 1992:161

data, his interpretation of that data, along with his overall reconstruction of what he terms 'Israelite Settlement' is heavily coloured by the picture presented in the Hebrew Bible – a clear illustration of the difficulty in liberating research designs from the constraints of the biblical narrative.

Finkelstein's working methodology, briefly outlined in his introductory chapter, is presented as being primarily concerned with archaeology and processes of settlement which "will hardly touch upon the biblical evidence at all..."⁵⁷ While such an approach would appear to comply with the professed methodologies of other scholars, most notably Coote and Whitelam, 58 which berate attempts to "reconstruct the process of Israelite settlement by means of traditional biblical archaeology", ⁵⁹ the biblical traditions play a much greater role in his interpretation of the archaeological data then is at first apparent. Indeed, in some cases, such as the detailed preliminary report on his excavations at Shiloh, his professed research strategy is effectively reversed, if not completely undermined.⁶⁰

Reflecting on the long, intricate and complex processes which led to the formation of an Israelite identity at the beginning of the monarchic period, Finkelstein states that, "An important intermediate phase of this crystallization is connected with the establishment of supra-tribal sacral centers during the period of the Judges. The most important of these centres was the one at Shiloh, whose special role at that time is elucidated in I Samuel – a historical work as all agree."61 The archaeological evidence presented in his detailed report however is extremely flimsy and does not support the weight of such a bold conclusion.

⁵⁷ Finkelstein, I. 1988:22

⁵⁸ In an attempt to justify the nature of their historical task, Coote and Whitelam argue that, 'What is being advocated against here is the all too common subjugation of archaeology in the service of biblical studies thereby dictating the aims of excavation and limiting the amounts of evidence produced for historical reconstruction.' Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam, 1986:19

⁵⁹ Finkelstein, I. 1988:22.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 1988:205-234.

⁶¹ Ibid. 1988:27.

Central to Finkelstein's thesis is his interpretation of the terraced structures in 'Area C' as "no ordinary houses", but rather, "the only public buildings ever discovered at an Israelite settlement site, which hint at the physical character of the sanctuary itself."62 Such a claim however is dismissed by Dever as "nothing but wishful thinking and hardly worthy of the hard headed realism Finkelstein exhibits elsewhere."63 For even if it were possible to interpret the archaeological data as evidence for some cultic institution at Shiloh, and much would depend on the pottery which Finkelstein does not present, except in photographic form, it goes well beyond that evidence to suggest that Shiloh constituted a 'supra-tribal sacral centre'. In light of the ambiguity of the archaeological data then, it becomes clear that Finkelstein's efforts to 'discover' the remains of a sanctuary at Shiloh is governed by his acceptance of its status in the Samuel traditions. 64 That is, in accepting the status given to Shiloh in the books of Samuel, Finkelstein is predisposed to view the terraced structures in 'Area C' as the remains of this sanctuary. Thus, it is the biblical traditions, and not the archaeological data which, in this instance, have methodological priority in his research strategy⁶⁵. Even his chronological periodization, 'the period of the Judges', is a designation derived not from any archaeological chronology, but the categories of the Hebrew Bible. 66 Furthermore, as the proliferation of newer literary approaches to the biblical text make abundantly clear, there are very few who would concur with Finkelstein's categorization of 1 Samuel as a historical work reflecting the social reality of pre-monarchic and monarchic Israel.⁶⁷

Such 'distraction' is also evident in a number of other influential reports on the archaeology of the Israelite settlement. The excavation and publication of the small rural

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⁶² Finkelstein, I. 1988:234 (emphasis my own)

⁶³ Dever, W.G. 1991:82

⁶⁴ Similarly Miller has drawn attention to the role of the biblical texts in Finkelstein's interpretation, particularly the so-called Ark Narrative of 1 Samuel 4-6, and 2 Samuel 6. See Miller, M. JSOT.S 127 1991:98

⁶⁵ Cf. Zwingenberger, U. OBO 180 2001:448-452 who argues that there is little, if any archaeological evidence for there having been a sanctuary at Shiloh.

⁶⁶ As Whitelam suggests, even Finkelstein's terminology, partly explained in a footnote in page 15 is significant, 'The reference to the "periods of Settlement and Judges" already indicates the influence of the periodization of the Hebrew Bible and alerts the reader to the possibility that the biblical traditions have played a much greater role in the interpretation of the archaeological data then is at first apparent.' Whitelam, K.W. 1998:185

⁶⁷ Cf. Miller, M. JSOT.S 127 1991:98. See also Miller, P.D. and Roberts, J.J.M. 1977.

site of Giloh by the archaeologist A. Mazar provides a case in point.⁶⁸ Mazar asserts that, "it is the only site in the Northern part of Judah which can be related with much certainty to the earliest Israelite settlers in the area."⁶⁹ Again however, this 'certainty' is based not on any archaeological evidence, but on an understanding of the material finds at that site read in conjunction with the traditions of the Hebrew Bible. Though he acknowledges the wide distribution, in all parts of Palestine, of the 'four room house', the presence of this particular architectural form in Giloh does not lead him to question his initial assertion that it is, in fact, an Israelite settlement.⁷¹

Similarly in his publication of the pottery assemblage from Giloh, which draws attention to the difficulties in accepting 'collared rim ware' as a 'marker' of Israelite settlement given both its widespread distribution in the region and its considerable continuity with Late Bronze Age forms, Mazar concludes, "the fact remains that in the central mountain sites which can be related *with confidence* to the Israelite settlers, these pithoi were not only popular, but indeed the most common pottery type". As with Finkelstein's assessments however, such *confidence* is not based upon any archaeological data, since such sites can only be regarded as Israelite if one accepts the picture presented in the Hebrew Bible. That is, the identification of Giloh as 'Israelite' is based not upon any positive evidence in the archaeological record, but assumptions about the location of Israelite sites drawn from the tradition of the Hebrew Bible. As such the problematic distribution of ceramic and/or architectural forms is overcome by an appeal to the biblical traditions which dictate that any settlement in this region, and during this period, *must* be an Israelite site.

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⁶⁸ Mazar, A. IEJ 31 1981:138-155. BA 45 1982:167-178. A similar network of assumptions are embodied in the work of Gal. See Gal, Z. TA 6 1979:138-155.

⁶⁹ Mazar, A. IEJ 31 1981:2

⁷⁰ The essential element of what is variously known as the 'four room', 'pillared' or 'courtyard house' is a central court-yard, though it is uncertain as to whether this was actually roofed or not. The classic, fully developed, rectangular late Iron I and Iron II examples typically have two rows of pillars down the sides, three banks of rooms arranged around the courtyard in a 'U' shape, with the entrance on the short wall, with many scholars positing the existence of a second story. While Fritz and Kempinski have argued that this basic type evolved from the nomadic tent, an argument further supported by Finkelstein, this position has been refuted by Stager. Cf. Stager, L. BASOR 260 1985:1-35.

⁷¹ Mazar, A. IEJ 31 1981:11

⁷² Ibid. 1981:30 (emphasis my own).

Despite their professed intention then to advance the cause of an alternative reconstruction of the process of Israelite settlement, one based primarily upon the expanding repertoire of archaeological evidence, neither Finkelstein nor Mazar pursue such a strategy with sufficient vigour. Indeed, in many ways it is the accumulating archaeological data from their own surveys and excavations which serves to undermine the very task which they set out to achieve. As Dever has noted in assessing the significance of this data for understanding the history of the region, "it must be stressed in light of archaeology today, it is the Late Bronze – Iron I continuity in material culture – not the discontinuity – which is striking, the more so as research progresses." That is, while the recent intensive surveys and excavations of the various Iron I settlements have contributed to a greater understanding of the various socio-political transformations across the region as a whole, there is *nothing* inherent in the archaeological data themselves which would support the conclusion that a particular site be designated 'Israelite'.

Among those to appreciate the irony that the increase in archaeological data has undermined attempts to locate and describe 'Israel' during this period is Thompson who states, "...it has become exceedingly misleading to speak of the term Israelite in an archaeological context of Iron I Palestine." Indeed, as noted previously such views have been reinforced by Finkelstein himself. The ultimate implication of this failure to distinguish a distinctly 'Israelite' material culture from an indigenous material culture in terms of the archaeological data then, is that the term 'Israelite' becomes unusable within the context of the discussion. Yet, for all their appearance of radical critique, such studies remain bound by a powerful circular argument that during this period, 'Israel' is to be found in certain parts of Palestine – namely the Central Hill Country.

The circularity of reasoning involved here is all too apparent: the Hebrew Bible dictates which settlements were 'Israelite' during this period, 'Israelite' material culture is then defined as the material culture of those sites designated by the Hebrew Bible to be

⁷³ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:204.

⁷⁴ Thompson, T.L. 1992:310

'Israelite', the discovery of these 'Israelite' sites then confirms the essential historicity of the same Biblical traditions. It is thus that Finkelstein, in a complete reversal of his professed research strategy, can claim that, "The starting point of a discussion about the characteristics of Israelite Settlement sites is the historical biblical text (*the only source available*) which specifies the location of the Israelite population at the end of the period of the Judges and at the beginning of the Monarchy." While such reflections on the question of Israelite settlement are certainly illustrative of the difficulties involved in liberating research strategies from the constraints imposed by the biblical narrative, and the methodological confusion it gives rise to, *the issue* which has provided the focal point for this paradox is the vexed question of 'Israelite ethnicity' and the precise meaning of the term 'Israel' in archaeological terms.

⁷⁵ See Whitelam, K.W. 1998:188

⁷⁶ Finkelstein, I. 1988:28. (emphasis my own) For a similar argument see Mazar who, commenting on the difficulty of defining a distinctive Israelite material culture holds that 'our departure point on this issue should be sites which, according to the biblical traditions, are Israelite during the period of the Judges, such as Shiloh, Mizpah, Dan and Beersheba; settlements then with similar material culture in the same region can be defined as Israelite' Mazar, A. 1990:353

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ISRAELITE IDENTITY

While during the last decade or so numerous scholars have addressed the question of Israelite origin and settlement, in recent years the general question of how to determine ethnicity from the material culture of Palestine in the Iron Age, and the particular problem of the ethnicity of the early 'Israelites' has come to the front line of research. Despite allusions in previous literature to the problems of recognizing ethnicity in the archaeological record, for many, it was the appearance, in English, of the volume of essays dedicated to Moshe Kochavi, and edited by Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman, which constitutes the 'real turning point in research'. Whilst this volume does mark a considerable advance, in both theory and sophisticated use of archaeological data, on Finkelstein's earlier 'Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement', providing a provocative illustration of settlement patterns, demography and socio-economic structures, it is Finkelstein's earlier attempt to define the concept 'Israelite' in ethnic terms which provides our initial point of departure.

According to Finkelstein, the identification of 'Israel' as an ethnic group in the Early Iron Age is a perplexing task since the formation of an Israelite identity "was a long, intricate and complex process which was not completed until the beginning of the monarchy." Despite the fact that he makes such cautionary statements in relation to ethnic identification in this period, Finkelstein pays no real attention to his own reservations, either in his general discussions, or in the final conclusion to his book. That is, whilst his formulation of 'Israelite' ethnicity, or rather his attempt to define the concept 'Israel' in ethnic terms, betrays a certain sensitivity towards contemporary anthropological research, it would appear that Finkelstein approaches the anthropological phenomenon of ethnicity without taking that research into proper consideration. Indeed, his theoretical definition

⁷⁷ In particular see, Bunimovitz, S. TA 17:210-222, 1990. Bunimovitz, S. and Yasur-Landau, A. TA 23 1996:88-101. Dever, W.G. BA 58:200-214 1995. Brett, M.G. 1996. Finkelstein, I. BA 59 1996:198-206. Hesse, B. and Wapnish, P. in N.A. Silberman and D.B. Small (1997) (eds.) 238-270.

⁷⁸ See Stager, L. BASOR 260:1-35, 1985. This well-known, and well received article, though seminal, merely begs the question of ethnicity, presupposing that the agrarian community and economic structure he characterizes, is in fact 'Israelite'.

⁷⁹Cf. Finkelstein, I. and Na'aman, N. 1994.

⁸⁰ Finkelstein, I. 1988:28

of an Israelite during the Iron 1 period as one "whose descendents described themselves as Israelite"⁸¹, takes little account of the considerable advances made in anthropological research since the 1960s.

As we have seen, in many ways it was Fredrik Barth's seminal publication of 1969 which marked the beginning of the modern anthropological study of ethnicity. 82 While the epistemological shifts embodied in Barth's programmatic thesis were the combined product of a variety of historical and ideological factors, its central ingredient, the shift from 'objectivity' to 'subjectivity', is what constitutes his enduring legacy to the discipline. That is, whilst previously anthropologists sought to differentiate human groups via the enumeration of the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they were the bearers, Barth sought to displace such supposedly 'objective' criteria from the front stage of research by arguing for the priority of 'emic' as opposed to 'etic' categories of ascription.⁸³ For Barth then, the primary objective in the anthropological study of ethnicity is an investigation of its social dimensions. Because such an approach advocates a focus on what is 'socially effective' in inter-ethnic relations, it follows that the group must be defined from within, on the basis of the actors' own categorizations of themselves and others. While such distinctions may take certain cultural features into account, they are not the sum of the objective features enumerated by the analyst, only those which the actors themselves deem significant.⁸⁴ While much of the subsequent theoretical literature would appear to confirm Barth's intuitive observation, that in essence ethnicity involves subjective processes of identification – a consciousness of real

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84 Barth, F. 1969:14.

⁸¹ Finkelstein, I. 1988:13

⁸² Barth, F. 1969. Indeed Despres has suggested dividing such studies into BB and AB, that is, 'before Barth' and 'after Barth'. See Despres, L.A. 1975:189. For a review of the theoretical antecedents of Barth's work see the arguments laid out in chapter three of this study.

⁸³ One of the essential contributions to the modern study of ethnicity has been this distinction between 'emic' as opposed to 'etic' aspects of anthropological epistemology. Though these concepts were introduced into scientific discourse by Marvin Harris via the linguist Kenneth Pike, it is necessary to distinguish rather different levels of 'emic-ness' and 'etic-ness' since in ideal, categorical form both concepts seek to conceal the inevitable intervention of the scientists own value system. See Mayes, A.D.H. Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association 11 1988:44-58.

or assumed difference vis-à-vis others⁸⁵, Finkelstein, it seems, remains completely unaware of this theoretical reorientation.

While the plain sense of Barth's thesis would appear to present itself in Finkelstein's 'theoretical definition' of an Israelite as "one whose descendents *described themselves* as Israelites", ⁸⁶ the extended version of that definition displays a near total lack of appreciation for the empirical and theoretical shifts initiated by that thesis. Such neglect can be illustrated by quoting Finkelstein's definition in full: "Accordingly an Israelite during the Iron I period was anyone whose descendents - as early as the days of Shiloh (first half of the eleventh century B.C.E.) or as late as the beginning of the Monarchy, - described themselves as Israelite. They were, by and large, the people who resided in the territorial framework of the early Israelite Monarchy, before the expansion began. Thus, even a person who may have considered himself a Hivite, Gibeonite, Kennizite, etc in the early 12th century, but whose descendents in the same village a few generations later thought of themselves as Israelite, will, in like manner, also be considered here as an Israelite." ⁸⁷ In light of our current knowledge, such a definition is extremely problematic, if not anachronistic, and as such warrants some explication.

When self-ascription, and ascription by others is defined as the central feature of ethnic groups, the nature of the continuity of such entities is clear: it depends on the maintenance of a boundary. Indeed the critical focus of Barth's investigation is the 'ethnic boundary' which defines the group as opposed to the cultural 'stuff' which it encloses⁸⁸. The salient feature of Barth's conception of boundaries however is that they are not limited to geographic lines more or less visible in the landscape of certain regions. That is, while they may have territorial counterparts, ethnic groups are not merely, or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories. Rather the boundaries of which Barth speaks, and the boundaries to which we must give our attention, are 'social boundaries', the socially relevant criteria which determine not only membership, but

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⁸⁵ Cf. Erikesn, T.H. 1992. 1993.

⁸⁶ Finkelstein, I. 1988:20

⁸⁷ Ibid. 1988:27

⁸⁸ Cf. Barth, F 1969:15

exclusion. ⁸⁹ As such Finkelstein's attempts to define as 'Israelite' anyone who resided within the territorial framework of the early monarchy is an overly simplistic definition which runs counter to most, if not all, modern anthropological reasoning. Indeed, as Maxwell Miller has pointed out, such a claim can only be advanced on the basis of the acceptance of the essential historicity of the narratives in I Samuel which specifies the location of the Israelite population at the end of the period of the Judges and the beginning of the Monarchy. ⁹⁰ Though the essential weakness of this argument is highlighted by Finkelstein's own admission that the Galilee region poses a particular problem to his definition since it falls outside the territorial jurisdiction of the early monarchy ⁹¹, he still insists that the population of that region be defined as 'Israelite'. In essence then, the term 'Israelite' is applied to anyone residing in what is assumed to have been the territorial framework of the early monarchy - whether they considered *themselves* to be 'Israelite' or not.

Although it lacks any of their explicit racial overtones, perhaps more fundamental is the affinity, implicit or otherwise, which Finkelstein's methodology exhibits with the interpretive principles which underscored the many research agendas at the turn of the century, particularly the 'settlement archaeology' of Gustav Kossinna ⁹². Though he has often been referred to as 'the evil mind behind all chauvinistic and racist explanation in archaeology', it was the Soviet scholar Leo Kleijn who first pointed out that Kossinna must be seen within the context of his own time. ⁹³ Judged from this perspective then Kossinna is no longer such an exceptional figure but rather fits, albeit as an extreme example, into the political context of the disciplines intellectual development within Europe. Thus, while his purely politically motivated ethnic considerations may have invalidated much of Kossinna's historical writings, as Trigger has pointed out, what he referred to as his 'Siedlungsarchäologie' embodied certain methodological principles of

⁸⁹ Cf. Barth, F. 1969:14-15.

⁹⁰ Miller, M. JSOT.S 127 1991:97-98

⁹¹ Finkelstein, I. 1988:28. Thompson also criticizes Finkelstein's understanding of the Galilee as being Israelite while excluding the Jezreel Valley. He argues that Finkelstein's argument that these settlements are 'Israelite' is based on his reading of later biblical traditions. Cf. Thompson, T.L. 1992:159-160, 239-250.

⁹² On Gustav Kossinna and his settlement archaeology see chapter two.

⁹³ Kleijn, L. 1974:74 Quoted in Harke, H. 1998:54.

more lasting importance.⁹⁴ Principal amongst these is what American scholars frequently refer to as 'the direct historical method', that is, the employment of archaeological data to trace a known historical entity sequentially back into prehistoric times. In this task Kossinna, like many others, saw himself guided by Oscar Montelius' principle that cultural continuity in the archaeological record denotes ethnic continuity. 95 Whilst the post-war years were to witness a veritable explosion of material which sought to demonstrate that the working methods of their respective authors had nothing to do with the 'Kossinna method', now fallen into disrepute, it is a measure of the power of his 'settlement archaeology' that it has continued to exert a marked influence on a wide range of scholars –Finkelstein included.

Though Finkelstein states that the identification of the 'Israelites' as one ethnic group in the Early Iron Age is a task complicated by the lack of any clear distinction between the various groups⁹⁶, in an effort to resolve such complexity Finkelstein shifts his focus to another chronological horizon where the identification of the population is apparently 'undisputed'. It is thus that one is confronted with the 'state of Israel', the Israelite monarchy – the period where the population of Palestine had attained a clear and selfevident sense of people-hood. With the identity of Israel then firmly secured in the Iron II, 97 Finkelstein, like Kossinna, embarks on his own retrospective journey, imposing the political map of the Iron II period onto the Iron I in an attempt to define as 'Israelite' all those who were encompassed by its borders. It is the Israelite monarchy then, or at least the biblical presentation of that monarchy, which provides the 'truly exceptional event' from which Finkelstein infers the situation in the Iron I. Thus, whilst Finkelstein's work

⁹⁴ By organizing archaeological data for each period of pre-history into a mosaic of archaeological cultures, Kossinna sought not simply to document how Europeans had lived at different stages of prehistoric development, but also to learn how particular peoples, many of whom could be identified as the ancestors of modern groups, had lived in the past and what had happened to them over time. Thus while his approach offered a means of accounting for the growing evidence of geographic as well as chronological variation in the archaeological record, it also marked the final replacement of an evolutionary approach to pre-history by an historical one. Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:161-167. On the workings of the Kossinna method see chapter two of this study.

⁹⁵ Though it remained at the periphery of his wide-ranging interests, Montelius did investigate the problems of ethnogenesis, paying particular attention to the question of Germanic penetration into the Nordic regions. See Trigger, B.G. 1989:155-163.

96 Cf. Skjeggestad, M. SJOT 6(2) 1991:165.

⁹⁷ Finkelstein, I. and Na'aman, N. 1994:17.

may well be the most comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of the archaeological evidence pertaining to 'early Israel', and certainly a quantum leap beyond both his earlier work and that of other American and/or Israelite archaeologists, it does nevertheless suffer from some serious theoretical and methodological weaknesses.

The principal weakness in what is otherwise an admirable archaeological survey lies in Finkelstein's assumption that ethnicity constitutes the basic, underlying essence or character of a given group of people which persists, unchanged, through time. While such a conceptualisation of ethnicity places considerable emphasis on the cultural and historical continuity of the ethnic unit, it tends to treat ethnicity as an explicit category, rooted in the givens of social existence - "immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the given-ness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language...and following particular social practices."98 As Barth argued however, if one chooses to regard such 'primordial attachments' as constituting the "inner integrity of a groups identity" one is led to identify, and distinguish between ethnic groups on the basis of those supposedly objective traits: "differences between groups become differences in trait inventories." ¹⁰⁰ It is this theoretical shortcoming however, which highlights another major flaw in Finkelstein's thesis.

