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Deconstructing Post-Modernism: Gellner and Crocodile Dundee

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Abstract and Introduction.

This essay is an attempt to dispense with the negative aspects of Romanticism and examine whatever positive it has to offer--in the light of ideas scattered through diverse writings of Ernest Gellner.

A paragraph on the negative side of Romanticism, however, is in order, since Romanticism is negative at base: it developed in understandable disillusionment over the excessively optimistic claims of the Enlightenment after the fiasco of the French Revolution and its aftermath. Its discontent was wider than the Enlightenment, however: it was a discontent with civilization as such, as was argued by Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*. The discontent, Freud suggested, was understandable: civilization is repressive: we inculcate in our charges a disastrous distaste for food and for sex. There is no dissent from Freud on this; it is obviously in our tradition to create in our charges distaste for the appetites we share with other animals; thus, the continuing appeal of these appetites creates "animalism," the desire to emulate other animals all the way, expressed, for example, in the writings of Count Gobineau and of D.H. Lawrence. This negativism, understandable as it is (and Lawrence autobiographical *Sons and Lovers* makes it hard not to sympathize with it), has no saving grace. Yet Romanticism also has something positive to offer: a search for integration, meaning, de-alienation. Can the positive ideas of Romanticism possibly be detached from the negative? Post-modernism is an attempt to answer this affirmatively and in detail. The question deserves a better treatment.

The Modern Vision was the vision of the Enlightenment Movement of the Age of Reason. It was a vision of a peaceful world governed by

scientifically oriented sweet reasonableness. The Romantic Movement gained its popularity more through its criticism of the Enlightenment Movement than through its positive substitute for it. The Romantic Movement presented the Enlightenment as alienating, as contributing to the alienation and tedium that are characteristic of the modern world.

Still, the Romantic Movement did attempt to offer an alternative to the Modern Vision, or at least a semblance of one: the Romantic Vision. This was a vision of integrated communal life, governed by tradition and by meaningful traditional values, yet decidedly not opposed to progress. It is hard, if not impossible, to hold a consistent, workable model of a society run by a mixture of tradition and progress. Critics of the Romantic Movement rightly noted that traditionalism forced the Romantic Movement into the Reactionary mould: its progressivism was a ruse. Even its nationalism, its advocacy of national autonomy was a ruse for its Reactionary hostility to individual autonomy: it supported the national right to self-determination as a substitute for the individual right to self-determination (which the Enlightenment Movement supported and the Reaction rejected.)

The mixture that the Romanticism offered, of tradition and progress, was naturally fascinating; it offered a reasonable challenge to generations of Reactionary sociology and anthropology, including Durkheim and Tannen. The Post-modern Vision thus slowly evolved into its present state. It is cheap, but it cannot easily be dismissed. Perhaps it can best be symbolized by Crocodile Dundee, a popular mythological hero. Unlike the Modernist Superman, Batman and their likes, who are firmly rooted in science fiction and "the American way", Dundee is both modern and primitive (Australian bush style) and, of course, he incorporates the virtues of both the Modern and the Romantic visions in a fashion as vulgar as the public can tolerate: he is a true Post-modern.

The fantastic character of popular mythology stems from its admitting the impossible or the barely possible as facts; the post-modern mythology

offers as fact the suggestion that the Enlightenment and Romanticism can be fused to yield a blend of the best of each. To deconstruct a myth, then, may be the proper way, perhaps the best mythical expression of the Post-modern Vision; as such he is a comic -strip version of what Gellner presents as the new Promethean Vision.

Gellner offers a way of dismantling the various characteristics of modern industrial society that our predecessors have accepted and we have inherited from them in order to see if we cannot reconstitute it differently. The contrast between the superficiality and vulgarity of the Dundee myth and the depth and breadth of Gellner's works should not blind us to their shared vision. It may be the best we have, anyway. This is my plea for discussing the very possibility of its realization.

The Romantic and the Post-modern Visions of Integration

Perhaps the most famous criticism of the Modern Vision of society in which classical social science is embedded is this: the vision is atomistic; thus, naturally, pursuing it leads to a society of disjoint individuals. This criticism is valid. Atomos and individuum are etymologically synonyms, after all, the latter term being the former Greek term Latinized. And the Enlightenment's individualism was thoroughly reductionist: all social phenomena, it taught, should be analyzed in terms of individuals and their non-human environments. The Romantics had no theory beyond the claim that rootless individuals are alienated, i.e., they have lost direction; unless they are endowed with characteristics of both heroes and geniuses and are engaged in the growing of new roots for some future societies, they are lost for good. The scantiness of this idea led to the proposal to neglect social studies, especially economics and rational political theory, not to mention cognitive psychology, and to concentrate instead on historical studies, especially of one's roots, namely folklore and such. This suggestion bloomed into a vision of a golden age of the integrated communities of our forefathers. This vision was first taken as frankly mythical, yet it has become a more realistic and informative part of an

overall image, provided by social anthropology. The myth of the golden age became the empirical scientific study of pre-literate society. Pre-literate society has severe shortcomings and limitations and defects and even ugliness. With all of its undesirable aspects, however, pre-literate society has one enormous superiority over the modern world. It is a unified community. One cannot separate the religion of pre-literate society from its art, technology, or daily life: they are all one; industrial society, in contradistinction, is atomized; its diverse aspects are as fragmented or compartmentalized as possible by a strict division of labor that has replaced the integrated happy farmer and artisan with the self-alienated conveyor-belt worker.