While the primordial perspective has been criticized from a number of different perspectives, its central contention, that a particular group's identity along with the beliefs and values which informed that identity remained relatively fixed and homogenous through time, has encouraged numerous archaeologists to seek out the material manifestations of those regularities in human behaviour which characterized a specific group of people. Working with the assumption then that within a 'given' ethnic group, cultural practices and beliefs tended to conform to prescriptive ideational norms and/or rules of behaviour, the significance of material culture became grafted in terms of its supposedly direct reflection of those cognitive structures collectively held by people as

⁹⁸ Geertz, C. 1963:109

⁹⁹ Bromley, Y. 1980:153 100 Barth, F. 1969:12

members of an ethnic group. Thus while the primary meaning of material culture was defined as a direct reflection of the mental template of its maker, the repeated association of such distinctive material culture objects within a particular locale was seen to constitute the "mental expression of what would today be called a people." It was thus that Kossinna could exclaim that "in all periods, sharply defined culture areas correspond unquestionably with clearly recognisable peoples or tribes." While this notion of artefacts as types reflecting basic ideas, mental images or culturally prescribed ways of doing things, and of regularly occurring patterns of different material items representing 'peoples' or ethnic groups has been critiqued at length, this basic logic, however implicit, continues to inform Finkelstein's basic analysis.

In his contention then that an 'Israelite' in the Iron I was one whose descendents, a few generations later, described themselves as 'Israelite', Finkelstein employs the same essentialist notions of ethnicity which characterized the culture-historical agendas of Kossinna, and to a lesser extent, Childe. Despite his professed uncertainty as to the identity of these twelfth century highland settlers, Finkelstein's assumption that the concept 'Israelite' can be used to designate a homogeneous ethnic group in Iron I is based on the very notion of cultural continuity so central to the primordial thesis. For while the formation of that 'Israelite' identity may indeed have been a long, intricate and complex process not completed until the beginning of the monarchy 103, it is that monarchy, and the 'culture' which distinguishes it which allows for the identification of 'Israelites' in the Iron I period. Beginning in that period then when the presence of 'Israelites' is 'secured' by the synchronisation of archaeological and historical sources, Finkelstein, like Kossinna, and many before him, embarks upon a 'retrospective' journey seeking in the archaeology of that land the material remains which would proclaim the existence of that unique collectivity known as 'Israel'. Throughout this journey his guiding light is the belief that this culture and the people of which it is both representative, and constitutive of, comprises a well integrated, bounded and continuous entity - one which can be distinguished from all other analogous entities. By isolating the material items which, it is

¹⁰¹ Childe, V.G. 1929:iv-v

Quoted in Childe, V.G. 1956:28

¹⁰³ Finkelstein, I. 1988:28

believed, are a passive reflection of the cognitive structures and social practices which both informed and defined that ethnic group and its culture, it is possible for Finkelstein to equate the geographic dispersal of those items with the areas settled by that group. It is this network of related assumptions then which allows Finkelstein to present us, not just 'ethnic Israelites' in the monarchic period, but 'ethnic Israelites' in the Iron I as well. While in many respects Finkelstein's later works, wherein he illustrates a greater sensitivity to the difficulties inherent in the ethnic identification of the highland settlers of the Iron I, represents a considerable advance on his 1988 thesis 104, a similar, if not more explicit series of assumptions continues to shadow the debate on Israelite ethnic identity, particularly in those contributions by William G. Dever.

In a series of articles spanning several years, William Dever has emerged as perhaps the foremost advocate of the thesis which claims the highland settlers of the Iron I period represent a new, and distinctive entity, and that this entity can be identified as 'Israel'. Yet while his credentials in relation to the thorny issue of ethnicity in the archaeological record are indeed admirable¹⁰⁵ he continues to address the specific question of Ancient Israel from a surprisingly conservative angle within both archaeology and anthropology.

First and foremost amongst Dever's arguments is his statement that, "in the twelfth century BCE there did exist, at least in the highland frontier, a new ethnic entity which we can recognise in the archaeological remains, and which we can distinguish from other known ethnic groups." In light of Dever's prior assertion however that "it must be stressed in light of archaeology today, it is the Late Bronze-Iron I continuity in material

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¹⁰⁴ See Finkelstein, I. BA 59 198-206 1996. JSOTS 237 1997:216-232. Yet whilst his adoption of the term 'Hill Country Settlers' certainly seems to be a more prudent move in light of recent anthropological research, Finkelstein does not execute any principled or revolutionary retreat from his original conclusion, namely that the political and ethnic entity 'Israel' is to be investigated and discovered archaeologically in the settlements of the Iron 1 period.

Dever's credentials in relation to this issue are laid bare within the context of an attack on Whitelam whose apparent failure to comprehend the vast literature on ethnicity is addressed by Dever who recommends as 'absolutely essential for the biblical scholar or historian, the classic work of Barth, and then Glazer and Moynihan, S.A. Arutionov, R. Cohen, J.F. Stack and S. Shennan.' Cf. Dever, W.G. JSOT 72:3-24 1996.

¹⁰⁶ Dever, W.G. EI 24 22-33 1993

culture – not the discontinuity – which is striking"¹⁰⁷, one is forced to enquire as to which specific material traits Dever feels are representative of this new, and distinctive group! Though not entering into any elaborate detail on the subject, Dever is adamant that a close analysis of the overall ceramic corpus of the Late Bronze IIB/Iron IA horizon reveals 'significant data which allows one to isolate certain diagnostic factors' amongst the three hundred or so late thirteenth, early twelfth century BCE hill country villages – a material complex he readily equates with a distinct new ethnic group. While the ceramic forms which constitute this corpus are clearly descended from the Late Bronze Age traditions, "exhibiting only the normal, indeed predictable evolution"¹⁰⁸, it is these 'innovations', coupled with their statistical distribution which prompts Dever to adduce the presence of a new ethnic group.

Despite this emphasis on ceramics which Dever's paper calls for, he is fully aware that no authority would hold that pottery alone can serve as a clue to ethnicity, and as such extends his 'ceramic analysis' to include other categories of material culture. Because of the dearth of archaeological finds relating to ritual however¹⁰⁹, and the near total absence of early Iron Age cemeteries¹¹⁰, the only significant features remaining for discussion are architectural forms, both house type and settlement layout, technology, and demography, aspects which have been thoroughly investigated by other scholars.¹¹¹ What such an analysis reveals to us is a picture of 'ethnicity' similar to that obtained from his ceramic analysis, that is, first, a rather sudden, and large-scale population shift from the larger urban centres towards small, mostly un-walled villages in the highlands and adjacent steppe areas – an increase which cannot be due to natural growth rates alone; Secondly, both village layout and individual house forms reflecting a kin related and closely knit social structure, a utilitarian lifestyle similar to the communitarianism, or egalitarianism

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¹⁰⁷ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:204

¹⁰⁸ IBID. 1995:205

Apart from Zertal's dubious Mt. Ebal 'altar' the only other site of religious significance which Dever mentions is Mazar's 'Bull Site' with its obvious continuities with the El and old Canaanite pantheon. Cf. Dever. W.G. BA 58 1995:205

On Iron Age Burials see, Bloch-Smith, E. 1992

On village layout, house form and technology in the Iron Age see Stager, L. BASOR 260 1985:1-35. On settlement pattern, subsistence and demography see the various contributions in Finkelstein, I. and N. Na'aman, eds. 1994.

of some commentators; and thirdly, a subsistence system characterised not by intensive agriculture, industry or trade, but rather small scale terrace horticulture involving the cultivation of olives and grapes, a technique which along with the practice of hewing water cisterns, suggests that these 'new settlers' were experienced farmhands.

While Dever is well aware that such "facts on the ground" may well be explicable in terms of the particular topographical and environmental conditions facing the inhabitants of these settlements within the context of large-scale socio-economic disruption 113, he is nevertheless adamant that this "ecology of change" has *ethnic implications*. That is, the overall archaeological data available on early Iron I socio-economic structure is indicative of what Dever regards as a "distinctive new population group in the highlands of Canaan by the late thirteenth century BCE, if not an ethnic entity." 115

Though Dever presents himself as well armed with a critical knowledge of the vast corpus of literature within both social anthropology and ethnography which engages the specific issue of ethnicity, in essence it is Barth's seminal publication which anchors his thesis. He will aware of the manifold difficulties involved in exploring ethnicity in the archaeological record on the basis of Barth's "defining traits", since their subjective nature renders group boundaries both fluid and flexible He is, in fact, unproblematic, and follows from the isolation which the itemized traits imply – racial difference, cultural difference, social separation, and language barriers, spontaneous and organized enmity. While such a programme entails a fundamental misunderstanding, if not complete inversion of the central thrust of Barth's thesis, a focus on the 'culture bearing aspect' of ethnic groups inevitably leads Dever to identify and distinguish ethnic

¹¹² Dever, W.G. JSOT 72:16 1996

For a more developed discussion of the functional thesis in relation to both Highland and Lowland settlements see, London, G. BASOR 273 1989:37-55.

¹¹⁴ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:208.

¹¹⁵ Ibid 1995:208

¹¹⁶ 'I had adopted Fredrik Barth's well known definition of an 'ethnic group', especially his specific traits which I thought might be testable against the archaeological record' Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:201.
¹¹⁷ Ibid 1995:201

¹¹⁸ Cf. Barth, F. 1969:11

groups on the basis of the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they are the bearer. Differences between groups once again become differences in trait inventories as attention is drawn to the analysis of 'cultures' as opposed to ethnic organization. Working from the assumption then that ethnicity relates to some static, 'natural' phenomena, 'out-there', readily identifiable by certain characteristic traits, the critical task of the archaeologist, like Dever, becomes the isolation of the material correlates of that supposedly ethno-specific behaviour.

While such a method, the defining mark of the culture-historical paradigm, has been subject to a number of wide ranging critiques, Dever's contention that the particular material traits he identifies as 'diagnostic' are indeed "innovative and distinctive" has been challenged by a number of scholars, including Finkelstein. Indeed as Finkelstein has pointed out, in many respects Dever's claim that the advent of this new socioeconomic movement, polity, or population group is signalled by the increasing frequency of such features as rock hewn plastered cisterns, terrace farming and 'four-room' or courtyard houses, resurrects Albright's half-century old theory according to which the Iron I wave of settlement was a direct outcome of these technological innovations.

As Finkelstein points out however, such an assumption, itself predicated on the deeper premise that the Iron I wave of settlement constitutes the first significant occupation of that territory, appears to ignore one of the more significant findings of recent surveys, namely that the highland regions were intensively occupied by hundreds of sites twice before, in the Middle Bronze, ¹²¹ and in the early Bronze Ages. ¹²² Indeed the extended chronological perspective adopted by Coote and Whitelam has illustrated how the rapid expansion of small scale agricultural settlements in the highlands of Palestine during the

¹¹⁹ In pursuing the 'culture-bearing' aspect of ethnic groups as their primary characteristic, Dever turns Barth's major methodological and theoretical insight on its head. To use Barth's own words, in this respect, the critical focus of Dever's investigation becomes the cultural stuff that the boundary encloses, rather than the ethnic boundary that defines the group. Cf. Barth, F. 1969:15

¹²⁰ Finkelstein, I. BA 59 1996. See also, JSOTS 237 1997:216-237.

¹²¹ Cf. Finkelstein, I. 1990.

¹²² Cf. Finklestein, I. and Gophna, R. BASOR 289 1993:1-22.

thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE was but one phase in the long term cyclical demographic processes affecting the region which date back to the 4th millennium BCE. Moreover, whilst this 'new horizon' may cast a sombre shadow over *any* claim that the fluctuations in settlement pattern during the Iron I constitute a unique event, its comparative perspective completely undermines Dever's assertion that the material traits associated with this 'shift' are in any way 'innovative' and/or 'distinctive'.

Thus while Dever would appear content to present such features as the hewing and plastering of water cisterns, terrace farming, and indeed the ubiquitous house form, sometimes referred to rather simplistically as 'the Israelite house', as innovations singularly characteristic of the Iron age, recent surveys have proved beyond doubt that these 'novel techniques' had been anticipated centuries beforehand. Thus, while few would disagree with Sir Mortimer Wheeler's dictum that the archaeologist is digging up not pots, but people, Dever's claim that the material culture of his early Iron I village complex, which is "clearly both new and distinctive" actually reflects the presence of a new ethnic group simply cannot be sustained.

Though it is true that Dever stands far from the 'biblical archaeology movement' whose epitaph he has drafted in several publications¹²⁵, his own response to the question of ethnicity in the highlands of Palestine during the Iron I falls well short of the 'true inter-disciplinary dialogue' such a project demands. Indeed, while Dever openly critiques those commentators who operate "with no model of ethnicity of their own and an insufficient grasp of the relevant archaeological data" his own approach to the question of ethnicity in the archaeological record is extremely conservative, if not a little naïve.

The principal locus of this conservatism is illustrated by Dever's consistent assertion that there exists a direct correlation between the supposedly distinctive archaeological

¹²³ Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1986:27-81

¹²⁴ Dever, W.G. JSOT 72 1996:19

¹²⁵ Cf. Dever, W.G. BA 45 1982:103-107. 1974. BASOR 242 1981:15-29. 1989.

¹²⁶ Dever, W.G. JSOT 72 1996:12.

complex he has delineated for the Iron I and a specific ethnic group. While such a simplistic equation has been subject to a number of wide ranging critiques¹²⁷, in many ways it was the advent of the 'New Archaeology' which heralded the liberation of archaeology from the empiricist confines of the culture-historical paradigm. As part of their manifesto these 'New Archaeologists' launched a scathing attack on the normative concept of culture which had dominated archaeological theory up to that point. Rather than simply a set of undifferentiated ideational norms, or rules of behaviour collectively held and transmitted over generations by members of a particular social group, it was argued that culture constituted an integrated system which comprised a variety of interrelated subsystems 128. The analytical consequence of this shift to an adaptive systems view of culture was that the primary meaning of material culture was no longer its direct relationship to the cognitive structures collectively held by peoples or ethnic groups. Rather, because culture was no longer regarded as 'something shared' by people but rather as something participated in differentially, the single frame of reference provided by culture history is rendered inadequate, necessitating an analysis of the structure of archaeological cultures in terms of their function within a differentiated social system. In short, the interpretative basis of the meaning of material culture by traditional archaeology was undermined, for what it took as representing ethnicity may instead refer to functional variability in the types of activities carried out on different sites. Thus one can argue that variations and changes in material culture from one period to another, and even variations within different socio-economic environments of the same period are open to several possible explanations, and need not, as Dever insists, reflect ethnic diversity at all.

Such criticisms not withstanding however, Dever remains firmly entrenched within the traditionalist camp, resolutely defending the view that the archaeological complex he has delineated for the Iron I, which he deems to be quite distinct, if not unique, bears witness

¹²⁷ For an assessment and over-view of the culture-historical paradigm within both anthropology and archaeology see chapters one through four of this study.

¹²⁸ On the 'New Archaeology' see Trigger, B.G. 1989:289-329. Binford, L.R. 1972.

to the emergence of a distinct and new ethnic group ¹²⁹. If then, as Dever maintains, we are able to recognise in the archaeological remains of the Iron 1 hill country villages a new and distinct ethnic group, the only question which remains is "which group is it?" ¹³⁰. In other words, which ethnic label shall we assign to the people of the Iron I hill country villages?

Iron I people' on the basis of a desire for "proper archaeological and socio-anthropological terminology" his employment of the term 'Israel', or at least its counterpart, 'Proto-Israel', can hardly be said to fulfil such a requirement. Indeed, it exhibits one of the major weaknesses in his analysis since despite his earlier insistence that the archaeological data *alone* should settle the question of the identity of these settlers, he has to appeal to 'extra-biblical' sources in order to decide which label to employ. Amongst that repertoire of supplemental Near Eastern texts of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age which Dever believes "document the presence of Egyptians, Hurrians, Canaanites, Philistines, Israelites and other actual ethno-cultural groups" is the reference to 'Israel' in the victory stele of the pharaoh Mernepthah which he believes *settles* the issue of the identity of the inhabitants of these Iron Age settlements. Indeed, as the second prong of Dever's thesis asserts, "if *these* Israelites were not *our* hill country people, then who and where *were* Merneptah's Israelites?" 134

130 Ibid 1996:13

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As Dever argues, '...if the cultural traits just mentioned, all discontinuous and representing something new are not ethnic markers, what are they?' Dever, W.G. JSOT 72 1996:15.

Dever also chides such theologically derived designations as Mendenhall and Gottwalds 'Yahwists' or Bolings 'Early Biblical Community' as meaningless since 'we do not know their significance'. Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:207.

¹³² Ibid. 1995:204

¹³³ Ibid. 1995:208

¹³⁴ Ibid. 1995:209 (emphasis in the original)

ISRAEL IN THE MERNEPTAH STELE

'Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe,
Ashkelon has been overcome,
Gezer has been captured,
Yano'am was made non-existent,
Israel is laid waste (and) his seed is not' 135

Every reconstruction of the origin and nature of ancient Israel is inevitably faced at some stage with the widely discussed single mention of the entity 'Israel' found on the Merneptah stele which has been securely dated to 1207 B.C.E. Assuming however, that the name in line seven of the coda section of this inscription can indeed be read as 'Israel' 136, all that can legitimately be inferred about this entity is that it existed *somewhere* in Ancient Palestine at the time of Merneptah's campaign to Hurru-Land, or Canaan in the closing decades of the late Bronze Age 137. Despite the fact however that the stele offers very little in the way of unambiguous evidence as to the nature and geographic location of this entity, several proposals have been put forward with the aim of resolving such uncertainties. It is not necessary to review recent theories in detail, 138 but only to mention some of the more salient points which bear upon the present discussion.

¹³⁵ Yurco, F.J. BAR 16 (5) 1990:27.

¹³⁶ Despite Devers' claim that the reading 'Israel' is crystal clear, the view that the term is unrelated to the Israel of the Hebrew Bible is a position taken most recently by Margalith. His conclusions are based on Driver's suggestion that the Egyptian s could also represent the Hebrew z. Accordingly, the name 'Israel' could be translated as 'Jezreel', 'which might be an unexperienced scribe's way of rendering Yezreel, the valley to the north of the country'. Cf. Margalith, O. ZAW 102:229 1990. For a critique of this position see the definitive article by Hasel, M.G. BASOR 296 1994.

at Gezer, dated by Dever to the Late Bronze IIB (1300-1200BCE), and by further inscriptional evidence, including the Amada Inscription which bears the designation 'conquerer of Gezer' as part of the titulary of Merneptah, one of the earliest attempts to cast doubt on the historical veracity of the campaign was made by Naville in 1915. Basing his thesis around his interpretation of the text which he translates as 'Ashkelon is a prisoner which Gezer brings holding him with his hand' (Naville, E. JEA 2 1915:200), Naville suggests that a war had ensued between Gezer and Ashkelon with Gezer emerging as the victor. Israel simply became involved in this dispute. Although others have followed this claim that Merneptah never campaigned in Palestine, most recently Redford, D.B. (1992), or insisted that the account is an exaggeration, Miller, J.M. (1977:213-284), Naville's original rendition of the text was never accepted by other Egyptologists.

¹³⁸ See Ahlström, G.W. and Edelman, D. 'Merneptah's Israel' JNES 44 1985:59-61. Bimson, J.J. JSOT 49: 1991:3-29. Yurco, F.J. JSEA 57 1982:70. BAR 17(6) 1991:54-61/ 92-93. Hoffmeier, J.K. 1996:27-31.

Principal amongst these is the significance, and meaning of the determinative attached to the name 'Israel' in comparison to that which accompanies the other entities named in the stele. Whilst the determinatives which accompany the entities Ashkelon, Gezer and Yano 'am are identical, consisting of a throw-stick, and the sign for hill country, that which follows 'Israel' consists of a throw-stick (the sign for a foreign people), with a seated man and woman (the sign for a group of people, both male and female), above three stokes (the sign which indicates the plural). 139 It has been suggested by Ahlström and Edelman that the determinative accompanying Israel may be a scribal error 140, but the implication that the Israel of the stele is a socio-economic entity (as opposed to a geographic designation) is further supported by a contextualised translation of the Egyptian word *prt*, 'seed'.

While lexicographers provide for the noun prt the generic meaning of 'seed' 141, one of the earliest translations of prt on the Merneptah stele by Spiegelberg was 'grain', 142. Though Breasted later pointed out that the phrase 'his(their/our) seed is not', in its context with Israel, could not mean the slaving of the male children 143, later scholars, citing Breasted as an authority, assumed that the phrase was merely a convention employed to denote a defeated people, taking prt to mean 'descendants'. Because several recent studies however have continued to translate prt as 'grain', the issue as to the exact meaning of *prt* in Egyptian military/conquest accounts remains.

Though the contextual setting of *prt* in certain epigraphic finds has led some scholars to promote the extended meaning of prt as 'descendants' or 'offspring', its contextualised relationship with 'Israel' in the Merneptah stele does not support such an interpretation¹⁴⁴. Rather, conducting a more detailed study of the wider contextual setting

¹³⁹ Kitchen, K.A. 1982:19.

^{140 &#}x27;The use of the determinative for people instead of land may be significant, resulting from the author's loose application of determinatives in connection with names of foreign peoples and places with which he was not personally familiar.' Ahlström, G.W. and D. Edelman, JNES 44 1985:60. See also Hoffmeier, J.K. 1996:28-29.

¹⁴¹ Faulkner, R.O. 1962:98.

¹⁴² Spiegelberg, W. ZAS 34 1896:23. Quoted in Hasel, M.G. BASOR 296 1994:52.

¹⁴³ Cf. Breasted, J.H 1906:258.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Faulkner, R.O. 1962:91.

of *prt* within Egyptian literature dealing with warfare, Hasel has argued for its rendering as 'grain', 145. Isolating five cases where the identical phrase, 'his/their/our seed is not' occurs, 146 significantly with the plough determinative, Hasel reveals how the standard military tactics of an invading Egyptian force frequently involved the employment of fire as an agent of destruction. Not just of cities, villages, and settlements however, but of field crops or harvests, that is their "supplies of sustenance". 147 Together with corroborative evidence from the fifth and sixth military campaigns of Thutmose III, and the internal evidence of the Merneptah stele itself, Hasel advances an interpretation of prt in the hymnic poetic unit of the stele according to which it is understood as 'grain'. "If this interpretation is sound, then the clause, 'its grain is not' communicates that the food supply/sustenance of the entity Israel is no longer in existence." ¹⁴⁸

Combined with the observation then that the determinative accompanying 'Israel' is that for a people, the phrase 'its grain is not' lends additional support to Hasel's conviction that the Israel of the Merneptah stele functioned as an "agriculturally based socio-ethnic entity in the late thirteenth century BCE, one significant enough to have been included in the military campaign against other political powers in Canaan." 149 Yet while the internal structural sequence of the stele may well communicate the existence of 'Israel' as a 'socio-ethnic entity' whose 'life-support system', that is, its grain, had either been destroyed or removed, attempts to locate the geographic provenance of that supposed ethnic entity have proved less fruitful.

As Edelman has pointed out, three main proposals have been put forward as a means of settling the question as to the geographic location of the entity named 'Israel' in the

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Hasel, M.G. BASOR 296 1994:52-54.

¹⁴⁶ Hasel, M.G. BASOR 296 1994:49. These translated phrases and their context, are taken from volumes three and four of Breasted's five volume 'Ancient Records of Egypt' and are as follows, 'Their cities are made ashes, wasted and desolated, their seed is not' (Ramses III, Second Libyan War). 'The fire has penetrated us, our seed is not' (Ramses III, First Libyan War). 'Those who reached my boundary, their seed is not' (Ramses III, Northern War, Year VIII). 'The land of the Meshwesh is desolated at one time, the Libyans and the Seped are destroyed, their seed is not' (Ramses III, Second Libyan War). 'I laid low the land of Temeh, their seed is not' (Ramses III, First Libyan War)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 1994:52. Frequently however, the food supply, rather than being destroyed was used by the Egyptian troops. See, Pritchard, J.B. ed. 'ANET 1969:377.

Hasel, M.G. BASOR 296 1994:53.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 1994:54.

Merneptah stele – Galilee, Transjordan and the central Cisjordanian hill country. The first two alternatives, proposed by Yeivin 151, Aharoni 152 and Na' aman 153 proceed on the rather simplistic assumption that the order in which the three 'city states' and 'Israel' appear on the stele actually reflect the course of the campaign. Leaving aside all doubts as to the authenticity of the stele's representation of Merneptahs's Palestinian campaign, Yeivin suggests that Yano'am is to be identified with el 'Abeidiyed in the Jordan valley just south of Lake Kinneret, thereby placing Israel to the northeast in the Galilee 154. The validity of this 'South-North' arrangement is also supported by Na'aman's suggestion that Yano'am be located at Tel esh Shibeb on the banks of the Yarmuk river, controlling the main road to Damascus. Assuming then that such an identification is valid, Merneptah's troops would have marched east, down the Beth Shean valley and crossed over the Jordan, there encountering the famed 'Israel'. The third proposal however, that 'Israel' be located in the central Cisjordanian hill country has been argued on the basis of a different approach.

Foregoing any assumption that the stele provides an accurate reflection of the course of Merneptah's campaign, Ahlström and Edelman have proposed a new, and welcome interpretation of the designation 'Israel', one based on the introduction of a literary device called a 'ring structure' 156. According to this structure, since Hatti seems to be used in a general sense to designate Asia Minor and Syria, and Kharu represents the Egyptian domains in Syria-Palestine, the scribe intended each of these "to represent subregions that together comprised the larger region Syria-Palestine." In the same way Canaan and Israel are said to represent two sub-regions that together comprised the narrower area of Cisjordan. Furthermore, whilst Canaan is said to represent the coastal

¹⁵⁰ Edelman, D. 1996:35-38.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Yeivin, S. 1971.

¹⁵² Cf. Aharoni, Y. and M. Avi-Yonah, 1977:map 46.

¹⁵³ Cf. Na'aman, N. 'Yenoam' TA 4 1977:168-177.

¹⁵⁴ Yeivin, S. 1971:29/30/85.

¹⁵⁵ Na'aman, N. 'Yeno'am' TA 4 1977:169/171.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Ahlström, G.W. and D. Edelman, JNES 44 1985:59-61.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 1985:60.

plain and lowland areas, the area of Israel specifically denoted the adjacent hill country. 158

Though he argues strongly that the name Israel refers to an ethnic entity as opposed to a geographic region, F. Yurco has suggested that the reference to Israel in the stele should be placed, along with the various city-states mentioned, as another element within Canaan and Hurru. 159 Whilst the 'parallel structure' on which he bases this arrangement has been open to question, 160 his contention that the three city states, along with Israel, be correlated with the four battle scenes depicted in the eastern section of the eastern wall of the Cour de la Cachette in the Temple of Karnak at Luxor has been critiqued on methodological grounds. 161 Assuming however that the four scenes, three of which involve attacks against cities, and the fourth a confrontation in open country with a host of enemies dressed in Canaanite garb, reflects the geographical sequence of the actual campaign, Yurco suggests that 'Israel' be equated with the fourth relief, and thus located south of the Jezreel valley in the central Cisjordanian highlands. Yet, while Yurco's understanding of the stele, may lead him to suggest that this 'Israel' was indigenous to Palestine 162, Bimson goes beyond this to argue that, "Mernaptah's Israel was a tribal confederation and as such is quite unreasonable to deny that it refers to biblical Israel."163 Such a statement however begs a whole series of questions.

Principal amongst these is the notion of a pan-Israelite tribal structure prior to the period of the monarchy which, despite the demise of Noth's amphictyonic hypothesis 164, is still

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 1985:60. Whilst Ahlström's modified version of this 'ring structure' maintains, in essence, his former position that the entity 'Israel' refers to a geographic territory, both of his conclusions, along with his attempts to discover a 'ring structure' at the end of a victory hymn over Libya have been seriously questioned. See, Hasel. M.G. BASOR 296 1994:47-49. Emerton, J.A. VT 38 1988:372-373. ¹⁵⁹ Cf. Yurco, F.J. BAR 16, no. 5. 1990:20-38.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Bimson, J.J. JSOTS 49 1991:20 n.1.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 1991:20, n.1.

¹⁶² Yurco, F.J. 1986:210. Here he cites Stager's view that the Shasu are pictorially and textually Shasu, whilst the Israelites are pictorially Canaanites, and also textually by inference in the stele where it is linked with Ashkelon, Gezer and Yano'am. This he claims refutes suggestions that Israel emerged out of a Shasu milieu.

¹⁶³ Bimson, J.J. JSOT 49 1991:14.

¹⁶⁴ The idea that early Israel was tribal, or a tribal confederation, has been challenged by Rogerson who is particularly concerned with the notion of segmentary organization. (Rogerson, J. 1986) For a summary of

very much influential in biblical scholarship. Indeed, this notion was evident in Finkelstein's discussion of the results of his archaeological investigation at Shiloh wherein he concluded that this site was one of the 'supratribal sacral centres.' While such a conclusion was seen to be based on a prior understanding of the biblical traditions and their applicability to historical reconstruction for this period, rather than an analysis of the archaeological data alone, a similar rationale seems to underlie Bimson's statement that there were "cultic centres which seem to have served non-sedentary groups, e.g. at Shechem, and Shiloh, places that feature as important centres for Israel in biblical traditions concerning the settlement and judges periods (Josh. 24; Judg. 21; etc.)."165 Indeed, in his discussion of Finkelstein's work Bimson states that, "since Merneptah's inscription predates the sedentarization process, the Israel to which it refers was presumably nomadic." ¹⁶⁶ Before the beginning of the Iron Age then, Israel must have been chiefly a semi-nomadic people of disparate origin whose unity was expressed through allegiance to a central shrine. While it is not clear from Bimson's discussion whether or not he is drawing a clear distinction between nomadism and sedentarization which entails a view of the former as some kind of evolutionary stage prior to the latter¹⁶⁷, his contention that Merneptah's Israel was a pastoral nomadic entity located in the central highlands of Palestine does not fit the evidence of the stele itself.

As was noted, the Egyptian text provides a determinative before the name of each toponym, and in every case but Israel, the same determinative is used. While it is true that some Egyptologists take this determinative less seriously since scribes sometimes called a people after the name of the territory they resided ¹⁶⁸, it appears that Merneptah's scribe was rather consistent in his use of determinatives in this unit and from this we should conclude that he intentionally distinguished the 'people of Israel' from the other modalities, most notably the city-state populations. In the eyes of the scribe then, 'Israel' was a socio-ethnic entity with a socio-political structure distinct from that of the city-

some of the problems involved in the using the amphictyonic model to describe the organization of early Israel see ABD

¹⁶⁵ Bimson, J.J. JSOT 49 1991:25.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 1991:19.

¹⁶⁷ Bimson does however refer in a footnote to the work of Lemche in making the point that some wealthy individuals in nomadic societies do make the transition to a settled existence. Ibid. 1991:24 n.1 ¹⁶⁸ Cf. Hoffmeier, J.K. 1996:29.

states and other entities mentioned. Indeed, a contextualised reading of the term *prt* was seen to provide further assistance in determining the nature of the entity Israel. When taken to mean 'grain' the term *prt* may, in this context, be taken to imply that Israel, in contrast to the three city-states mentioned before, functioned as some sort of agriculturally based/sedentary socio-ethnic entity. Its subsistence was primarily agricultural and possibly containing some forms of animal husbandry as was common at the time ¹⁶⁹. Within the context and information of the Merneptah stele then, Israel may be perceived as a rural sedentary group of agriculturalists located in the central hill country but without its own urban city-state support system.

A significant difficulty however is presented by the recognition that Egyptian terminology, for various sociological reasons, such as a common *Lebensart*, frequently joined rather disparate groups of people within a single artificially unifying rubric, as was the case with various Bedouin 'Shasu' peoples¹⁷⁰. Though clearly West Semitic, as opposed to Egyptian in origin, a similar set of difficulties are presented when 'Israel' is understood as an exonym coined by West Semitic peoples. For while one may well imagine a scenario that prompted outside groups to coin such a name for this entity, such as a propensity for warfare or a common sense of religious worship,¹⁷¹ one *cannot* recklessly assume that these 'Israelites' understood themselves, even in general terms, as the *single unit* that others, including our scribe, perceived. In this respect Bimson's assertion that the 'Israel' of the stele was indeed a tribal coalition such as we find in the Song of Deborah is one which can *only* be maintained on the basis of biblical parallels. For as Ahlström has argued, "...one cannot deduce from the Merneptah stele that Israel

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Hopkins, D.C. BA 56 1993:200-211.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Sparks, K.L. 1998:106ff. As Sparks argues, 'though its derivation is debated, it is generally agreed that the term 'Shasu' comes from either the Egyptian word 'to wander' or the West Semitic root 'to plunder'. Although the argument for Egyptian origin seems a bit stronger...in either case the name Shasu probably originated as an exonym used by outsiders to describe the various wandering groups on the periphery of Egyptian and urban Asiatic culture...it is most likely that the Shasu represent an Egyptian social construct that joins the various Bedouin groups within an artificially unifying rubric on the basis of their common lifestyle and dress.' On the issue of the Shasu see Ward, W.W. ABD 5 1992:1165-1166.

¹⁷¹ Scholars are generally in agreement that the name 'Israel' is the combination of the theophoric element 'El' along with a verbal form, probably śãrâ (to fight/prevail) or śrr (to rule). Although Hosea (12:4ff) apparently took the divine name as the object rather than the subject of the resulting construction, Albright long ago pointed out that in West Semitic nomenclature the divine element is normally the subject; that is, we should translate Israel as 'El persists', or 'El rules' or something along those lines. Cf. Albright, W.F. JBL 46 1927:151-168.

was a tribe, a tribal league, or confederation...the Egyptian text does not give us any clue about the social structure of the people Israel."¹⁷²

Thus, while the Merneptah stele may indeed prove beyond doubt that shortly before 1200 B.C.E. Egyptian intelligence knew of an inimical Israel residing in the highlands of Palestine, and that they considered it of relative significance, the wide-ranging, and often competing conclusions which have been proposed on the basis of this tantalizing reference often move well beyond the available evidence 173. For while we remain in the scribe's debt for including this entity in his campaign survey, for whatever reason, one can only lament his failure to provide more precise information. As such it would appear that Dever's only justification equating his 'new and distinctive' highland group of the early Iron Age with that Israel mentioned in the victory stele of Merneptah is the simple logic that if this is not Merneptah's Israel, then the question of their identity remains unsolved. 174 Yet, while he may dismiss as preposterous any suggestion that the well dated historical witness of the stele constitutes a "mere coincidence" 175, ultimately his application of the label Israel, or at least its counterpart, 'Proto-Israel', to his Iron I hill country complex rests on an altogether different set of assumptions. 176

As Dever himself makes clear, the principal argument in favour of this identification is "a classic archaeological approach based upon the well documented continuity of material culture in Palestine from the twelfth through the seventh/sixth centuries BCE."177 Though alluded to in passing by several archaeologists, this argument, based upon a 'national Israelite material culture' is really a simple one - "if the basic material culture which defines a people exhibits a tradition of continuous unbroken development...and if material culture does indeed reflect culture, then our Iron I hill country settlers are the

¹⁷² Ahlström, G.W. SJOT 2 1991:33-34.

¹⁷³ As Hoffmeier has pointed out, in building a historical reconstruction which relies so much on one phrase in a single historical work, many of these studies are guilty of committing 'the fallacy of the lonely fact.' Hoffmeier, J.K. 1996:30

¹⁷⁴ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:206

¹⁷⁵ Dever, W.G. JSOT 72 1996:18.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Ibid. 1996:18

¹⁷⁷ Dever, W.G. Ibid. 1996:18.

authentic progenitors of later biblical Israel."¹⁷⁸ Thus if there is any warrant for the term 'Israel' in the Iron II, that is, during the monarchy, 'which all responsible scholars would agree is the point at which we confront the state of Israel whose citizens were certainly Israelites', then the employment of the more tentative term 'Proto-Israelite' for the inhabitants of the Iron I village complex is entirely justified – "...for here we are on the horizon where the later biblical Israel is in the process of formation, still nascent."¹⁷⁹ While in time Dever believes we can abandon such provisional terminology and "speak confidently of 'Early Israel' and 'Later Israel', with ample archaeological data to illuminate both"¹⁸⁰, for now the impression of ethnic Israelites preceded by ethnic 'Proto-Israelites' "offers a workable compromise."¹⁸¹

While on a purely methodological level Dever's appeal to the decisiveness of continuity in material culture has been curbed by the revelation that some of the 'characteristic features of Israelite settlement in the Iron I period' actually changed, or disappeared during later periods¹⁸², it is Whitelam's paper which exposes a deeper theoretical malaise infecting Dever's thesis¹⁸³. Though he frequently presents himself as an advocate of true interdisciplinary dialogue, as Whitelam's study suggests, Dever's certainty that there must be a direct connection between the inhabitants of these Iron Age hill-country settlements, 'monarchic Israel' of the Iron II and even that entity named in the victory stele of Pharaoh Merneptah is based on an essentialist notion of ethnicity very much at odds with current research.¹⁸⁴

Though Dever refuses to concede that the "thirteenth/twelfth century BCE polity which he has delineated archaeologically initially constituted a homogenous group since its

¹⁷⁸ Dever, W.G. Ibid. 1996:18.

¹⁷⁹ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:210.

¹⁸⁰ Dever, W.G. Ibid. 1995:210.

¹⁸¹ Dever, W.G. JSOT 72 1996:18.

Because of certain changes in socio-economic, political and demographic circumstances, ie the transition from an initial process of sedentarization to a stage of established settlement, urbanization, and centralization, certain 'characteristic features' of Iron I 'Israelite Settlement' eg. collared-rim jars and small sites, were no longer common in the later Iron II period. Cf. Finkelstein, I. 1988:264-285.

¹⁸³ Whitelam, K.W. 2000:8-24.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 2000:12-16.

members were of such diverse origin"¹⁸⁵, his contention that continuous contact between such diverse groups resulted in the reduction of cultural diversity and the assimilation of originally discrete groups into a single bounded entity is based on the rather naïve assumption that geographic and social isolation have been the critical factors in sustaining cultural diversity. While the inadequacy of such a view, namely that each social group could only maintain its cultural distinctiveness through a bellicose ignorance of its neighbours was expertly illustrated by Barth, ¹⁸⁶ the expectations of boundedness and homogeneity which attend Dever's 'assimilationist' thesis are part of a normative conceptualisation of culture which simply cannot be sustained.

Within this theoretical framework it is assumed that culture is made up of a set of shared and undifferentiated ideational norms which are maintained both by regular interaction within the group and the transmission of such shared norms to subsequent generations through the process of socialisation. The ultimate implication of this essentially conservative portrait of cultural transmission then is the production of a cumulative, continuous and precisely distinguishable tradition. Furthermore, because 'culture' is endowed with such a determining role within this paradigm, the classification of persons as members of a particular group is dependent upon their exhibiting the particular traits which are constitutive of that culture. 187 Thus, because he regards this 'culture-bearing' aspect of ethnic groups as their defining characteristic, Dever is obliged to conclude not only that the 'highly distinctive' and 'innovative' archaeological complex he has delineated for the Iron I is in fact the material manifestation of those supposed regularities of human behaviour which characterize an ethnic group, but that observed continuity in that material tradition is testament to the continuity of the ethnic group which produced it. It is this rather essentialist notion of ethnicity then, and the expectations of boundedness, homogeneity and continuity it embodies which informs Dever's contention that there does exist a relatively straightforward connection between the Israel of the Merneptah stele, the inhabitants of the highland settlements he investigated in the Iron Age and the later Israelite monarchy. For while it may well be the

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¹⁸⁵ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:211.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Barth, F. 1969:9-38.

¹⁸⁷ Barth, F. 1969:11-13.

case that the material culture so characteristic of the Iron II has its origins in the twelfth century B.C.E., if not earlier, Dever's assumption that continuity in this material culture is symptomatic of continuity in 'Israelite' ethnicity is one that cannot be sustained in light of our current knowledge.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Though it has been argued that the widespread adoption of the culture-historical paradigm within archaeology was a product of the need to establish a system for the classification of the spatial and temporal variation which was becoming increasingly evident in material culture since the nineteenth century¹⁸⁸, such an argument implies that discrete, monolithic cultures constitute a natural and universal mode of cultural differentiation waiting to be discovered by the discipline of archaeology. While certainly spatial and temporal variation in human ways of life is an unequivocal fact which is manifest in the archaeological record, ¹⁸⁹ it can be argued that the particular classificatory framework developed within archaeology to describe and explain such variation is based on certain historically contingent assumptions about the nature of cultural diversity. Indeed the concept of 'culture' which has been widely embraced within archaeological epistemology, and its regular conflation with ethnicity, is the product of a particular ideology of cultural differentiation which emerged within the context of post-Enlightenment European Nationalism. 190 As Handler has pointed out, "nationalist ideologies and social scientific enquiry (including that of archaeology) developed in the same historical context - that of the post-Renaissance European world - and...the two have reacted upon one another from their very beginning." ¹⁹¹

As a result of this close, mutually influential association, 'culture' came to be regarded as a bounded, continuous and unified entity which bears witness to the existence of the nations which are their bearers: it is culture which distinguishes between nations and it is culture which constitutes the basis of that national identity. It is this assertion of cultural particularity then which proclaims the existence of a unique collectivity whose existence is so natural as to require no other definition then mere assertion. ¹⁹² It is this ready conflation of social scientific and political ideological concepts then which has contributed to the assertion of a congruency between territorial contiguity and ethnic

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1978:86.

¹⁸⁹ Shennan, S.J. 1989:5.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Trigger, B.G. 1989:148-163. 1995:263-279. Handler, R. 1988.

¹⁹¹ Handler, R. 1988:8.

¹⁹² Hobsbawm, E.J. and T. Ranger ed. 1983:14.

unity across a historical stage – the end product being an historically validated continuity of identity. Rather than 'discovering' any general form of universal difference then, archaeologists it seems, along with other social scientists, merely invented it. ¹⁹³

While in some spheres of archaeology, this 'culture-historical' paradigm, along with the assumptions about culture and identity which it embodies have been rejected, the presumption that an exclusive congruence exists between ethnic unity, territory and history remains intact and continues to inform much archaeological description and classification. Indeed much archaeological research still takes place within a clearly established framework of bounded socio-cultural entities which are assumed to correlate with past social/ethnic groups — whether this correlation is explicitly identified or not.

In contrast to this process of 'methodological objectification', 194 the approach developed within this study suggests that ethnicity is not constituted by the historical legacy of a primordial, essentialist identity. Rather, drawing upon recent research within anthropology, it has been argued at length that ethnicity is a dynamic, contested phenomenon which is manifested in different ways, in different contexts and in relation to different forms and scales of interaction. As a result of such contingency then, the cultural practices and representations, which are involved in the signification of the same identity may vary qualitatively and quantitatively in different social contexts characterised by different social conditions. Thus it can be argued that there is rarely, if ever a 'one-to-one' relationship between expressions of identity and the entire range of cultural practices and social conditions associated with a particular group. On the contrary, the resulting pattern will be one of overlapping ethnic boundaries produced by context specific representations of cultural difference which are at once transient, but also subject to reproduction and transformation in the ongoing process that is social life. Rather than constituting the basic, underlying essence or character of a group of people then, which persists unchanging through time, ethnic identity is based upon shifting, situational and subjective identifications of self and others which, though rooted in

¹⁹³ Fardon, R. 1987:176.

¹⁹⁴ Jones, S. 1997:140.

ongoing daily practice and historical experience, are also subject to transformation and discontinuity.

While the appeal of Dever's thesis then may lie in its professed ability to demonstrate the persistence of certain ethnic attachments, sometimes over hundreds of years, his adoption of a spatial and temporal framework based upon bounded, coherent groups tends to obscure the various heterogenous processes involved in the reproduction and transformation of ethnicity. That is, in place of the often patchy, discontinuous, overlapping and contextualised praxis of ethnicity, Dever's reflections on the identity of early Israel substitutes the illusion of a seamless, coherent whole. As Coote has argued, it merely begs the "question of the nature of Israel by implying a singularity and continuity", which, though commonly presumed, is both "improbable and misleading." ¹⁹⁵ In contrast, the approach developed here focuses upon peoples' consciousness of ethnicity and the reproduction and transformation of transient expressions of cultural difference within the context of particular historical structures which impinge upon human experience and condition social action. Within such a framework the static 'oneto-one' correlation between particular items of material culture and a particular ethnic group envisaged by Dever is simply untenable. Because the significance of such material culture is continually reproduced and transformed in changing social and historical contexts, by different people, occupying various positions within a society, assemblages of material culture must be understood within the context of such heterogenous and conflicting constructions of cultural identity. There is no single, unambiguous ethnic association, simply because no such single social reality has ever existed. In order to analyse such complex processes of ethnic identification within the past then, it is necessary to adopt a decidedly contextual approach; This would substitute a focus on practice as opposed to group as the primary focus of analysis.

Not surprisingly, a degree of familiarity with recent anthropological theories of ethnicity has led some commentators to adopt an extremely sceptical stance, suggesting that ethnicity is neither an appropriate nor accessible phenomenon for archaeological

¹⁹⁵ Coote, R.B. 1990:78.

analysis¹⁹⁶. While it may seem disconcerting to an archaeologist that this new approach implies a denial of the relevance of morphological characteristics in defining ethnic groups, as this approach suggests, this new focus on non-morphological, or non-classificatory criteria should only be depressing to those who have attempted to establish a static relationship between material culture and ethnic groups. Yet, while the ethnic significations of various aspects of material culture are unlikely to have been fixed, being subject to constant reproduction and/or transformation within a variety of social and historical contexts, the theoretical approach developed here suggests that such 'contextual' realisations of ethnicity, and ultimately the manifestation of ethnicity in the past, are not beyond the possibilities of archaeological interpretation. So how then does one approach the relationship between ethnicity and material culture if it is not a fixed and intrinsic one?

Though it has been argued that the construction of ethnicity is, in part, based upon the shared, subliminal dispositions of social agents which shape, and are shaped by, objective commonalities of practice, crucially ethnic identification was seen to involve an *objectification* of such cultural practices in the recognition and signification of difference in opposition to others. That is, whilst such subliminal dispositions provide the basis for recognition of commonalities of sentiment and interest, the particular forms such oppositions take is a product of the intersection of the *habitus* of the people concerned with the conditions making up a particular context of social interaction. It is in such contexts then that the particular cultural practices and beliefs which, to some extent embody the underlying structures of the *habitus*, become objectified and rationalized in the construction of ethnic difference. Because there is a relationship then between the historically constituted dispositions of *habitus* and the recognition and expression of ethnicity, the way in which material culture is meaningfully involved in the articulation of that identity, whilst certainly arbitrary across cultures, *is not random within particular socio-historical contexts* as it is directly related to the specific nature of that context.

¹⁹⁶ Trigger, B.G. 'NAR 10 1977:22-23. 1989:277.

The definition of such 'contexts of interaction' is however a rather problematic venture within archaeology since it is rarely possible to ascertain the finer details of those particular moments of social interaction and identification such as can be observed in the course of anthropological fieldwork. That is, there are no informants who can provide witness to that evanescent 'emic' perspective so significant to categorization: archaeologists simply do not have direct access to peoples' ideas and perceptions.

At present the most inviting, if indeed the only, 'key' to this difficulty of inferring past systems of meaning from ancient material objects on the table for consideration is, as Ian Hodder has put it - to begin to consider the ancient record as text, to get inside the symbolic meaningful world of ancient peoples through the fullest appreciation of their cultural context. 197 Whilst the definition, and nature of this 'context' has been contested, with some commentators suggesting it may place certain limitations on the signifying potential of material culture 198, if we come to understand 'context' as that "unique set of cultural dispositions" which inform all aspects of the cultural practices characterizing a particular way of life, then it can be argued that such a 'context' provides the basis for the perception of ethnic similarity and difference when people from different cultural traditions interact. Just as individual words then only make sense within the context of certain sentences, in order to 'read' material culture, to understand its past meanings, it is necessary to define that context within which an object has associations which contribute to its meaning. As such, any analysis of ethnicity within archaeology must be framed by a broad understanding of the "totality of that relevant environment" which contributes to the meaning of an object.

However, whilst such 'subliminal dispositions' may indeed provide the basis for the perception of the commonalities of sentiment and interest which ethnicity entails, it has already been argued that sensations of ethnic affinity, and common experience are not necessarily covariant. That is, similarities in *habitus* do not of necessity guarantee ethnic

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Hodder, I. 1978. 1982a. 1982b. 1986. 1991.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Yates, T. 2000:158-199

¹⁹⁹ Hodder, I. 1986:6

²⁰⁰ Hodder, I. in J. Thomas ed 2000:89.

similarities, and differences in *habitus* need not preclude ethnic identification. ²⁰¹ Rather, it was argued that the emergence of ethnic consciousness, along with the categories and symbols it entails, is the product of an ongoing process involving the dialectical opposition of situationally relevant cultural practices and historical experiences. Over time such processes may lead to 'fluctuations' in the level of correspondence between the representations of a particular ethnic identity and the cultural practices and historical experiences of the people involved. Therefore, the extent to which ethnicity is embedded in any pre-existing cultural realities, or indeed a shared habitus is highly variable and contingent upon the particular transformations engendered by such processes of interaction and the nature of the power relations between the different interacting agents. Thus configurations of ethnicity, and consequently the styles of material culture involved in the signification and structuring of ethnic relations may, and indeed will, vary in different social contexts and in relation to different forms and scales of interaction. From an archaeological perspective then, the multidimensional nature of ethnicity is likely to result in a complex pattern of overlapping material culture distributions relating to the repeated realization and transformation of ethnic identity in different social contexts, rather than any discrete monolithic cultural reality. 202

Given the critical role of such historical processes in the generation and expression of ethnicity then, it is essential that archaeologists supplement their contextual analysis with a decidedly historical perspective. The adoption of such a diachronic, contextual framework then would enable archaeologists to reveal something about those 'shifts' in the expression of ethnicity over time, and concomitantly, those dimensions of material culture which signify it.²⁰³ In short then, the employment of a diachronic, contextual framework may well reveal something about those specific contexts within which ethnicity is generated, reproduced and transformed. It will enable the archaeologist such as Dever "to examine the mobilization of group as process," ²⁰⁴ rather than present it as a discrete, monolithic reality, unchanging through time.

²⁰¹ See, Yelvington, K.A. CSSH 1991:168.

²⁰² For a similar argument see, Thomas, J. 1996:78-82.

²⁰³ Cf. Shennan, S.J. 1989:16.

²⁰⁴ Conkey, M.W. in M.W. Conkey and C.W. Hastorf ed 1991:13

Nevertheless, whilst such a theoretical framework may succeed in identifying the basic processes involved in the reproduction and transformation of ethnicity across diverse social and historical contexts, it also suggests that there are likely to be significant differences between discursive, literary representations of ethnicity, and its manifestation in social practice through material remains, differences which have important implications for the interpretation of ethnic groups in historical archaeology. It is the recognition and illumination of such qualitative differences which is essential for an analysis of ethnicity in which both archaeological and documentary evidence can be seen to operate as "equal and potentially opposing elements in the dialectical process of knowledge." ²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Austin, D. and L. Alcock eds. 1997:35

CHAPTER SIX

ETHNICITY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL A WORKING MODEL

ISRAELITE ETHNICITY AND BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY	266
ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE HISTORICAL CATEGORIES AND THE PRAXIS OF ETHNICIT	278
	294

ISRAELITE ETHNICITY AND BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

In their hunt for the Israelites of antiquity, biblical scholars have frequently employed what has broadly been termed, the 'primordialist' concept of ethnicity. By viewing the attachments which underlie ethnicity as both involuntary and coercive¹, they have consistently and repeatedly interpreted ethnic identity as constituting a determining and immutable dimension of an individual's self-identity. Within archaeological treatises however, this rather essentialist perception of ethnicity has been closely aligned with the old anthropological notion of social groups as biologically and culturally closed units. One of the principal assumptions underlying this 'theoretical union' is that within such social groups, the cultural practices and beliefs which are held to define it, tended to conform to prescriptive ideational norms and rules of behaviour which, held in place by the dead weight of conservatism, are unlikely to be transformed, thereby continuing to serve as 'mental templates' for material production.

As a result of such assumptions, the society, or 'group' in question is represented as a discrete homogenous unit, unchanging through time. Any attempt to trace contemporary or indeed historically known ethnic groups through the prehistoric record then, proceeded on the firm conviction that there existed a stable and objective repertoire of material cultural traits which directly reflected not merely the 'mental make-up', or cultural norms of the people who produced them, but their identity. Furthermore, because such a mode of analysis is predicated on the a priori assumption that "stability, orderliness and equilibrium characterized traditional societies" and that geographical and social isolation were the critical factors in sustaining that 'stability', obvious discontinuities in the archaeological record could only be explained as resulting from either the invasion of different population groups, or the diffusion of radically new and powerful ideas, for example religious cults. As a result of the way in which different types of analysis intersect with and reinforce one another then, a fixed 'one-to-one' relationship was

¹ Geertz, C. 1963:105-157. For an overview and assessment of the 'primordial perspective' see Chapter Three.

established between specific types of material culture, and a particular ethnic identity, in this case, 'Israelite identity'.

Whilst such an approach has been widely criticized for its unreflexive and disintegrative nature³, the assumption that ethnic groups can be defined by their behavioural and material content has continued to provide the interpretative basis for the identification and isolation of so called 'ethnic markers' in the archaeological record.⁴ Yet, whilst in principal, the deliniation of such diagnostic traits is an explicitly archaeological task, in almost all cases these 'ethnic markers' have themselves been defined through historical sources. That is, the ethnic association of a particular item of material culture or indeed, an archaeological site, is determined *not* by the finds themselves, but rather by particular historical sources which are used to construct a narrative framework concerning the physical movements and geographic distribution of particular named peoples. Such information is then employed to determine the ethnic status of particular regions and sites within which archaeologists then 'seek out' the artifactual material which relates to that particular group, thereby confirming the essential historicity of the text. In effect, archaeological investigation becomes little more than a self-fulfilling exercise.

Whilst the archaeology of *The Holy Land* in the broad sense of the exploration of biblical topography and antiquities goes back centuries, 'biblical archaeology' did not arrive at its apocryphal 'golden age' until the early decades of this century⁵. Throughout this evolution however, it was the biblical narrative, "whose own witness is so impressive that the historian has no reason to dispute it" which constituted the source to which the

² Rosaldo, R. 1993:42.

³ 'By endowing nations, societies, or cultures with the qualities of internally homogenous and externally distinctive and bounded objects, we create a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls.' Wolf, E. 1982:6. Cf. Barth, F. 1969:9-38.

⁴ Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992:4.

While periodic assessments of Syro-Palestinian and Biblical archaeology have appeared from time to time, especially early on when a single scholar such as Albright or Wright could still comprehend the field as a whole, to date no full scale history of our branches of archaeology such as Willey and Sabloff's 'A History of American Archaeology' (1980), has ever been written. The closest approximation however may be that of the Ashmolean Museum's P.R.S. Moorey, (1991). For a prolegomenon to a broader history, though admittedly from an American perspective, see Dever, W.G. 1974. 1985:31-74. ABD Vol.1 1992:706-722.

⁶ Bright, J. 1981:361.

archaeologist was bound. Whilst the elevated significance accorded to the Hebrew Bible in historical research may well be illustrative of a certain pervasive philosophical and religious idealism, it was the belief that Israel's history (if not the theological interpretation of that history by the biblical authors) was faithfully recounted within the narratives of the Hebrew Bible which steered the majority of research agendas. This is abundantly clear in the fact that until the post-war resumption of fieldwork in the early 1950s, it was those areas with familiar names, and an important role within the biblical tradition, which were the focus of investigation: Jericho, Shechem, Jerusalem, Megiddo, Beth Shean, together with numerous other mounds. While the preoccupation with such large scale urban tells is entirely understandable within the context of the need for spectacular results in order to preserve funding for what were highly expensive projects, it was a desire to *confirm* the events of the past and thus *reveal* the realities of ancient Israel which constituted the major motivating factor.⁷ Nowhere is this more evident than in the conquest hypothesis on Israelite origins as forwarded by W.F. Albright.

Positing a large scale invasion of the land of Canaan by Israelites who, after a series of spectacular victories in both Transjordan and at Jericho, swept through the promised land in a succession of lightning campaigns which destroyed many of the large scale urban centres, and much of the population before assuming control of the entire land, the 'conquest model' of Albright and his successors is little short of a paraphrase of the Book of Joshua/ Judges⁸. Though Albright appealed to the evidence for destruction at several urban centres followed by the appearance of substantially poorer settlements as a testimony to the accuracy of the biblical account, it was the 'materialization' of a seemingly novel and distinctive 'pottery type', the 'collared rim pithos' which confirmed for Albright, not just the presence of invading Israelites, but the Bible as a source of history⁹. Though initially cautious in isolating this pottery type as part of a restricted or ethnically identifiable assemblage, its ethnic status was soon established, despite a

⁷ As G.E. Wright declared, biblical archaeology's chief concern 'is not with strata or pots or methodology. Its central and absorbing interest is in the understanding and exposition of the scriptures.' Quoted in Dever, W.G. 1985:55.

⁸ Cf. Albright, W.F. BASOR 58 1935:10-18. BASOR 74 1939:11-23.1974. See also Wright, G.E. 1961:73-112. 1961. Bright, J. 1956. 1981.

number of serious challenges from members of his own field staff.¹⁰ In this respect, Albright's excavations at Megiddo and particularly the exposure of stratum VI in 1934 were seen to mark a critical juncture.

Describing the pottery discovered there as "almost indistinguishable from contemporary Israelite pottery in Shechem, Bethel, Shiloh, Ai and Gibeah" all sites documented in the Joshua Narrative as 'recent Israelite acquisitions', Albright declared that the Megiddo assemblage, which included large amounts of collared rim pithoi, "must accordingly be Israelite." Central to this brand of reasoning was Nelson Glueck's pioneering work in Transjordan wherein regional ceramic differences seemed to parallel ancient national divisions. That is, there appeared to be a distinct difference between pottery found in 'Ammon', 'Moab', 'Edom' and 'Israel' during the Iron Age. Nevertheless, whilst the foundation was certainly laid for the direct equation of certain ceramic types with political and ethnic boundaries, it was not until the publication of his *Archaeology of Palestine*, a book which was to serve as the major introductory textbook for at least two generations of scholars, that Albright was to establish the collared rim pithos as the 'ethnic indicator' of Israelites par excellence¹³. In doing so, it seems Albright had realized his primary methodological goal: that archaeological data could indeed support, if not verify, the historicity of the biblical traditions.

Whilst such assumptions, framed largely by the professed historical veracity of the biblical traditions, were explicit within various incarnations of the discipline, one of the major shared assumptions to characterize the 'New Horizon' proclaimed by Robert Coote¹⁴ was that the biblical traditions are no longer to be understood as simple

⁹ 'Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details and has bought increased recognition of the Bible as a source of history.' Albright, W.F. 1974:128. Cf. Yadin, Y. BAR 7 1982:18.

¹⁰ It was Robert Engberg who, citing Albright's own rule that except in rare cases, pottery cannot be used in the Near East as an index of ethnic movements, argued that ethnic change and material culture change were not always coterminous. Engberg, R. BASOR 78 1940:4-9

¹¹ Albright, W.F. BASOR 68:1937:25

¹² Ibid. 1937:25.

¹³ Albright, W.F. 1949:118.

¹⁴ Cf. Coote, R.B. 1990.

reflections of an earlier historical reality. Rather they offer a valuable insight into *perceptions* of that reality from particular points of view at the time of the writers.¹⁵ Thus, rather than direct reflections of external origins in the Late Bronze or Early Iron Ages, stories of 'Israelite origins' it is argued, are perhaps more profitably read as a reflection of certain ideological disputes within the emergent Second Temple community.

In defiance of an extremely vocal 'defense of orthodoxy' then which had organized itself around the clarion call that there must be 'limits to skepticism' ¹⁶, adherents of Coote's 'New Horizon' sing from an altogether different hymn sheet. Prompted largely by a growing propensity within the discipline for the 'Bible as Literature', exponents of this 'new search' rally around Lemche's principle that the "gap between 'literary fixation' and 'underlying event' is too great to permit one to accept the tradition as a primary source for our reconstruction of the period" Central to this 'minimalist mantra' however, is not just a question of how the Old Testament may be used in historical reconstruction, but rather one of how that literature is to be understood. It is here that the powerful challenge to traditional source critical approaches are at their most potent as 'literary artistry' is played off against 'historical referentiality'. As Philip Davies, among others, has pointed out in his analysis of biblical narratives as literature, "...here is where the increasing role of literary criticism ...is making a valuable contribution to historical research, by...pointing out that the reason why many things are told, has virtually

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¹⁵ Cf. Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1987. Garbini, G. 1988. Davies, P.R. JSOTS 148 1992. Grabbe, L. ed. JSOTS 245 1997. Brettler, M. 1995.

¹⁶ Hallo, W.W. JAOS 110 1990:187-199. While Hallo's central point concerns the debate over whether or not cuneiform sources are adequate for reconstructing Near Eastern history, society, and institutions, he then enters into the question of the use of the biblical traditions for historical reconstruction concluding that 'one can hardly deny the reality of a conquest from abroad, implying a previous period of wandering, a dramatic escape from a prior place of residence and an oppression there that prompted that escape.' His rallying call for a limit to skepticism has been taken up by a number of scholars such as I. Provan, JBL 114 1995:585-606.

¹⁷ Lemche, N.P. 1985:377-378.

¹⁸ While the issue here is to do with understanding the nature of the genre of Old Testament historiography, an issue which cannot be divorced from the question of the nature of historiography in general, an account of the history of thought about the nature of history cannot be the subject of this study. See for example, Collingwood, R.G. 1946. Breisach, E. 1983. Momigliano, A. 1977. On the nature of biblical historiography see in particular, van Seters, J. 1975. 1985. See also Mayes, A.D.H. 2002:65-87

everything to do with literary artistry and virtually nothing to do with anything which might have happened." ¹⁹

As a growing appreciation of the artistic integrity of much of the biblical literature has undermined attempts to mine the text for some fabled historical core, a much sharper focus on the social production of the biblical traditions has been of increasing concern in recent years. In this respect, the essential thrust of Wellhausen's axiom that a biblical document reflects "the historical context of its own formation rather than the social milieu of its explicit referent to a more distant past" is one which has hardly been overcome, for it illustrates a perspective necessary for understanding the biblical literature. Yet, whilst the recognition that the historical referent of such an ideologically motivated collection was not the past, but rather 'the contemporary need', unites an otherwise diverse field of opinion as to the exact nature of the biblical literature, the conditions of production and structures of power within which these texts derive their meaning, particularly in their representation of Israel's past, is a topic which requires further consideration.

Whilst the increasingly late dating of much of the biblical corpus would appear to strip the historian of the ability to write any history of ancient Israel by removing from his repertoire the greatest body of information about its emergence and development²¹, Coote and Whitelam have long maintained that "it is by no means the case that the historian cannot, or should not, explore those aspects of society which are not the subject of literary remains"²². It is the attempts to examine these 'zones of silence'²³ then, to ask ourselves about those holes and black spots of history, those things it has forgotten, which mark not just a significant advance in the study of the history of the region, but a radical reappraisal of one of the foundations of Israelite history.

¹⁹ Davies, P.R. JSOT 148 1992:29. Such views are also echoed by G.W. Ahlström who states, 'because the authors of the bible were historiographers and used stylistic patterns to create a dogmatic and as such tendentious literature, one may question the reliability of their product.' Ahlström, G.W. JSOTS 127 1991:118.

²⁰ Quoted in Thompson, T.L. 1992:383.

²¹ Cf. Miller, J.M. BA 54 1982:215. Thompson, T.L. JSOT 7 1978:20.

²² Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1987:18

²³ Cf. Le Goff, J. 1992:27.

Central to this redefinition of the historiographical task has been a marked shift in the nature of archaeological investigation in recent years. That is, the vital switch in focus from the almost exclusive interest in large urban tells so characteristic of earlier research, towards a more balanced interest in regional surveys in conjunction with the excavation of larger, and smaller, often single period rural sites. As Anthony Snodgrass has intimated in his appraisal of Greek archaeology, such a 'methodological revolution' enables archaeologists to, "contribute substantially to a different branch of historical study from the traditional event orientated, political one, and to do this on a scale not of a simple restricted locality, the site, but of a region...it explores the rural sector of ancient life on which our ancient sources are most defective and corrects the urban bias of the past century and more of excavation. It generates relatively little in the way of preserved finds but an almost endlessly exploitable store of new knowledge."

The switch from an event centered, personality dominated narrative of traditional style biblical history then to a 'Braudellian' inspired concern with 'social history' in its broadest terms provides not only a fresh perspective on the history of the entire region, but an important corrective to a number of mistaken assumptions which have underwritten much of biblical scholarship. Principal among these is the biblically inspired assumption uniting the three 'classic models' on the emergence of Israel, namely, that it constituted a *unique* event in the history of Palestine.

Over and against the theological construct of the biblical narrative, analysis of the results of those surveys and excavations within the extended temporal and chronological framework afforded by Braudel has revealed that the wave of settlement which took place in the Palestinian highlands during the late second millennium BCE was no more than *one phase* in the long term, cyclical socio- economic and demographic processes influencing that region since the fourth millenium BCE.²⁶ Furthermore, the search for broad patterns and generalizations also challenges the related assumption that socio-

²⁴ As a representative of this substantive methodological shift see Finkelstein, I. 1988.

²⁵ Snodgrass, A. 1987:99

²⁶ Cf. Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1987. Whitelam, K.W. JSOT 63 1994:45-70. Finkelstein, I. 1988. Finkelstein, I. and N. Na'aman eds 1994.

political transformations within the region were inevitably the result of external invasion and infiltration – one of the central tenets of the culture historical paradigm. Rather, the study of such socio-political transformations within the region from the perspective of la longue dureé has revealed settlement shifts, such as that characterizing the late Bronze – Iron I transition, to be the result of largely indigenous responses to various social, political, economic and climactic factors. Whilst the burgeoning body of data to emerge from such a principled methodological reorientation allows for considerable debate and disagreement as to the relative importance of the various factors which contributed to the 'transformation and realignment of Palestinian society' at this time²⁷, recognition of their largely indigenous nature has helped confirm one of the most important, if not the central feature of this growing consensus - namely the striking continuity in material culture from the late Bronze Age through the early Iron Ages. 28 The switch to a greater emphasis on inclusive regional surveys then appears to have undermined some of the domain assumptions underwriting the classical constructions of Israel's emergence²⁹.

Yet whilst the 'revolutionary understanding' of these highland settlements, and their material culture as largely indigenous responses to the various topographical and environmental conditions facing the inhabitants have largely eroded the assumption, common since the time of Albright, that these settlements, and their material culture provide the physical manifestation of ancient Israel, it is ironic that 'the search for ancient Israel' which inspired and motivated much of these regional surveys, has failed to find the object of its quest.30 Because it is "continuity in material culture - and not

30 Whitelam, K.W. 2000:383.

²⁷ Such factors range over the nature and importance of regional and inter-regional economic decline and stagnation (Coote, R.B. and K.W. Whitelam 1987. Whitelam, K.W. JSOT 63 1994:57-87), climatic features (Thompson, T.L. 1992), and the socio-economic background and location of the inhabitants of the highland sites, whether pastoral nomads in the process of sedentarization or displaced groups from the urban centres and lowlands in the wake of political and economic disruption, (Finkelstein, I. 1988, Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:200-214).

²⁸ As Whitelam has pointed out, 'it is important not to lose sight of this basic agreement across a range of scholars, biblical specialists and archaeologists who are often presented as being in the diametrically opposed camps of minimalism and maximalism.' Whitelam, K.W. 2000:383.

Such assumptions include - 1. That 'Israel' came from outside the land. 2. That the emergence of 'Israel' constituted a unique event in the history of Palestine. 3. That this new entity could be clearly recognized by drastic discontinuities in the material culture at large urban tells.

discontinuity"³¹ which is the striking feature of these settlements which span the late Bronze – Iron I transition, the expectation that an increase in both the quantity, and quality, of archaeological data would serve as a conclusive source for defining an early Israelite material culture, and with it, the early Israelites, has proved somewhat exaggerated.

The inability to realize such a goal, however, lies not in any technical difficulties with the data themselves, but rather in the fact that biblical scholars have consistently started with the mistaken assumption that ethnicity is an objective fact about the past which they could 'go out and find' - "a category amenable to precise determination"³². To them, ethnicity is an explicit category rooted in "the givens...of social existence; immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the giveness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language and following particular social practices"33. Because these 'primordial bonds' which result from the 'givens of birth': blood, language, religion, territory and culture, are seen to possess an ineffable, and at times over-powering coerciveness in and of themselves, they nullify any alliance or relationship engendered by particular situational interests and/ or social circumstances. In the words of Clifford Geertz, "...one is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbour, one's fellow believer ipso facto as the result, not merely of personal affection, present necessity or common interest, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable, absolute import attributed to the very tie itself."34 It is such endowments, then, or legacies which assume critical importance in defining the boundaries of the group. Accepting this rather essentialist 'culture bearing' aspect of 'ethnic groups' as their primary characteristic then, biblical scholars have inevitably, and almost exclusively focused, their research on the search for so called 'ethnic markers' as material correlates of such groups. When faced with the inability to isolate a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture complex within the context of the central hill country during Iron I on the basis of such supposedly diagnostic material traits however the limitations

³¹ Dever, W.G. BA 58 1995:204.

³² Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:1. Cf. Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992.

³³ Geertz, C. 1963:109.

³⁴ Geertz, C. 1963:109.

of Coote's 'new horizon' become all too clear. Indeed, as Barth amongst others have pointed out, rather than supplying any 'new perspective' on ethnicity and ethnic group formation, such an approach merely begs all the critical questions: "it allows us...to imagine each group developing its cultural and social form in relative isolation, mainly in response to local ecological factors, through a history of adaptation by invention and selective borrowing." Differences between groups become differences in trait, and particularly material trait, inventories thereby limiting the disciplines ability to contribute to a dialogue on ethnicity as a meaningful social phenomenon in accordance with sociological, and anthropological studies.

The point, however, is not that archaeological data *never* reflect ethnicity but rather that we can no longer continue to operate with interpretative principles which assume precisely what should be open to question. In treating material culture as the concrete expression of that "common social tradition which binds a people together"³⁶, this is exactly the mistake we make. For while 'ethnic groups' undeniably do use overt markers to actively express social identity, in their search for 'ethnic artifact types' biblical scholars have divorced those types from their social and symbolic context. Independent forms are treated as independent indicators of ethnicity, allowing for the 'recognition' of ethnic groups where their presence may otherwise be unknown: pottery, ³⁷ architectural styles, agricultural and technological innovations, even the exploration of ancient foodways³⁸ are all elements of material culture which have been utilized in this fashion. When separated from cultural meaning and social/historical circumstance however, these 'artifacts' provide few insights into past social behaviour beyond those which can be readily correlated with 'function' and/or 'adaptation'³⁹.

³⁵ Barth, F. 1969:11

³⁶ Childe, V.G. 1956:16.

³⁷ On the limitations of pottery for ethnic identification see Bunimovitz, S. Tel Aviv 17 1990:210-222. Tel Aviv 23 1996:88-101.

³⁸ For a review of some of the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the absence of pig-bones at many Iron I sites and its ethnic implications see, Edelman, D.V. 1996:22-55. Hesse, B. JOE 10 1990:195-225. Hesse, B. and P. Wapnish JSOTS 237 1997:238-270.

³⁹ Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992:4.

Rather than a solid and enduring fact then, through which the destiny of a particular people may be traced, this study has argued at length that ethnicity is more profitably understood as an evanescent, situational construct, based upon shifting, subjective identifications of 'self' and 'others' which, though rooted in ongoing practice and historical experience are continually subject to transformation and/or discontinuity⁴⁰. Within such a framework, it was argued, any static 'one-to-one' relationship between a particular item of material culture and a particular social identity is simply untenable since the significance of such items are continually reproduced and transformed in changing social and historical contexts by different people occupying varying positions within society. Rather, it was argued that in order to examine the contextual generation, and expression of what are often conflicting constructions of cultural identity, it was necessary to make some wide ranging alterations to our current analytical frameworks. Changes which, of necessity, would result in the dissolution of the social and cultural 'group' as the primary focus of analysis. For while so-called 'Israelite style' material culture may well have been involved in the generation and expression of a particular identity, it cannot be assumed that the meaning of such material styles was necessarily fixed – that it *always* conferred 'Israelite' identity.

Rather, what has traditionally been interpreted as 'Israelite' culture may well have been appropriated, subverted and transformed in varying configurations of ethnicity in different social domains and in relation to different forms and scales of interaction. Thus, it can be argued that the adoption of any analytical framework based on bounded socio-cultural units, be they 'Israelite', 'Philistine', or 'Canaanite', leads to the reification of such groups whilst simultaneously obscuring the various heterogeneous processes involved in the negotiation of power and identity. If biblical scholars persist in their assumption that there is only *one* meaning to be extracted from a particular style of material culture, they will never be able to comprehend the multiple strands of practice involved in the reproduction and/ or transformation of ethnicity in the past. Rather, that past will continue to be represented as a fixed and distant monolithic reality encouraging

⁴⁰ Cf. Chapter Three.

simplistic and often exclusive associations with particular national and/ or ethnic groups. 41

Whilst the acceptance that archaeological remains are likely to be involved in the construction of potentially diverse and fluid identities throughout the course of their social life certainly facilitates the development of a dynamic and engaged relationship between archaeology and living communities⁴², it also undermines the long-held assumption that "ethnicity is a subjective concept which archaeologists cannot hope to study to any significant degree without the aid of specifically relevant historical or ethnographic data", For while literary traditions may indeed provide the historian with a record of the past's own 'self awareness', one cannot simply assume that the peoples described in such sources necessarily correspond to the self-conscious identity groups which are essential to the notion of ethnicity developed in this study. 45

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⁴¹ Cf. Ucko, P.J. '1994:237-282.

⁴² Ibid. 1994:249. Cf. Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1992:68-101. Pearce, S.M. 1996:133-204. Pearce, S.M. ed. 1994

⁴³ Trigger, B.G. 1995:277.

⁴⁴ Though not wholly appropriate, or adequate to all forms of historiography, J. Huizanga's famous definition of history as 'the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past' is peculiarly appropriate in this case, since whether or not consciously present as a datum for explanation or legitimation, it is the present of the historian which constitutes the reality within the context of which the past is bought to light and interpreted. Cf. Mayes, A.D.H. 2002:65-87.

⁴⁵ Finkelstein, I. BA 59 1996:203. For a similar argument see Miller, D. 1985:202-203 – 'the case which has been made of established classifications of society – in particular caste – against the variability in pottery has been analyzed, should not be construed as an intention to find a reflection, or representation of caste in ceramics.'

ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

As P.J. Geary concludes in his provocative exploration of the uses of ethnic terminology in the early middle ages, 'one finds that whilst early medieval authors stress origin, customs, language and law as the most significant characteristics by which ethnicity is determined, each of these characteristics/ traits was, in effect, subjective and arbitrary, and together do not provide a means by which one can determine the identity of an individual and/ or group, 46. That is, ethnicity did not exist as an *objective category*, but as a subjective process by which individuals, and groups identified themselves and others within specific situations, and for specific purposes. Taking as his basis Isajiw's guarded critique of the then dominant assumption that ethnicity constitutes an 'objective phenomenon' wherein ethnic groups are assumed to exist as it were, 'out there', '47, Geary's examination of those categories by which authors in the middle ages identified, or at least purported to identify different peoples, is guided by the principle that whilst the objective approach may well "simplify the problem, it simultaneously distorts the phenomenon."48 Yet whilst Geary's examination of those traits stressed by medieval authors as the most significant in determining membership within a particular ethnic group reveals how, rather than reflecting any ancient iron clad ethnic distinctions, each was, to a large extent, both subjective and arbitrary, a similar contradiction between the articulated criteria by which people were assumed to be differentiated and the actual circumstances within which that differentiation took place can be attested within the narrative traditions of the Hebrew Bible.

Though a full scale analysis of such ethnic sentiments and their articulation within the Hebrew Bible is certainly beyond the scope of this study⁴⁹, certain definitions of 'Israel' will be explored in an effort to confirm the initial hypothesis that such discursive categories should not constitute an a priori framework for the description, classification and interpretation of archaeological data. For as Tessa Rajak has argued in relation to the

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⁴⁶ Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:16

⁴⁷ Isajiw, W.W. 1974:111-124.

⁴⁸ Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:18.

⁴⁹ Cf. Sparks, K.L. 1998. Mullen, E.T. 1993. 1997. Lemche, N.P. 1998

study of Jewish sites in ancient Palestine, "to determine in advance what is Jewish and what is not...is to operate with a preconception of Jewish identity when our task is precisely to seek to define that identity."⁵⁰

The dominant position concerning the Song of Deborah was articulated over one hundred years ago in the International Critical Commentary by George F. Moore. Moore saw the poem as a "triumphal ode," and suggested that, "by the vividness of every touch, and especially by the elevation and intensity of feeling which pervades it, it makes the impression of having been written by one who witnessed the great events it commemorates."51 Throughout it creates an "impression of reality" and its historical representations "agree entirely with the historical situation, so far as we are able from our very scanty materials to reconstruct it."52 While many scholars would concur with Moore's summation that the Song of Deborah constitutes one of the oldest extant monuments of Hebrew literature, being composed somewhere in the twelfth, or at least the eleventh century B.C.E., 53 his contention that it was composed by a primary witness to those events has proven more difficult to establish. As a result it is only natural that a number of scholars have recently questioned the hoary antiquity of the Song⁵⁴, frequently explaining its supposedly archaic features as a consequence of its poetic genre – that is, that poetry tends to preserve earlier morphological forms. G. Garbini has lent his support to this view by pointing out that the language of the Song is, after all, not so archaic and includes features that post-date the tenth century Gezer calendar, such as the definite article and the common plural construct.⁵⁵ Whilst one may attempt to explain such features via modernization of the text, that, like other biblical texts, the poem continued

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⁵⁰ Rajak, T. 1994:240. Indeed Whitelam makes a similar point in relation to the identification of the Israelites in Iron Age Palestine when he argues that, 'the debate in archaeology has not concerned the identity of the inhabitants: this was taken for granted as self evident until recently.' Whitelam, K.W. 1996:180.

⁵¹ Moore, G.F. 1895:107

⁵² Ibid. 1895:131.

⁵³ Cf. Craigie, P. 1969:254. Mayes, A.D.H. 1969:353-360. Freedman, D.N. 1980:132. Stager, L. 1986:224.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ahlström, G.W. 1986:80-81. Axelsson, L.E. ConBOT 25 1987:52. Lemche, N.P. JSOTSup 110 1991:92-93. van der Toorn, K. SHCANE 7 1996:236.

⁵⁵ Cf. Garbini, G. 1988:32. This position has also been supported by Soggin who finds within the text rather advanced theological notions which he suggests pints us towards a later date. Soggin, J.A. 1988:71-77.

to develop, ultimately the heroic genre of the poem is of the sort that is a poor substitute for history. ⁵⁶ Nevertheless, one must ask what it can tell us about Israelite ethnic identity.

As it is usually translated, the poem recounts a battle in which ten entities collectively known as 'Israel' participated, or at least should have participated in a battle against the 'kings of Canaan'⁵⁸. Of primary importance to the question of Israelite ethnicity is this: what is the nature of these ten modalities and in what sense do they share a common identity as Israel? Geographic explanations of the text have recently been in vogue with scholars such as Ahlström arguing that 'Israel' in this period should primarily be understood as a geographic region rather than a people.⁵⁹ As Lindars has noted however, such explanations do not explain the reference in 5:15-16 to Rueben's clans (מוגלפ twice) and even less the reference to Benjamin's kinsmen (דיממע) in 5:14.60 Furthermore one must reckon with the fact that these so-called geographic regions are behaving throughout very much like social modalities that make and follow corporate decisions regarding participation in the conflict. Whether these social modalities were envisioned along ethnic lines is somewhat obscure to us, and even in the case of Benjamin and Rueben one must be careful not to draw hasty conclusions from slippery Hebrew terminology. However, as observed in relation to the Merneptah stele, one should not be content with the conclusion that what we have here is nothing more than a list of geographic regions. Rather, we have social modalities associated with geographic regions – and this is something quite different. Leaving aside the question of ethnicity within the ten supposedly "tribal" modalities however, the most important question in relation to 'Israelite ethnic identity' becomes this – what essential ties connected these supposedly tribal modalities with each other, and so, for the poet at least, created the entity called 'Israel'?

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⁵⁶ Bowra, C.M 1961:535.

⁵⁷ Cf. Judges 5 v13-18. RSV. It has also been suggested that properly understood, the text indicates that *all* of the tribes actually took part. Cf. Halpern, B. HTR 76 1983:379-401.

⁵⁸ 'The Kings came and they fought, how they fought, those kings of Canan, at Taanach, near the waters of Megiddo, but no booty of silver did they take' Judges 5 v19. RSV.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ahlström, G. 1986:57-83. See also De Geus, C.H.J SSN 18 1976:111.

The most common answer to such a question has been an appeal to Noth's amphictyonic proposal, namely that these groups shared a common cultic shrine and thus fought to protect it⁶¹. Whilst it is no doubt true that the text certainly presumes a certain mutual responsibility on the part of the ten groups mentioned, and this is as one would expect from Noth's thesis, there is no sense in which such a responsibility hinged on the defense of a particular central, cultic shrine⁶². Rather, the text explicitly states that these groups shared a common responsibility, not as defenders of a central cultic sanctuary but as the people of the god Yahweh to fight in battle against the 'non-Israelite' kings of Canaan⁶³. It was this common Yahwistic religious devotion which seems to have connected the supposedly tribal modalities together, and thus made 'Israel' what it was for the composer of the Song of Deborah. That is, for the writer of the Song of Deborah, the entity 'Israel' was composed of those ten groups which were united by a common devotion to the god Yahweh, and by a common obligation to fight on his side. It is this apparent religious distinctiveness then which, for the poet not only provides the most powerful integrating force, but also serves to divide those 'Israelites' from all other peoples – particularly the Canaanites. It was 'Israel' who were the people of Yahweh, and it was Yahweh who was the god of Israel.

Yet whilst the text speaks primarily of a common religious identity that united an otherwise geographically diverse groups of Yahwists at times of military conflict,⁶⁴ from a political perspective the two entities could not be more different. For while the city-states of Canaan against whom these Yahwists took up arms were ruled by kings, 'Israel' followed both Deborah and Barak (and its commanders 'יקקוה לארש') who, whatever they

⁶⁰ Cf. Lindars, B. 1975:207.

⁶¹ Noth, M. 1958:53-141.

⁶² As Mayes has pointed out 'the criteria proposed by Noth to determine whether or not a particular sanctuary was an amphictyonic central sanctuary are largely circumstantial. This in itself is not a decisive weakness but it must be of some significance that the laws of the OT, and in particular the book of the covenant (Exod 20:23-23:33), which has been identified as amphictyonic law, make no reference to obligations laid on the Israelite tribes to maintain and protect a central sanctuary (and in fact the Book of the Covenant surely envisages a number of local sanctuaries)...' Mayes, A.D.H. ABD Vol. 1 1992:214-215.

⁶³ Smend, R. 1970:1-42.

⁶⁴ It has long been noted that an important aspect of 'tribal' identity within the Song of Deborah is geographic (Lindars, B. 103-104) and we should suppose from this not only that geography distinguished

were, were certainly not kings. Indeed from a sociological and cultural perspective the poet also viewed 'Israel' as distinct from 'Canaan'. This is not simply because of their religious, political and geographical differences. Rather, it is because of a kinship difference reflected in the poet's references to Benjamin's kinsmen (מוגלפ) and Rueben's clans (מוגלפ). A distinction which is valid even if we are not sure how the poet thought these social modalities worked and operated. Thus while 'Israel' within the Song of Deborah may certainly be viewed in quite specific socio-economic terms as an agricultural/sedentary entity over and against the urban/monarchic structures of the city-states, its definition of that 'Israel' as a homogeneous entity unified by virtue of common devotion to the god Yahweh is paralleled in other biblical texts, most notably the Book of Deuteronomy.

Cast in the form of a series of speeches delivered by Moses to all Israel gathered on the plains of Moab prior to that entity's entrance to the land promised to their ancestors, the Book of Deuteronomy provides a kind of 'social manifesto' of Israelite ethnic identity. Based upon the ideal of complete, and absolute obedience to Yahweh alone, a concern echoed in other biblical texts⁶⁶ the deuteronomic⁶⁷ material seeks to define 'Israel' in

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the tribes from one another, but also that it necessarily distinguished them from non-Israelites, that is, from Canaan and the like.

⁶⁵ It is perhaps best to think of both Deborah and Barak as 'military saviours' in the sense suggested by Richter some time ago, or indeed as 'charismatic leaders', a description which has its roots in Max Weber's application of the term 'charisma' to one model of authority or leadership that existed alongside two others: traditional authority (such as that exercised by elders) and legal authority (the monarchy). Though Weber was more concerned with prophets than with the pre-monarchic deliverer, the application of the term to the latter has become common, especially in the work of Malamat.

⁶⁶ Cf. 'Hosea' See, Andersen, F.I. and D.N. Freedman 1980. Davies, G.I. 1992. Harper, W.R. 1905. Mays, J.L. 1969. Stuart, D. 1987. Wolff, H.W. 1974. Snaith, N.H. 1953. Whitt, W.D. SJOT 6 1992. For a summary comparison of the similarities between Deuteronomy and Hosea see Weinfeld, M. 1972:366-370. ⁶⁷ Following the distinctions made by Martin Noth, the term 'Deuteronomic' will be used to refer to the Book of Deuteronomy and to designate those ideas and ideals that are expressed therein. The adjective 'Deuteronomistic' will be reserved for the 'history' that follows, ie. the works of Joshua through Kings, which are clearly dependent upon the Deuteronomic ideals as a base. Unlike Noth's position however, the distinction between the two terms should not be understood in the present materials as implying a difference in authorship, though this may well have been the case, since in its present form, Deuteronomy shows clear signs of Deuteronomistic editing.

terms of the various ways in which devotion to this particular deity serves to distinguish the entity 'Israel' from all others.⁶⁸

In the Book of Deuteronomy then, the entity 'Israel' is created on the plains of Moab prior to the crossing of the River Jordan when, according to the covenantal schema of the narrative, the people accept the obligations of the book – "Today you have proclaimed concerning Yahweh that he will be your god and that you will walk in his ways and observe his statutes, and commandments and ordinances and will obey him. And Yahweh has proclaimed concerning you that you will be a people for his own possession, according as he declared to you and you will keep all his commandments and that he will set you high above all the nations which he has made, in praise, and in fame, and in honour, and that you shall be a people holy to Yahweh your god, as he has declared."69 Whilst in the first instance this mutual proclamation defines 'Israel' through its special relationship with Yahweh, its national god, it additionally accords this people a special position, high above all the nations, a people separated as Yahweh's personal possession. It is this relationship then between 'Israel' and its god which provides an essential component of Israelite group identity throughout the Deuteronomic history. Indeed this metaphorization of 'Israel' as a group covenantally bound both by, and in, a special relationship to its deity is further developed in terms of its relationship in distinction from rather than in comparison to, the surrounding peoples.

Since Israel is to be defined by the exclusive nature of its relationship to Yahweh, the ascription of 'holiness' to 'Israel' is conditional upon participation in the prescriptions of the covenantal demands. Whilst in the first instance this requires both the recognition and acceptance that Israel must worship *Yahweh alone*, this demand is further supplemented by two further obligations upon entry into the land, namely that Israel is to destroy completely the nations dwelling there, 7v2-3, and is to avoid any relationship with those

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⁶⁸ Although it is common to focus on the notion of covenant, and its importance in Deuteronomy – and it is, no doubt, important – the primary function of that covenant was to promote the Deuteronomic preference for an exclusive relationship with Yahweh. Indeed, many of the phrases in the book, such as the concept of 'Israel' as 'a holy people', and the claim that the people were 'set apart' by Yahweh from among 'all the peoples on the face of the earth', were designed to emphasize this special, and therefore exclusive kind of relationship which 'Israel' ought to have with its deity.

people, or their gods, vv4-5.⁷⁰ It is in the performance of these two unambiguous, if not entirely uncontradictory demands that a clear sense of contrast between 'Israel' and all other nations/ peoples is developed.

Whilst the application of the language and ideals of 'holy war' against the collected inhabitants of the land, here represented as seven nations, 71 may be seen to represent the threatening visage presented by the 'competing cultures' with which this 'Israel' was to come into contact with, the extreme which this ideal of separation from those who constitute 'outsiders' represents is supported by the injunction which prohibits the possibility of any intermarriage. 72 This total separation from the 'indigenous peoples of Canaan', coupled with the direction for their complete destruction are incorporated into the covenantal ideals of Deuteronomy by the explicit justification that any contact with those nations would lead to a 'turning away from Yahweh and the service of other gods' – explicit violations of the major covenantal obligation which would lead to the destruction of Israel. 73

The manner in which Israel is to act then with regard to the religious practices it will encounter is framed by the distinctively deuteronomic ideal of *cultic centralization* and

⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 26, v16-19. On the covenantal form of the present book see McCarthy, D.J. 1978:157-205.

This prefacing of the covenantal ideals and obligations to the entry into the land to possess it is a common feature within the Deuteronomic tradition. See also Deut. 4:1, 5:6, 7:1, 8:1, 9:1, 11:8, 10, 29, 31, 12:29, 28:21, 30:16, etc.

This list, and the variations upon it are a common feature in the Hebrew Bible as a designation of the indigenous populations of the land of Canaan. Cf. Genesis 15:20, Exodus 3:8, 23:23, 33:2, 34:11, Deuteronomy 20:17, Joshua 3:10, 9:1, 11:3, 24:11, Judges 3:5, I Kings 9:20, Ezra 9:1, Nehemiah 9:8, 2 Chronicles 8:7.

⁷² In the biblical traditions, the concern with inter-marriage and the enforcement of prohibitions against it does not seem to have been emphasized strongly until the post-exilic period, when the remnant of the Judahites were in danger of being assimilated into the surrounding national groups. It is only in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah that actions to dissolve and prohibit such marriages seem to have been enforced. Ezra 10:1-5. Nehemiah 10:28-30, 13:23-27. Notably however, such prominent figures in Israelite tradition such as Moses, Joseph, Samson, and Solomon all took 'foreign' wives. On the issue of 'mixed marriages' in the Second Temple Community see, Barstad, H.M. 1996. Berquist, J.L. 1995. Eskenazi, T.C. and K.H. Richards eds. JSOTS 175 1994. Hoglund, K.G SBLDS 125 1992.

⁷³ The internal tension produced by the ideas of a merciful deity and one who acts in strict accordance with the idea of absolute justice as exemplified by the covenantal blessings and curses runs throughout the Deuteronomic legislation and the Deuteronomistic history in general.' Cf. Mullen, T.H. 1993:66.

the standardization of all mutual activities in one and only one sanctuary.⁷⁴ That is, in contrast to the 'diversity of places where the nations served their gods 12v2, and which were to be destroyed, their altars torn down and their *asherah* broken, the worship of the god who had chosen this people would be restricted to that place which he would 'choose.' The distance between this 'Israel', and all other peoples was to be complete, and intractable.

This 'separation' is further refined in Deut 18v9.14 where the forms of divine-human intermediation which would distinguish 'Israel' from its neighbours are carefully delineated. Once again however, the covenantal obligations connected with entry into the land are explicit as Israel is commanded, "you will not act according to the abominations of those nations". While the cataloging of such abominations begins with the prohibition against passing one's child through fire it is swiftly followed by the enumeration of various types of divination, sorcery, augury, necromancy (all of which are assumed to have been standard practices in the ancient world). Whilst the exact meanings of some of the terms are uncertain, it is quite clear that what is being presented here is a 'comprehensive list' of those various forms of determining the will of the divine which were commonly practised amongst Israel's neighbours. Whether or not the 'other nations' actually practised such 'rites', and the wealth of terms concerning divination and

⁷⁵ Interestingly, the redactor avoids making explicit the exact identity of this place, preserving it for Yahweh's choice which later will be connected with the figure of David and his dynastic line, 2 Samuel 7:4-17.

Deuteronomy, 18:9b The activities which constitute 'abominations' are extremely diverse, the phrase regularly occurs in connection with the activities of 'other nations' in worshipping their gods, the worship of idols, the offering of an imperfect sacrifice, various forms of divination, wearing the clothing of an opposite sex, using the wages of a prostitute to fulfill a vow, or using false measures

⁷⁴ On the theme of worship at one and only one sanctuary see Deuteronomy 12:5,11,14,18,21,26, 14:23-25, 16:2, 17:8, 18:6. Though it is often argued that these and other references are later additions to the corpus, which elsewhere does not require such a centralized cultic arrangement, it is clear that this ideal forms a central structural element in the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic vision of what constitutes legitimate 'Israelite' religion. Cf. Mayes, A.D.H. 1979:61.

The meaning and significance of the phrase 'to burn' or 'to pass a child in/through fire' while still debated is generally accepted as a reference to child sacrifice, especially reserved for the cult of Molech (2 Kings 23:10) While it is commonly assumed that this practice is explicitly forbidden in Leviticus 18:21, the exact practices referred to in this passage remain somewhat obscure. It is notable however, that the practice of child-sacrifice, while presented as one that could have powerful results, is consistently presented as an abomination to Yahweh, and as such was forbidden in Israel. The lack of scholarly agreement over the issue is vividly illustrated by the opposing positions on child sacrifice in the ancient near east by M. Smith, JAS 95 1975:477-479, and by M. Wienfeld UF 4 1972:133-154.

augury in the ancient world suggest at least some of such practices were common, Israel must avoid them. That is, in contrast to the multiplicity of such forms of intermediation, Deuteronomy proclaims that only one form would be acceptable amongst the people of Yahweh's choosing: a prophet (nabî) like Moses. As Mullen makes explicitly clear, the implications of the selection of this particular mode of intermediation become all the more apparent with the realization that the authorized voice which dominates the narrative of Deuteronomy in its final form, i.e. the voice of the Deuteronomistic writer, claims to be none other than the prophetic successor to Moses himself.⁷⁹ Thus, by appeal to this portion of the stipulation of the covenant, the final redactor of Deuteronomy eliminates the possible competing claims of other visionaries and politically and religiously empowers himself as the sole and authoritative spokesperson, raised up by Yahweh to proclaim the word of the deity concerning the nation, and identity of his people Israel. Via this prophetic voice then, the structural parameters for the identity of Israel are established within the context of a people described and discerned by virtue of their profession of adherence to a certain set of covenantally based values that are to be realized in religious and cultural practices.

Even the deuteronomic ideal of leadership for the nation expressed in the 'law of the king' so is restricted by the obligations of the covenant which, in the first instance distinguished Israel from the surrounding peoples. The king would be one of Yahweh's own choosing. Whilst this position which was to be held in check vis-à-vis the accumulation of wives and wealth, two common measures of power and status in the ancient world, the greatest 'restriction' placed upon the monarch is defined by "the copy of the Torah which he is to make and with which he is to live and rule" Thus, whilst the election of a monarch would, superficially make 'Israel' like all the other nations, the nature of that kingship, defined by the prescriptions of that torah, would in ideal terms, distinguish 'Israel' from those other entities.

⁷⁸ Cf. Wilson, R. 1980:89-135.

80 Deuteronomy 17:14-20

⁷⁹ Mullen, E.T. 1993:73. This position has been most clearly elaborated by R. Polzin 1980:25-72.

Indeed, the nature of 'Israel's' distinctivness as a people is further extended with reference to the types, and categories of food which may be consumed.⁸² Though the origin of the 'apodictic' form of stipulation encountered in this section remains a major point of debate⁸³, it is clear that its intention is to regulate human behaviour and thus to 'order' social groups. With respect to the food code then, the separation between 'Israel' and other peoples could not be clearer – what is an abomination for Israel, is quite acceptable for others.

In its present literary form then Deuteronomy encompasses a single event – the farewell speech of Moses to the people 'Israel' instructing them on how, precisely, they were to obey the Torah in order to receive the promises granted to their ancestors. Though there are frequent and sometimes significant allusions to these ancestors and the promises made to them, Deuteronomy does not develop any traditions or narratives in relation to them⁸⁴. This development, in the sense of a compliment to, and fulfillment of an essentially confessional definition of 'Israel' is fulfilled by the Tetratuch. It is in the Tetratuch then that the *origins* of this ideal unified 'Israel' are constructed. Through the stories of the Patriarchs, Abram, Isaac and Jacob, the people chosen by Yahweh to be his own special possession⁸⁵ are provided not merely with a myth of ancestry from which all members of that group *must* be descended⁸⁶, but a genealogical background that develops

⁸¹ Deuteronomy 17: 18-20. As McBride has pointed out, the king was to serve as a model of obedience to the covenant before the people. McBride, S.D. Int 41 1987:241.

⁸² On the specific issue of the dietary regulations of Deuteronomy 14 see, Mayes, A.D.H. 176-181. Houston, W. JSOTS 140 1993:83-93. Weinfeld, M. 1975. Firmage, E. SVT 41 1990:178-180. Eilberg-Schwartz, H. 1990.

⁸³ On the apodictic form and its development see the discussion in Mayes, A.D.H. 1979:74-77.

⁸⁴ T. Römer has argued that the actual names of the Patriarchs, i.e., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, have been added to the references to the 'Fathers' in the book of Deuteronomy by the final redactor of the Pentatuch and that prior to that redaction, the references were simply to some otherwise unnamed traditional ancestors with whom the promise of the land had been connected. Cf. Römer, T. 1990. this position however has been extensively critiqued by Lohfink who argues that the initial reference to the patriarchs in Deut 1:8 explicitly identifies the ancestors and establishes their identity for the remainder of the book. Cf. Lohfink, N. 1991. For a critical review of these positions see McKenzie, S.L. JBL 112 1993:128-130.

⁸⁵ The classical expression of Israel as Yahweh's chosen people is found in Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18. For a discussion of the relationship of the Deuteronomic ideal of election with other biblical expressions of that concept see Weinfeld, M. 1972:60-62.

⁸⁶ On the concept of genealogies within the Old Testament see Wilson, R.R. 1977. ABD Vol. 2 1992:929-932. Robinson, R.B. CBQ 48 1986:595-608. Johnson, M.D. 1988.

an additional element in the definition of that unit: their claim to be the *legitimate* possessors of a particular land.

The idea of human groups – whatever their character – having apical ancestors, whether in the form of human beings, divinities or animals (or as combinations of these) is widely known from many parts of the world. Indeed the notion of a people consisting of twelve named units whilst certainly more specific, is not unique to the Old Testament definition of 'Israel'. However no ancient tradition paid an attention to the requirement of '*common blood*' for membership of a specific people that can be compared to the emphasis placed on this criteria in the stories about the patriarchs. Within the Tetratuch, the people 'Israel' are the descendants of one man and one woman, Abraham and Sarah, said to be half-sister and –brother.⁸⁷

Whilst the selection of the line of Abram and his descendents as the ones to receive Yahweh's blessings and gifts emphasizes at every point the nature of the relationship between the divine and human realms, there is no introduction to, nor explanation of the prior relationship between Abram and Yahweh. Quite simply, Yahweh speaks and Abram obeys. In this vein Abram is directed to go to the land which Yahweh would show him and from where Yahweh would present him with an unconditional grant that would provide the basis for the identification of his descendents with that particular land and lineage. That promise comes by way of a direct revelation of Yahweh to Abram who tells him, "I will give this land to your offspring." There is little ambiguity attached to the nature of this promise: the land that is presently inhabited by Canaanites will be given to those who can trace their lineage to Abram. All that is lacking for the ground to be laid for the eternal gift of the land to Abram and his offspring then is the notice of the birth of a legitimate heir. It is this issue which provides a focus for the remaining stories concerning Abram.

87 Cf. Gen. 20:12

⁸⁸ Gen. 12:7. Cf. 17:1; 18:1; 26:2; 24; 35:9.

However the very nature of the divine promise is immediately put into an interesting perspective, for it has already been noted that Sarai, the wife of Abram, was both barren and childless. In order for the divine to fulfill his pledge then, this situation would require a remedy. When Abram claims that a certain member of his household, Eliezer of Damascus, is his only heir, Yahweh responds that it is Abram's *biological* heir who would be the one to constitute the line of inheritance. Hese offspring would be, as promised earlier, innumerable. The tension of the unfulfilled promise of a biological heir then provides the narrative thread upon which a number of other issues concerning the separateness and special nature of the people who are to be descendants of this lineage will be introduced.

The manner of this inheritance and the nature of genealogical purity are introduced in the account of the birth of Ishmael to Abram and Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid of Sarai. The central issue of this story is *status*: whether or not this son, borne by an Egyptian mother would qualify as the legitimate biological heir promised in 15:10. While there is little in the etiology of Ishmael's name nor in the story of how he would relate to his brothers to suggest that he will not qualify as the rightful heir to Abram, as the covenant recounted in chapter 17 makes pointedly clear, he will *not* be the recipient of the promise. From the outset it must be noted that this 'Priestly' story of the covenant between Yahweh and Abram contained in 17:1-27 is repetitious. However it is also clear that this account of the covenant involves much more than a simple repetition of previous promises, for within the story the status of Abram is changed as is signified by his change in name. Rather than *Abram* becoming a "great nation" *Abraham*, by virtue of this covenant, was to become the ancestor of "numerous nations," a shift in emphasis that focuses directly upon the issue of the legitimate heir to the promises of the land. 91

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⁸⁹ Gen. 15:4

⁹⁰ Gen. 12:2

⁹¹ The Hebrew traditions know of two forms of the Patriarch's name: Abram and Abraham. The former occurs only in Gen. 11:26-17:5, Neh 9:7, and in 1 Chron 1:27. It is possible that Abram is a short form of Abiram though this longer form is never applied to the patriarch. Abram/Abiram would mean 'the father is exalted. Though the etymology and translation of Abraham are less certain, a folk etymology is given for the name in Gen 17:4-5 relating the name to the notice that Abram would become 'the father of a multitude of nations'. As Hicks has pointed out however, the form Abraham is best understood as an Aramaic expansion of Abram which has the same basic meaning and form. Cf. Hicks, L. IDB 1 1989:15.

While the covenant grant is explicitly defined as "all the land of Canaan for an eternal possession"⁹², the sign of this covenant between Yahweh, Abraham and his descendants would be circumcision. It is participation in this ritual then which would define all those who would be recognized as offspring of Abraham. 93 Within the account of this covenant, and its fulfillment by Abraham⁹⁴, is the announcement of the blessing of Sarai, a story which changes not only her name⁹⁵ and status, but that of Ishmael by noting that he is not the one to be heir to the promise. Rather, Sarah was to be given a son whose name would be Isaac and with whom Yahweh was to establish his eternal covenant. The promise given to Abraham then was to be fulfilled in the descendants who could trace their lineage through Isaac. Though others may be able to make genealogical claims to be offspring of Abraham, the promise, by divine designation, would be maintained with those descended through this lineage alone. With the promise to Abraham and Sarah fulfilled with the account of the birth of Isaac in 21:1-4, the only issue to be resolved in the account of the life of Abraham is the issue of the marriage of the legitimate heir, Isaac. Such an account is of primary importance for it provides a prototypical example of marriage for those who claim inheritance in this family.

As the text makes clear, the appropriate form of marriage is endogamous. Indeed the text could hardly be more explicit in identifying the location, and the people from whom a wife for Isaac is to be taken: "You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose midst I am dwelling." Instead Abraham commissions his servant to procure for Isaac a wife from Abraham's homeland, a pointed reminder that Abraham had migrated to this land from elsewhere. As the narrative recounts the procurement of Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor, brother of Abraham, the

92 Gen. 17:8

⁹³ Gen. 17:10-14. The absolute binding nature of this command is made clear by the note in 17:14b regarding any male not circumcised, 'his life shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant.' The Hebrew bible contains some nineteen cases of this *karet* penalty which is to understood as a divinely enforced punishment for deliberate sins against the divine. For a discussion see Milgrom, J. 1991:457-460. ⁹⁴ Gen. 17:23-27.

⁹⁵ Though the name change from Sarai to Sarah parallels the changing of Abram to Abraham, no etymology is given for Sarah to parallel that of Abraham.

⁹⁶ Gen. 24:3, 37. Notably Deut. 7:1-3 specifies that 'Israel' is to avoid intermarriage with any of the seven population groups that were to be disinherited by them.

identity of this native land is further specified. It is none other than Aram Naharayim, the district in which lay the "city of Nahor," and the kinspeople of Abaraham. Marriage alliances then were to be determined through proper genealogical lines.⁹⁷

Unlike the numerous stories told about Abraham however, those associated with Isaac serve only to provide the background for the narration of the continuation of the promise and the insistence on endogamous marriage with properly designated kinspeople. Indeed at each and every point, Isaac appears as a mere reflection of Abraham, and a perfect vehicle for the continuation of the promise. 98 It is with the stories of Isaac's twin children however, Esau and Jacob, that the manner in which the divine could continue to designate the legitimate heir to the promises given to Abraham and passed to Isaac are developed. With Yahweh's pronouncement concerning the children, still in the womb, 99 the way is prepared for the abrogation of the right of the first born to inherit the promises given to the father. For just as Ishmael would not be the legitimate heir of his father Abraham, so Esau, the elder would serve Jacob, the younger. Indeed, to draw attention to the divinely legitimated role of Jacob the narrative twice draws attention to the fact that the right of primogeniture does not automatically qualify one as 'worthy' to possess the promise. 100

In the first instance Esau, when hungry, sells his inheritance rights to his brother for a bowl of porridge, thereby forfeiting his birthright. 101 In the second episode, Jacob, with the help and instruction of his mother Rebekah, deliberately tricks his father into giving him the blessing that was originally intended for the older Esau: "peoples will serve you

97 The cultural as well as genealogical aspects of the relationship are also emphasized in the narrative, for Laban, the brother of Rebekah, who acts as her major spokesman, and the servant of Abraham both invoke the same deity, 'Yahweh, god of Abraham'.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Gen. 25:29-34.

⁹⁸ As Mullen has noted, 'One is tempted to question whether the entirety of the accounts of Isaac are not derived, in literary terms, either from those concerning Abraham and Jacob or from the background literary motifs and forms upon which those were built. It seems highly questionable that there ever existed any independent cycles of stories, either oral or written, concerning Isaac.' Mullen, T. 1997:150. 99 Cf. Gen. 25:23.

The standard practice of inheritance in the ancient Near East was based upon the principle of primogeniture. According to Deut. 21:15-17, the eldest son was to receive double the portion of the inheritance of the father than what is received by the other sons. This custom however is often negated in the biblical stories as witnessed by the loss of inheritance by Rueben in Gen. 49:4, or in this case Esau.

and nations will bow down to you." As though to reinforce the spurning of his birthright, Esau is reintroduced with reference to his choice of wives, both of whom were a bitter disappointment to Isaac and Rebekah. For in contrast to the 'proper' union of his brother Jacob who traveled to the house of Laban in the land of Haran to marry the daughters of his mother's brother, Esau chose Judith and Basemath, the daughters of Beeri and Elon, both Hittites. With these unions, and through his own cunning in securing the blessing of Yahweh, Jacob is able to surpass Abraham in his quest for heirs, for in Genesis 29:31-30:24 (35:22b-26) are recounted the births of eleven sons and one daughter to Jacob's two wives and their hand-maids. While upon other Abrahamic lineages may be bestowed blessings of prosperity, ¹⁰³ it is *only* through the criteria of lineal descent through Jacob's offspring, the apical ancestors of the Israelite tribes, that membership in the community of 'Israel' will be defined.

Emerging within the story then are sure indicators that genealogy and marriage are developing as boundaries that separate those insiders who possess the promise of Yahweh from the outsiders who, though related, cannot trace their lineage back through the legitimate line. For while a commitment to endogamous marriage certainly stresses the necessity of not 'mixing the blood', the prohibition is always presented as an aspect of the covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Not even after ten generations are the offspring of mixed marriages allowed enter the congregation of the Lord.¹⁰⁴ The question of the correct relationship with Yahweh then is the same as keeping the pedigree free from foreign influence.¹⁰⁵

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¹⁰² Cf. Gen. 27:29. When Esau 'discovers' the theft of his blessing, an act which in all probability would have carried little legal weight in the ancient world, he pleads with his father for another blessing. Yet whilst Isaac can clearly revoke his blessing of Jacob and return it to Esau, he does not. Rather, Esau, who has already proven himself 'unworthy' of the rights of the firstborn, both by selling his birthright and now by marrying women from among the land, receives a lesser blessing that confirms his subjugation to Esau. ¹⁰³ Cf. Gen. 17:20.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Deut. 23:3.

The dangers connected with engagement with foreign women and especially Canaanite women are directly addressed in the outspoken prohibition against marrying the daughters of Canaan in Exodus 34. the reason given in this instance is that these women will persuade their husbands to worship foreign, that is, Canaanite gods. Thereby they will forsake the God of their fathers, Yahweh. (Ex. 34:16) Indeed, this warning is repeated in Deut. 7:3-4 where the same reason is given. This does not mean however that the

While the collected traditions concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are connected by the themes of the promise of the land, the promise of a nation, and the promise that they would be the vehicle of blessing to the other nations of the earth, they simultaneously provide an explicit definition of the community which was to be the legitimate inheritors of those promises. That is, the promises made to Abraham would be fulfilled in those, and only those, who could trace their lineage through his legitimate heirs, Isaac and Jacob. In contrast to the book of Deuteronomy then wherein membership of the idealized community of 'Israel' was 'achieved' through adherence to the dictates of Torah, within the Tetratuch, membership within that community which Yahweh has chosen as his own special possession was 'ascribed' at birth. ¹⁰⁶

Old Testament does not contain sections that seem to contradict this general theological line, such as the case of Ruth, the ancestress of David, and Jael the Kenite woman (Judg. 4:17)

distinction between the Priestly community of Qumran and the early Christian community. In the former, membership of the community is determined by genealogical descent, and as such status within the community is 'ascribed'. In the latter however, genealogical descent is replaced by a commitment to belief so that status within that community is 'achieved'. While in practice it will be found that status within any society may be both achieved and ascribed, the two forms do, nevertheless serve as useful heurestic models by which the essential nature of any given society may be better understood. On the use of models, or 'ideal types' in biblical scholarship see Mayes, A.D.H. 1989:38ff.

HISTORICAL CATEGORIES AND THE PRAXIS OF ETHNICITY

Geary's earlier cited examination of those 'traits' emphasized by contemporary medieval authors as the most significant in determining membership within a particular ethnic group revealed how each was, to a large extent, 'a subjective and arbitrary category', but his conclusion that, "as an objective category an individual's identity is impossible to determine" does not lead him towards an examination of those specific instances in which individuals, or collectivities were given ethnic identifications. Rather, recognizing that the opportunity for such 'thick description', is ultimately lacking given the fragmentary and laconic nature of early medieval documentation, Geary instead proposed to examine *not* why specific individuals and/or collectivities were labeled as they were, but rather why they were labeled at all. 109

Nevertheless, whilst Geary's analysis of this phenomenon leads him to posit a situation of military engagement and/or political opposition as the context within which the employment of such 'ethnic terminology sought to achieve some sort of internal coherence, the possibility that the biblical narrative, or indeed the very definitions of 'Israel' they project, were developed in order to address some situation of perceived (cultural) conflict is rarely addressed, particularly by archaeologists¹¹¹. That is, rather than remarking upon the potentially symbolic function of such 'categories' in the process of group identity formation and boundary maintenance, biblical archaeologists have continued to operate with the implicit assumption that they reflect 'accurate'

¹⁰⁷ Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:21. As an example of the complex ethnic identities of important medieval families, Geary cites the example of the Welfs. Scholars have long been troubled by the fact that contemporaries of the second wife of Louis the Pious, Judith, whose father was a Welf, identified the family's origins differently with various attempts being made to see them as Bavarian, Saxon, Frankish or Alemannian. As Geary suggests, the most reasonable conclusion is that all are equally correct, but were the result of different situational and contextual observations of the family.

^{108 &#}x27;Thick Description' is a term borrowed by Clifford Geertz from Gilbert Ryle to characterize ethnographic description. Geertz describes this form of description as 'a microscopic interpretation of a social discourse which seeks to rescue the said of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms' Geertz, C. 1973:3-30. ¹⁰⁹ Cf. Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:21.

¹¹⁰Cf. Ibid. 1983:21-25

¹¹¹ Cf. Whitelam, K.W. 2000:382-397. JSOT 63 1994:57-87. BI 8 2000:8-22.

ethnographic descriptions of ancient Israelite identity and practice. Nevertheless, whilst the failure to appreciate the various symbolic functions of the descriptors isolated by the biblical text has led to a profusion of supposedly 'archaeological' investigations of 'Israelite' ethnicity which are dominated, albeit at various levels of critical acumen by the 'tyranny of the historical record', the ideological significance, and import of such categories, and the traits they emphasize, has not gone unnoticed.

While at the outset of the 'search for ancient Israel' it was assumed that the biblical traditions, in essence reflected a historical reality which the spade of the archaeologist would inevitably confirm, the increasingly potent impact of newer literary studies has undermined any attempt to mine that text for some fabled historical core. Allied to this radical reappraisal of the biblical picture has been the growing conviction that the Hebrew Bible, as we now have it, is largely a product of the Persian and Hellenistic periods, and is therefore much later than the events it purports to describe. As Robert Carroll has stated in his own inimitable style "...while I can see that there may be something to be said for the view that the Bible contains fragments of material from before the collapse of the Temple of the sixth century, the claim that the Bible as we know it, comes from the second temple period seems to me ungainsayable." While this is in some respects, a return to the earlier position of Wellheusen, as Whitelam notes "the crucial difference lies in what Jobling terms, the 'literary sensibility' of the text".

That is, whilst the legacy of literary studies has been to undermine confidence in the assumption that the 'world of the text' readily coincided with the views of the past which they portrayed, dating the final form of these texts to the Persian and/or Hellenistic, or

As Mullen points out, 'this has led to the continued general acceptance of the descriptions of Israel and the Hebrew materials against, rather than within their ancient Near Eastern environment.' Mullen, E.T. 1993:60/fn. 16:60.

whybray's approach to the nature of history writing is representative of a widely held position, 'Clearly not everything in the so-called historical books of the Old Testament should be accepted as historical fact. We know that bias-free historiography is an impossibility. All history writing reflects the point of view of the historian who consciously, or unconsciously bends the facts in a particular direction by selecting, emphasizing, understating or omitting them as he sees fit...' Whybray, R.N. ET 101 1996:71-72. Cf. Barstad, H.M. JSOTS 245 1997:37-64. Davies, P.R. JSOTS 148 1992. 1997:104-122 Knauf, E.A JSOTS 127 1991:26-64. Knoppers, G.N. JBL 116 1997:19-44. Southgate, B. 1996. Yamauchi, E. 1994:1-36.

indeed first century Roman periods, ¹¹⁶ has not solved the problem of their relationship to the socio-historical backgrounds, or ideological influences which helped to shape them. Rather, methodological difficulties have been multiplied and sharpened as scholars seek to bridge that gap between 'text' and 'social reality' by probing the intellectual and political milieus which both shaped, and were shaped by such texts. It is into this multifaceted and multi-layered arena then that scholars such as Theodore Mullen have plunged in an effort to elicit a response to 'that one aspect of the biblical narratives which have escaped all discussion in the literature, their nature, and function, as written documents."¹¹⁷

Whilst the recognition of this aspect of the biblical material leads Mullen to posit a "select and very specialized group of people who were able to read and teach the text on the basis of the traditional reading which they themselves had already learned," analysis of the context of production of these narratives is subsumed by a focus upon "the function of this private history... and the ways in which it may have been utilized by the exilic and/ or post-exilic communities that adopted it." Though much about the historical situation of the exilic and early post-exilic periods remains conjectural, as Mullen states, "it is reasonable to assume that for portions of the emergent Judahite exilic and restoration community, the period was one of crisis and readjustment." For while the 'exile' itself involved the physical deportation of leading elements of Judahite society

¹¹⁵ Whitelam, K.W. JSOT 63 1994:65.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Davies, P.R. JSOTS 148 1992. 1998. Whitelam, K.W. 1996

Mullen, E.T. 1993:5-6. As Mullen points out, what is so crucial about this aspect of the material is that in the form in which it would have been composed in its original setting, at least to the best of modern understanding of the Canaanite/Phoenician writing system borrowed and utilized by the Hebrews, it would have consisted of only a consonantal text. While one may argue that the development of an alphabetic system would tend to make literacy available to a larger, general public, the restriction of the alphabetic representation to consonants alone confines any immediate or spontaneous literacy to those with the specialized knowledge of the appropriate or proper reading of the text at hand. Without the vowels being present, the text remained highly ambiguous, and could only be read by those who had already learned the appropriate vocalization of the consonants represented in the text. Cf. Graham, W. 1987:97-98.

¹¹⁸ Mullen, E.T. '1993:6. Cf. Goody, J. 1986.

Cf. Jamieson-Drake, D.W. 1991.

Mullen, E.T. 1993:7. This is not of course intended to suggest that these materials were used in one way, and only one way, nor that they could be understood in only one manner by one or more groups. Rather, it is merely to suggest that there is a general way in which these materials might have been utilized by some of the constituent groups that preserved them as part of the prophetic collection of the Hebrew materials. ¹²¹ Ibid. 1993:9.

from their 'homeland' ¹²², the central symbols of attachment to that land lay in ruins. It was during this period then, when threatened with the loss of a distinct identity connected with a discernable past that the need to develop a new and distinctive form of ethnic identity took on extra significance. ¹²³ As Mullen argues, on the basis of A.D. Smith's much celebrated thesis, this was done "by the *conscious development* of social ethnic boundary limitations which, as utilized within the community, helped to develop and maintain a new social construction of Judahite reality which was both continuous with, and different to the past from which it had developed" ¹²⁴. By understanding these narratives as 'transformative vehicles of ethnic identification, community formation and world maintenance' then, Mullen seeks to present them, and particularly Deuteronomy, as a type of 'social manifesto' which seeks to give both form and structure to an ideally visioned ethnic group called 'Israel'.

The book of Deuteronomy, which in its present form represents the covenantal creation of the people 'Israel' on the plains of Moab prior to their crossing of the Jordan to 'conquer' the land, exemplifies a ritual manifesto of ethnic boundary formation. By mutual proclamation, Israel is defined as a holy people, a possession of Yahweh, an entity separate from and opposed to the nations surrounding it. In terms of the temporal nature of the narrative that makes this presentation however, the community 'Israel' is constituted by those present on the plains of Moab. Hence the ritually transformative power of the narrated stories invites a ritual participation that traverses time and includes the present in the imagined and created 'Israel' on the banks of the Jordan. To be 'Israelite' would require one to be separated from all other groups, to be dedicated to Yahweh alone, and to avoid the 'perils' which association with other groups entailed. By accepting, and internalizing this vision of the ideal as outlined in the covenantal obligation of Deuteronomy then, the 'ethnic unity' of 'Israel', so nearly lost in the flames that destroyed the old state of Israel, would be reconstructed, and the 'golden age' recreated. Understood in this way then, Deuteronomy, if not the entire Deuteronomistic

¹²² Cf. Hoglund, K.G. SBLDS 125 1992.

This however is not to suggest that neither Israel or Judah had developed a sense of ethnic identity before the experience of exile, rather it is merely to argue that with the perceived crisis of the exile it became necessary to redefine and recreate what would become 'Israelite' and/or 'Judahite' ethnicity.

history "constitutes a two way vision...it looks to the 'past' to understand the present and to the future to restore the ideals that have been described as part of that past." ¹²⁵

Nevertheless, whilst the aim of this idealized vision of a reconstituted 'Israel' is certainly to forge a community congruent with the demands which Deuteronomy sets out, there is an implicit recognition that 'social reality' in its present form does not conform with the ideological requirements of that particular vision of 'Israel': "this new reality requires a response to the call which Deuteronomy makes". ¹²⁶ For while the priestly and scribal guilds certainly had the access, and ability to foster, if not enforce upon the fluctuating community certain views and ideals, it is most likely that theirs constituted but *one* voice amongst the cacophony of competing visionaries attempting to promote their own particular views on the nature of that community. Indeed, as the various, if not conflicting traditions, which guided the growth and development of the restoration community ¹²⁷ suggest¹²⁸, the period was one in which "a variety of solutions were sought to preserve the diversity of the components which once constituted the ethnic self-perception of Judah." ¹²⁹

It was within this complex web of cultural and religious influences then that the author(s) of Deuteronomy, and perhaps the Deuteronomistic history itself, sought to instigate a program of renewal which, if followed, would result in the realization of that particular

Mayes, A.D.H. 1979:177. As Mullen argues 'The groups who would accept or reject this vision would ultimately decide if the prophetic authority of this speaker had been established and was to be supported by and incorporated into their symbolic universe.' Mullen, E.T. 1993:284.

The development and relative importance of those differing religious traditions in the development of post-exilic Judahite religion have been traced by Hanson, P.D. 1987:485-508.

¹²⁴ Mullen, E.T. 1993:10. Cf. A.D. Smith 1986:46

¹²⁵ Mullen, E.T. 1993:284.

The concept of 'restoration' is one that deserves a special notice in this context. While the biblical materials make it quite clear that the cultus in Jerusalem was continuous with the older monarchic cultus, any concrete evidence for such is lacking. Rather, all of the materials available which provide any evidence for earlier cultic activities come to us through the 'eyes' of this 'restoration community' and their intentional biases must be understood. No clearer indication of the ideological presuppositions of the Second Temple cultus could be found than those which guide the Chronicler's presentation of the cultus as a direct continuation of the heavenly models institutes by David and his designated heir, Solomon.

¹²⁹ Cf. Mullen, E.T. 1993:13. The recognition that the Deuteronomic materials represent but one particular group's collection, collation and compilation of 'traditional' materials by which that particular post-exilic population attempted to define and maintain its identity constitutes the starting pointing point for any analysis of this material and its significance for the issue of ethnic identity in ancient Israel. Cf. Barth, F. 1969:11.

brand of ethnic and religious distinctivness they promoted. Given the fact however that such a program was "one for the future" being entirely dependent upon a response to the call that Deuteronomy makes, *any move* from descriptive exhortation to historical description seems entirely unwarranted, if not highly questionable. For as Stuhlman has argued, "whilst the ideology which defines the true people of Yahweh is one of clear distinction and separation, the social reality of Israel in the world, is one where such boundaries were blurred." ¹³¹

Though it has long been recognized that a concern with group survival gives the Deuteronomistic tradition its distinctive character¹³² Stuhlman's detailed analysis of those laws which provide for capital punishment reveals that "the social environment encoded in Deuteronomy reflects a great deal of internal anxiety and a marked sense of vulnerability."¹³³ That is, while it may exhibit an unambiguous 'in group – out group ethos'¹³⁴ in which dangerous persons are confined to an unequivocal group of foreigners, those outsiders who apparently threaten the integrity of 'Israel's' internal boundaries are in fact, *indigenous outsiders* who co-inhabit the land and who are regularly encountered.¹³⁵ Their 'foreign-ness' lies not in any geographic and/or cultural separation, but rather in their lack of subordination to the divine law and associated community order as defined by Deuteronomy. Indeed, as Stuhlman suggests, this growing sense of jeopardy derived not merely from various individual and group deviants within the community, but at least in part from the leading sectors of that community's hierarchy¹³⁶. Both endanger the welfare and stability of the 'incumbent state'. Both are perceived as serious threats that which must be censored in order not to incur the wrath of the deity.¹³⁷

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¹³⁰ Alt, A. 1953:250-275. Cited in Mayes, A.D.H. 19??:177.

¹³¹ Stuhlman, L. JBL 109(4) 1990:613-632.

¹³² Von Rad, G. 1953. McBride, S.D. Int 41 1987. Mayes, A.D.H. 1979. JSOT 58 1993:13-33. Weinfeld, M. 1972.

¹³³ Stuhlman, L. JBL 109(4) 1990:626.

¹³⁴ Mayes, A.D.H. 1979.

¹³⁵ Stuhlman, L. JBL 109(4) 1990:615.

¹³⁶ Deuteronomy 13:2-6. 18:14-22.

It is these chaotic social forces then, these criminals, who threaten to undermine the social and cosmic restraints of the Deuteronomic ethos and who must be purged *from the midst* of 'Israel'. ¹³⁸

With respect to the traditions contained in the Tetratuch then, one could argue that the narratives concerning the identity of 'Israel' constructed by these stories *complement* the emerging description of an 'ideal Israel' constructed by the Deuteronomic writer(s).¹³⁹ For while the Deuteronomic material erects boundaries for the description of this ideal that tied the identity of 'Israel' to its allegiance to the Torah, the Tetratuchal narratives further define and refine that group by providing it with a myth of ancestry through which *all* members must be descended. Membership within this 'Israel' then would be defined not merely through a response to the call to obey the law of Yahweh, but by way of genealogies and lists which would allow for the processes of inclusion and exclusion of both individuals and families.

As Blenkinsopp amongst others has pointed out, this development was encouraged, in part, by the Achaemenid administration which, to facilitate the productivity of a region often sought to maintain ethnically identifiable communities which they could tax and regulate as corporate units. ¹⁴⁰ Indeed, to secure such distinctiveness they not only insisted upon some form of community self-definition that was expressed by way of a standardized corpus of 'traditional law', but frequently regulated such peoples to their own specific settlements. ¹⁴¹ When viewed from this perspective, the return from 'exile' takes on a very different cast. Rather than the beneficiaries of some enlightened policy of

and its effects must be removed from the community's confines. In either case, the word clearly shows that the danger is perceived to be posed within the prescribed boundaries.

¹³⁸ Cf. Deut. 13:6; 17:7.

¹³⁹ Cf. Mayes, A.D.H. 1983:141. A similar position has been taken by M. Rose who argues that the Yahwistic material was composed to form an introduction to the Deuteronomistic history that extended back to the creation. Cf. Rose, M. ATANT 67 1981. For an extended critique of the documentary hypothesis see Whybray, N. JSOTS 53 1987. Kaiser, O. 2002:289-322.

Blenkinsopp, J. 1992:239. On the Persian Imperial policy and the social and political changes that occurred in Judah during the late sixth to mid-fifth centuries B.C.E. see, Hoglund, K. SBLDS 125 1992:207-240.

¹⁴¹ As Hoglund has pointed out, this decentralization of the population of Yehud during the Achaemenid dynasties is evidenced by the increased settlements in new sites during the Persian period. A 'ruralization'

repatriation of wronged exiles, these newly settled groups were the subjects of a transportation, moved to under-developed or sensitive regions of the empire for reasons of economic and/or political policy. From this perspective then it must be noted that one of the initial forces underlying the actual creation of such a charter may have been a political action imposed upon the developing Palestinian community by a combination of Persian royal administration and a Jewish colonial elite that had been 'imported' to Judah. With such a group claiming descent from the original Judahites who had been taken into exile now in control of the Jerusalem temple and the revenues it generated on behalf of the Achaemenids, issues of descent and membership would become tantamount to political empowerment. It is through this series of developments then, which covered several generations in the process of their legitimation and institutionalization, that a new 'Israel' emerged and took a definitive form during the Persian period, basing its identification on the boundaries that were defined in the collected materials of the Pentatuch.

Whilst such internal challenges and external motivations certainly contributed to the profound sense of vulnerability and encroachment implicit within Deuteronomy and the fundamental shift in perception evident within the Patriarchal narratives, they are also indicative of a social world in which a practical gap existed between the symbolic lines of demarcation which sought to define the religious and cultural identity of the 'true Israel' and the social world from which they sprang. When coupled with the fact that modern Syro-Palestinian archaeology has, as yet, been unable to distinguish a distinctive 'Israelite' material culture, it seems reasonable to assume that the need to define 'Israel' as encountered within the biblical narratives is based *not* on the reality of any existing distinctions, but rather on the insistence that such distinctions *did* in fact exist. Just as the medieval authors who constitute the focus of Geary's examination were seen to present as ancient 'iron-clad' distinctions what were in fact relatively fluid, and in a sense,

that is in direct contrast to the settlement patterns in other areas of Palestine during this same era. Cf. Hoglund, K. SBLDS 125 1992:57-58.

¹⁴² Cf. Blenkinsopp, J. 1992:45. See also McAvenue, S.E. CBQ 43 1981:364.

¹⁴³ For analysis of those processes by which reality is socially constructed and by which identity is defined and codified see, Berger, P.L. and T. Luckman 1966:47-128.

arbitrary characteristics, the biblical presentation(s) of 'Israel' it seems, are no more real than the 'fantasies' off the Roman ethnographers' which Geary critiques. 144

While language, laws, customs, and particularly origin then, are articulated by medieval authors as objective criteria by which ethnic groups may be discerned, as Geary points out, they may have existed within an individual in a complicated, even contradictory fashion: "A man may speak a Romance language, dress as a Frank, and claim Burgundian law. How he perceived his ethnic identity, and how he was in turn perceived by others, if in fact anyone thought of his identity at all, is impossible to determine as an objective category." 145 Similarly, the status of the biblical definitions of 'Israel' as 'objective categories' to be pursued, are compromised by an appreciation of the context of their own creative world. For while many of those transportees resettled in their 'original homeland' under the auspices of the Achaemenid empire sought to emphasize their Judahite descent as an emblem of their identity, 146 the restoration community was not a homogeneous group. At the same time, other options, based on differently selected materials, were collected and circulated, assuming their own shape within the communities that produced them in an effort to retain those things, that for them, formed the basis of their identity as 'Israel'. Similarly within the Song of Deborah, on the basis of the non-participation of certain tribes in battle, one must posit a situation where the textual vision of what constituted 'Israel' was not shared by all. 147

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¹⁴⁴ Cf. Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:17. See also Amory, P. EME 2(1) 1993:10.

As an example of the scribal propensity to cite origin (which can include geographic origin, personal ancestors, or even the common origins of a people), customs, language and law as the defining characteristics of ethnic groups, Geary cites the much discussed passage from Regino of Prüm which dates from the late 800s, '...diverse nations of peoples (nations populorum) differ amongst themselves in origin, customs, language and law.' Regino of Prüm, 'Epistula ad Hathonem' xx. Cf. Geary, P.J. MAGW 113 1983:18

¹⁴⁶ As Davies points out, 'The truth about the society of Yehud is this, then; it is an erstwhile Babylonian province shorn of its ruling class and governed by Babylonians, now become a Persian province and receiving a new population transplanted by the Persians with funds to build a temple and the city of Jerusalem. This society is constituted by a fundamental contradiction: its elite is aware of its alien origin and culture, but its raison d'être implies indigenization: the Persians want the immigrants to accept the new land as their own. So, no doubt, do the immigrants themselves, since it is to be their land.' Cf. Davies, P.R. JSOTS 148 1992:112.

The central weakness in the employment of such discursive categories in the search for an 'Israelite' ethnicity then lies in their conviction, or indeed their anticipation that the peoples of whom they write are in fact clearly bounded and homogenous entities – their constituent individuals sharing clear, uniform cultural characteristics which serve not merely to unite, but to distinguish clearly between 'us' and 'them'. Clearly however, such views tend to downplay the importance, even render invisible, any significant variation within these units. For whilst such discursive categories may indeed please by virtue of their smooth coverage and apparent finality, the projected assumption of scholars that there did exist aggregates of people who, in essence shared a common culture and interconnected differences which distinguished each such entity from all others, 148 cannot continue to serve as an a priori framework for the description, classification and interpretation of archaeological data. As such, any archaeological approach which aims at collecting features in order to compare them with an idealized culture conceived, in its turn, as a fixed and bounded entity, is seriously erroneous. Indeed, as Norton has pointed out, a focus "upon such discursive categories tends to neglect the question of how meanings are socially experienced and lived. The equation of the social and discursive seems to flatten out, or impoverish the texture of social reality." ¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, perhaps haunted by the persistence of the old taboo that 'you can only do history from texts' 150, the assumption that there did exist a stable repertoire of cultural traits characteristic of certain ethnic groups has continued to inform the majority of archaeological interpretation within biblical studies. By emphasizing the situational and subjective nature of ethnicity however, this study has suggested that archaeologists may simply be unable to discover those 'categories' presented by the historical sources within the archaeological record. Indeed, it is even possible to question the very existence of such bounded, homogenous ethnic entities, except at a conceptual level in the abstract cultural categories employed in such discursive articulations of ethnicity.

 ¹⁴⁷ It has been argued however, that properly understood, the text actually indicates that all of the tribes took part in battle against the Kings of Canaan. Cf. Halpern, B. HTR 76 1983:379-401. 1996:76-103.
 148 Cf. Barth, F. 1969:9.

¹⁴⁹ Norton, N. Man 28 1993:756.

Because such conceptual categories are based upon a conscious reification and/or objectification of transient cultural practices taking place at different times, and in different contexts, the adoption of any analytical framework based upon the assumed normalcy of bounded socio-cultural units, be they Israelite, Canaanite, or whatever, only serves to obscure the various heterogeneous processes involved in the negotiation of power and identity. In contrast, the praxis of ethnicity, and this is what is most likely to be represented in the archaeological record, results in a set of transient, yet often repeated realizations of ethnic difference in particular socio-historical contexts. Whilst such practical realizations of ethnicity are both structured, and structuring, involving in many instances the production and consumption of distinctive styles of material culture, they are also a product of the intersection of the perceptual and practical dispositions of particular social agents and the particular interests and oppositions engendered in particular contexts rather than any abstract category of difference. As James, in his review of attitudes towards and representations of Celtic identity points out, "...one can thus argue that most of the time, the 'average ethnic group' has no actual existence, it only appears when individuals need to be conscious of their ethnicity and to manifest it in action."151

In some ways the distinction between such abstract *conceptual categories* and the *praxis* of ethnicity developed in this study is analogous to the distinction Paul Connerton has developed between 'contexts of inscription' and 'contexts of incorporation'. For Connerton while abstract representations of ethnicity are frequently encountered in 'inscribing practices' such as writing, the 'praxis of ethnicity' falls within the domain of 'incorporating practice' such as habitual practices and dispositions, performative acts and

¹⁵⁰ Febvre, L. 1973:35.

¹⁵¹ James, S. 1999:74. As James argues 'In my own case each of my multiple identities is important to me, but most of the time they are not active. I only think about, and actively live one or another in particular contexts: for example, living in Durham, I am sometimes acutely aware of being a Southerner; visiting Scotland, of my Englishness; when in America I can become awfully British, and may also be very conscious that culturally, I have more in common with fellow Europeans in Paris or Naples than with fellow Anglophones in New York, Madison or Fresno. Because, if it appears at all, ethnic identity is constantly generated and regenerated at the points of contact between more than one society, and because the societies involved are constantly changing through time, then the manifestations of ethnicity are constantly shifting too.' Ibid. 1999:83.

bodily comportment. Whilst the former category is seen to trap and hold information long after the author has stopped informing, the latter 'actions' carry messages which a sender or senders "impart by means of their current bodily activity, the transmission occurring only during the time which their bodies are present to sustain that activity." Whilst these two forms of practice, inscriptive and incorporating may persist alongside and in many ways overlap one another within any particular socio-historical context, and as such should not be viewed as two exclusive fixed categories 154, they do represent a useful heuristic device in that they allow one to isolate qualitative differences in the manifestation of ethnicity within different contexts. 155

As Connerton has pointed out however, interpretative history has usually taken inscription, and most commonly textual inscription, as its privileged object of enquiry. ¹⁵⁶ That is, in their efforts to reconstruct past ethnic groups, both historians and archaeologists have colluded in giving precedence to the literary representations of ethnic groups and have then proceeded to search for an isomorphic reflection of such 'categories' in the archaeological record, thereby confirming as accurate the textual understanding of the nature of that group! As this study has argued however, to do so is to commit the sin of conflating two qualitatively different manifestations of ethnicity. If biblical archaeologists continue to pursue the seemingly coherent ethnic categories represented in the historical sources, then there is a risk that a great deal of time and effort will be devoted to the pursuit of an entity which, in essence, did not exist! Contrary to the prevalent assumption then that archaeologists cannot hope to study ethnicity in the absence of historical sources¹⁵⁷, the approach developed here suggests that historians cannot hope to study past ethnic groups without a proper consideration of material

153 Ibid. 1989:72.

¹⁵² Connerton, P. 1989. This distinction which Connerton draws is also somewhat analogous to the debate on the prioritization of 'emic' and/or 'etic' perspectives.

¹⁵⁴ Cf, Bourdieu, P. 1977:20-23.

As with all heuristic devices, the potential for them to slip from enabling research tools to straitjackets of the historical process is all too real.

¹⁵⁶ Connerton, P. 1989:102. Cf. Austin, D. 1997:9-42. Kelly, M.C.S. and R.E. Kelly 1980:133-143. Little, B.J. 1992:1-22.

¹⁵⁷ Trigger, B.G. 1995:277.

culture, and the experienced, practical contexts within which such inscriptive representations, or discourses of ethnicity, intersect and derive their power.

Whilst such a theoretically informed analysis of the dynamic and historically contingent nature of ethnic identity then counteracts the domain assumption that 'ethnicity constitutes the basic underlying essence, or character, of a given group of people which persists through time and can be traced back to a unique origin, it also has the potential to subject contemporary claims about the permanent and inalienable status of identity and territorial association to critical scrutiny. Thus, as with any research proposal which seeks to probe the nature of the relationship between culture, identity and the past, the political implications of the theoretical approach developed in this study are manifold.

CONCLUSION

During the 1990s a burgeoning corpus of literature has emerged devoted specifically to issues of ethnicity, nationalism, cultural identity and politics as they impact on the field of archaeology. 158 For many, this recent concern with socio-political issues has been strongly linked, both by its opponents and advocates, to the critical perspectives which have been developed within what has broadly been termed 'post-processual archaeology¹⁵⁹. However, 'post-processualism' in itself represents a heterogeneous range of approaches, and a concern with the 'socio-politics of archaeology' is by no means restricted to archaeologists whose work would be incorporated within this category. Indeed, broader sociological and ideological movements, coupled with the various groups associated with them, have also contributed to the recognition of such concerns¹⁶⁰. While such influences may serve to exemplify the complex nature of the relationships which exist between archaeology as a particular practice concerned with the past, and the rest of society, it can be argued that 'post-processual archaeology', as a disciplinary movement, has in part set the context, and provided important critical perspectives for exploring the nature of archaeology as a contemporary practice involved in the construction of identity.

Within the context of this critical reflection on the nature of the discipline then, many individual case studies have been undertaken which demonstrate that the use of archaeology in the construction and legitimation of national identity and territorial claims is far more extensive then has generally been assumed. From the nationalist imagination of nineteenth century Danish scholars¹⁶¹ to the often violent territorial disputes of the

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¹⁵⁸ Diaz-Andreu, M. and T.C. Champion eds. 1996 Layton, R. ed. 1989. Shennan, S.J. ed. 1989 Kohl, P.L. and C. Fawcett eds. 1995. Silberman, N.A. 1982. 1989. Meskell, L. ed. 1995.

Post-Processual archaeology is an amorphous phenomenon: it takes many different shapes and forms, deriving inspiration from fields as diverse as contemporary literary criticism, women's studies and human geography. As Earle and Preucel have recently suggested post-processual archaeology is perhaps more profitably understood as constituting a radical critique of the long dominant, 'New' or processual archaeology, of the 1960s and 1970s than a unified research programme or disciplinary paradigm in its own right simply due to such diversity. Because it is such a mixed bag it is difficult to define a common core, a new orthodoxy that has already replaced or, at least is trying to dislodge, the positivist, systemic ecological functionalism championed most stridently by Lewis Binfors and his disciples. For a discussion of some of the major tenets of 'post-processual' archaeology see, Hodder, I. 1982. 1986. 1991. Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1987. Trigger, B.G. 1989. Yoffee, N. and A. Sherratt, 1993. Thomas, J. 2000.

Cf. Moser, S. 1995:150-177. P.J. Ucko JBSS 8 1983:25-40. AusA 16 1983:11-26. 1987.
 Kristiansen, K. JEA 1 1992:3-33. Trigger, B.G. Man 19 1984:355-370.

contemporary Middle East¹⁶², we can readily witness how symbols from the ancient past play conspicuous and often powerful roles in the political present: how archaeological finds may become battle banners for newly imagined ethnic groups and nations: how the often dubious evidence of ancient ethnic migrations and diffusions may be cited in order to justify and legitimate present day territorial expansion: how as a direct result of national funding practices, even individual personal interest, disproportionate emphasis has been given to certain archaeological sites and/or eras which are deemed to be 'politically useful': how archaeological interpretations often both reflect and reinforce the centralizing policies of emergent nation states. Such 'nationalist bias' in archaeological research then is neither a regional aberration, nor an instantly curable symptom of an identifiable scholarly disease. It is neither new, nor unusual. Rather, archaeology, by its very nature has *always* had an obvious political dimension.

While the near universal fact of this relationship between nationalism and the practice of archaeology precludes the realization of any overly optimistic goal of considering it everywhere it occurs, Trigger's perceptive review of this complex relationship has revealed how a 'nationalist agenda' has encouraged archaeologists to abandon a primary concern with evolution and focus their interests on understanding the archaeological record as a history of specific peoples. This 'new focus' often led to a much 'thicker description' of material remains and had "a positive effect on archaeology inasmuch as it encouraged archaeologists to trace spatial variations...more systematically then they had done previously." More significantly, within colonized countries, the rise of a nationalist archaeology, "when combined with an awareness of the dignity of all human beings, helped to promote a resistance to colonialism and racism, both of which often wore an evolutionary guise." 165

Yet, while one can admire the positive role of an ethnically, or nationally inspired archaeology which helps to build justifiable pride in a specific cultural tradition, and

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 1995:277.

¹⁶² Glock, A JPS 23 1994:70-84. Elon, A. JSOTS 237 1997:34-47. Shavit, Y. JSOTS 237 1997:48-61.

¹⁶³ Trigger, B.G. 1995:269-270. 1989:196-206. Sklenar, K. 1983:135-165.

¹⁶⁴ Trigger, B.G. 1995:269.

stimulate research into the development of that tradition, much of the current literature is highly critical of nationalistic pretensions in archaeology. They see a commitment to nationalism as consciously, or unconsciously distorting the past, limiting the questions to be asked, and artificially determining the units that are to be studied. Whether it be Stalin's Soviet Union, 166 Hitler's Germany 167 or Mao's China 168, an archaeology closely identified with 'state-ist' policy all too readily becomes a distorted archaeology which bends, if not ignores, rules of evidence in order to promote a particular set of concerns. Furthermore, and perhaps more fundamentally, such studies have revealed how 'archaeology in the service of the state' all too frequently manipulates archaeological remains in order to justify the ownership of land held 'from time immemorial', or to support policies of domination and aggression over neighbouring peoples. 169

In determining the border between 'responsible' and 'unacceptable' research into a group's remote past however, certain problems do emerge. For if, as Silberman contends, archaeology is always an unavoidably political enterprise 170, when does one deem the use of the remote past as overly politicized and excessively nationalistic, and on what Does one criticize Saddam Hussein's deliberate manipulation Mesopotamia's ancient past to justify his attempted annexation of Kuwait, or condemn the late Shah of Iran's triumphal declaration of 2500 years of Persian monarchic rule, simply because we dislike these figures and disagree with their unsuccessful policies? Are the reconstructions of our own past and/or national identities more acceptable simply because they are ours? As Jones has pointed out, such questions intersect with fundamental concerns about 'objectivity' and the place of political and ethical judgment within the discipline of archaeology. 171

Whether indigenous, ethnic or national, the relationship between archaeology and the construction of contemporary identities illustrates the socially and politically contingent

¹⁶⁶ Kohl, P.L. and G.R. Tsetskhladze 1995:149-174.

¹⁶⁷ Anthony, D.W. 1995:82-96. Arnold, B. Antiquity 64 1990:464-478. Harke, H. 1995:46-60.

¹⁶⁸ Falkenhausen, K. 1995:98-125. Trigger, B.G. 1989:174-179.

¹⁶⁹ Whitelam, K.W. 1997.

¹⁷⁰ Silberman, N.A. 1995:249.

¹⁷¹ Jones, S. 1997:6.

nature of archaeological knowledge. That is, the way archaeologists interpret the past is conditioned by what they individually or collectively believe they know about the past and by the techniques available for recovering, analyzing and interpreting archaeological evidence. In light of this realization, the claim that archaeology provides the only legitimate and authoritative approach to the past has been questioned and the validity of diverse, multiple explanations of the past endorsed¹⁷². Others however have been extremely vocal in their criticism of this approach which they view as a form of extreme relativism. As Kohl points out, within this stance "diversity becomes liability as any review of racist, chauvinist readings of the past would demonstrate. The point is obvious and should not require belabouring but apparently many post-processualists operate under the illusion that such dangerous undesirable tendencies are behind us...In the real world (eg South-East Asia...the Middle East) such readings are still ubiquitous, and still dangerous...In this light post-processual archaeology seems hopelessly academic." 174

Amongst the majority of archaeologists however, the only response to such qualms about the possibility a relativistic slide into multiple, equally legitimate perspectives on the past is the demand for an orthodox set of disciplinary criteria for establishing the validity of competing interpretations on an objective basis, independent of the political realities of the present. Thus, Bruce Trigger suggests that as it develops archaeology acquires a larger database, and new methodologies which in turn act as a constraint upon the imagination of the archaeologist. Such methodological advances then permit the

Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1987:245. However, Shanks and Tilley reject the charge that relativism disables intellectual enquiry by affording equal validity to all interpretations. One can be pluralistic without being uncritical, and different perspectives can enter into a productive debate. Nevertheless, their contention that one can discriminate between different versions of the past on the basis of the value systems which lie behind them does raise problems of its own. Cf. Thomas, J. 2000:1-18.

¹⁷³ Broadly speaking, relativism involves a belief that there are no universal criteria that we can employ to compare or judge between values, customs, beliefs and interpretations. There are however, two distinct forms of relativism, both of which can be observed in archaeology. The first is cultural relativism, often associated with the work of the anthropologist Franz Boaz, which holds that it is inappropriate to evaluate other societies (including those of the past) according to our own standards since they have themselves been constructed within a particular set of historical conditions. The second, more radical variety, is epistemological relativism which questions the universality of our knowledge of the world and the means by which we acquire it. Epistemological relativists may be entirely skeptical concerning the existence of universal truths, the possibility of objectivity and value-freedom, and even the existence of a definitive reality as opposed to a series of equally valid interpretations of existence.

¹⁷⁴ Kohl, P.L. 1993:15.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Anthony, D.W. 1995:82-96. Kohl, P.L. and C. Fawcett, 1995:3-18.

archaeologist to challenge former and contemporary interpretations on the basis that they were either based on inadequate information, or that the data were wrongly interpreted. ¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, as Anthony points out, most interpretations of past human behaviour can be approached from a number of different directions, employing different databases, and analytical techniques, the convergence of which provides a further, though not necessarily infallible, warrant for the objectivity of the results. ¹⁷⁷ While the claim to be able to falsify certain interpretations on the basis of new evidence, or by means of new techniques is dismissed by some as an untenable manifestation of elitism and intellectual hegemony, ¹⁷⁸ Trigger's perspective on archaeological data is not new. Indeed as Harke points out, it represents a variant of the post-war German reaction to the political usurpation of the past by the Nazis, with archaeologists 'standing aside' to claim that truth was being manipulated by others for their own political ends. ¹⁷⁹

Archaeologists however, or any social scientist for that matter, do not occupy some privileged perspective outside of society and its ideological constraints. Rather the theories, concepts and questions which we adopt influence the selection, description and interpretation of particular 'facts', and these theories, concepts and questions are to some extent a product of our own socio-historical context. Regardless of what some may suggest however, such an observation does not herald a descent into a nihilistic relativism which states that evidence is entirely determined by theory and that therefore there can be no basis for arbitrating between competing theories. On the contrary the acknowledgement that there are no neutral, factual 'givens' constitutes a primary condition for strengthening our interpretations through debate concerning the specific socio-historical contexts within which particular concepts and theories were produced and the extent to which they are supported by ethnographic and/or archaeological evidence.

¹⁷⁶ Trigger, B.G. 1995:273-277.

¹⁷⁷ Anthony, D.W. 1995:88-92.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1987:87-88.

¹⁷⁹ Harke, H. '1995:56. Ucko, P.J. 1995:16.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Gathercole, P. 1994:1-4. Shanks, M. and C. Tilley 1987:247-248. Shennan, S.J. 1989:1-5.

¹⁸¹ Anthony, D.W. 1995:83.

This point of view is ultimately derived from the work of Antonio Gramsci who argued that all forms of cultural production are implicated in a 'war of position', in which conflicting visions of reality compete in

It has been argued in this study that a high degree of closure has existed between the reconstruction of past ethnic groups and specifically nationalist discourses of identity in the present. As Handler has pointed out, "nationalist ideologies and social scientific enquiry [including that of archaeology] developed in the same historical context – that of the post-Renaissance European world – and...the two have reacted upon one another from their beginnings." ¹⁸³ Indeed attempts to identify past cultural groups within the archaeological record have been particularly suited to the construction of national traditions which as Devalle points out are "concerned with establishing a legitimating continuity with the past."184 One of the main reasons, it was argued, for this close association was the similarity of the concepts of *culture* that were central to both. Thus while within nationalist discourse 'nations' were assumed to be well integrated, bounded and continuous entities, occupying exclusive spatio-temporal positions, a similar picture of discrete, bounded and homogeneous entities was generated through archaeological theory and practice, particularly within the culture-historical framework.

Within this paradigm it was assumed that 'culture' is made up of a set of shared and undifferentiated norms or beliefs which were maintained by regular interaction within the group and the transmission of such shared norms to subsequent generations through the process of socialization. Because the transmission of cultural traits then was assumed to be a function of the degree of interaction between individuals or groups, a high degree of homogeneity in material culture was assumed to constitute the material manifestation of a people who shared a set of prescriptive learned norms of behaviour, in other words, a clearly defined ethnic group. In this way then, 'archaeological cultures' came to be regarded as organic, individuated entities, the archaeologist's substitute for the individual entities who traditionally made up the historian's repertoire¹⁸⁵. Bolstered by the belief that bounded material culture complexes are inevitably a direct reflection of ethnicity, the

order to secure the support and compliance of social groups. Archaeology can support or dispute conceptions of human nature, or constructions of ethnic or national identity, or accounts of the universality of particular social arrangements. As such it is directly embedded in the political field, and the statements which archaeologists make are always 'politically active'.

¹⁸³ Handler, R. 1988:8.

¹⁸⁴ Devalle, S.B.C. 1992:21.

concept of the archaeological culture facilitated, not merely the projection of an unchanging, essentialist culture and identity deep into the past, but in doing so enabled history, place and people to be tied together in an exclusive, monolithic fashion. In effect national cultures and identities become reified as pure and homogeneous entities and, when projected deep into the past, serve to promote a sense of political autonomy, self-determination and territorial sovereignty in the present. In effect, ethnicity becomes conceptualized as the historical legacy of a 'primordial', essentialist identity.

One of the central contentions of this study however has been the necessity of challenging such static, functionalist conceptions of cultural groups and their selfgenerated histories in order to explore the possibility of a plurality of histories and identities, in both the past and the present. Drawing upon recent research within both anthropology and archaeology, it has been argued, at length, that ethnicity is a dynamic, contested phenomenon which is manifested in different ways, in different contexts and in relation to different forms and scales of interaction. 186 Moreover, the representations of cultural difference involved in the articulation of ethnicity are transient, although subject to reproduction and transformation in the ongoing process that is social life. Within such a framework it was argued, any static, one-to-one correlation between particular monuments and/or items of material culture and a particular ethnic group is untenable because the significance of such material culture is continuously reproduced and transformed in changing social and historical contexts, by different people occupying varying positions within a particular society. 187 Rather, historical monuments and particular assemblages of material culture need to be understood within the context of heterogeneous, and often conflicting constructions of cultural identity. There is no single, unambiguous ethnic association because no such single social reality has ever existed. 188

While such an approach to ethnicity challenges the long held assumption that bounded, homogeneous ethnic or cultural entities constitute the natural units of socio-cultural

¹⁸⁵ Childe, V.G. 1940:2 Piggott, S. ' 1965:7.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Barrett, J.C. 1994:73/171.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Barth, F. 1969. Burley, D.V., G.A. Horsfall and J.D. Brandon 1992. Eriksen, T.H. 1992. 1993.

¹⁸⁷ Hodder, I. 1982a. 1986. Miller, D. 1985. Shennan, S.J. 1989.

differentiation, it also serves to explode the exclusive association of ethnic entities with a single, discrete territory and history. For if particular archaeological sites and/or other material remains have been involved in the construction of multiple, fluid, and often diverse identities in different contexts, then the historical justification for *any* claim to exclusive rights over a given territory, be they ethnic, national or Europe-wide, is effectively negated. Just as such an approach serves to undermine the monolithic and essentialist accounts of the past so often used to support the political goals of certain nationalist groups, so too recent research which emphasizes the discontinuity, transformation and fluidity of identities also has the potential to undermine the basis of minority ethnic claims for land rights and cultural self determination. For while the success of such minority claims is dependent upon the establishment of a homogenuous culture and identity, stretching, in a unilinear fashion, deep into the past, many will inevitably fail such a requirement. Thus, just as such concepts are beginning to provide a means for political mobilization of the past as such concepts are beginning to provide a means for political mobilization beginning to maintained.

Nevertheless, while one consequence of such an approach should be that no *one group*, through narratives of the past, can claim sole and perpetual rights within any particular territory, the motives for this project have not been entirely critical. Rather it has sought to invoke dialogue and negotiation in an effort to address the ways in which specific representations of the past have contributed to the construction of particular identities, and how the domination of certain representations over others is embedded in power relations both within and between groups. Ultimately, it is hoped, it is such modes of interaction and analysis which will facilitate the development of theoretical frameworks which would allow one to explore the ways in which ethnicity is manifested in particular contexts, and to explore the multiple associations between different kinds of identity and notions of time and place. That is, frameworks which will facilitate analysis of the

¹⁸⁹ Pace Whitelam, K.W. 1996.

¹⁹⁰Mackie, Q. 1994:189-190. Murray, T. 1993:109-112. Indeed the irony of the situation, namely that colonial discourse has helped to shape the very discourses which were designed to reject it has been pointed out by many commentators. Cf. Whitelam, K.W. 1996:14.

multiple, twisted and discontinuous histories of our world, rather than merely attempting to impose upon them a linear, continuous and homogeneous past.

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