This image is one which was first offered philosophically, not empirically; only after its philosophical variant, the Romantic Vision, was thoroughly discredited (see below) was it rendered empirical, enabling to have a come-back, without suffering summary dismissal, as the Post-modern Vision. In both variants, Romanticism and Post-modernism, it was opposed to the Modern Vision of the Enlightenment Movement. The most recent example cited in Gellner's writings is a quotation from Marshall Sahlin's, wherein the classical philosophical, perhaps even moralistic, criticism of the Economic Man of the Enlightenment Movement as selfish, self-centered, lost and self-alienated, is replaced with the image of the hunter and gatherer as the Uneconomic Man; want not, lack not. It follows from the empirical descriptions on which Sahlin relies, Gellner observes, that the agricultural revolution, viewed traditionally as a great boon, "was a catastrophe, both moral and material, not a glorious achievement" (Plough, Sword and Book, p.32).

Gellner himself is a supporter of progress, but he comes to examine its cost, and the possibility of canceling ancient debts so as to be able to retrieve some old lost property. There is no doubt that Gellner has no patience for the campy anthropologists who pretend that magic is equal to science in descriptive and technological power. Nor does he consider

the relativist claim that the truth is divided, that our truth may equal theirs: to the contrary, we live in one world, is his slogan. Nevertheless, he tries to exonerate magic. Though science in his view caused "the great divide" between the advanced and the less advanced parts of the one world, there is value to the magic that was lost with the advent of literacy and more so with the rise of science. Magic -systems are vague, "non-referential" (not endorsing the ideal permit their followers a higher degree of integration than is to be found in the modern scientific -industrial society. "What on earth, literally," he asks (Plough, Sword and Book, p. 78), "could ever induce or enable the various tentacles to cut themselves off from the non-referential main body?" His answer to this question makes his philosophy new. The chief target of his criticism is the Modern Vision, even that vision updated. Those to whom he sounds Romantic, however, do not hear his intended message: limited in their choice of options they fail to entertain, or even to comprehend, his proposal to consider the cost of atomization and the cost of moving forward, not backward.

The Romantic Vision came first as a philosophical vision because it was a backward gaze, and so a fake one, not given to empirical examination, if only because it was openly anti-scientific; hence it was not given to empirical support. In the present age, when science is highly prestigious, it is a handicap to be anti-scientific. This handicap was removed only very recently: the peak of the Post-modern Vision, of the empirical variant of the Romantic Vision, is the recent work of Paul K. Feyerabend (Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 1988), in which Western science is viewed as a tradition and is placed within a set of systems of knowledge so-called, all traditional. The scientific tradition is not always the most advantageous, Feyerabend observes. Also, it is supremacist and even imperialistic and thus highly objectionable: it ruthlessly destroys other systems of knowledge [especially the pre-literate, magically oriented ones, those better conforming to the Romantic Vision].

These, then, are the philosophical Romantic Vision and the (pseudo-) empirical Post-modern Vision. The enormous cost of our having entertained its philosophical variant in the recent past is the topic of the next paragraph; the cost of continuing to entertain it will be discussed in the rest of the next section.

The Romantic and the Post-modern Vision.

Humanity has paid dearly for the Romantic Vision, for the Romantic quest for integration. In the period between the Reaction to the French Revolution (1814) and the end of World War II (1945), in the period that may be called the Romantic Era, the quest for integration was the main feature of the Romantic populist ideology. It played almost the same role in all Reactionary politics, official, semi-official, unofficial and academic, and culminating with Fascist and Nazi politics. The exceptional variant was, of course, official Soviet politics that, though populist and Reactionary, had a veneer of progressive ideology. An episode in Soviet history, known as Zhdanovschina (after the name of its official advocate André Zhdanov), epitomized this populism, which deviated from the Romantic Vision in that its placing the golden age not in the (primitive) past but in the (technologically advanced) future. Yet, like all other Reactionary regimes of the Romantic Era, Soviet Russia, too, made use of chauvinist and other supremacist theories, and they all did so on the ground that these were at the time scientifically respectable. (This is an argument in favor of Feyerabend's criticism of science; he does not use it, however, preferring to speak of Europe's recent past only elliptically.) So much for the incalculable damage caused by the populist adherence to the Romantic Vision, to the quest for integrated society.

All this evil is past history: the Post-modern Vision, the new variant of the Romantic Vision, is certainly not European supremacist: it is routinely understood as a criticism of supremacism and of any other form of parochialism (see I.C. Jarvie, The Revolution in Anthropology, and Gellner's preface there). It has been accused of Reactionary tendencies,

but if this is so, then it is a new kind of Reaction: those social anthropologists who write scientific progress-reports and make documentary films extolling pre-literate tribes in accord with the Romantic Vision present propaganda, but not as political activity. Therefore, the Post-modern Vision is treated these days as a respectable doctrine, though as a mere idle dream, just because it is a nice dream--nice in that it is friendly to pre-literate people and so it is not imperialistic nor racist nor whatever else is associated with supremacist Reactionary politics. Taking it for granted that the Post-modern Vision is benign, lending it respectability has its cost; the cost may be assessed and possibly reduced.

The cost of taking the Romantic Vision and its diverse broad topic. The cost of the very indulgence towards the Post-modern Vision as an idle dream is easier to assess, at least in part: taking it as a respectable but idle dream precludes the discussion of the possibility that the dream is not utterly impracticable, that at least to some extent it is practicable under certain circumstances. Of course, it may nevertheless be judged undesirable, at least as a plan to execute only in part and at a great cost. Nevertheless, it is advisable to take seriously the question, is the Post-modern Vision desirable or not? This question is shelved too, and for the same reason. The vision is treated as unserious. It is even resented when viewed as more than a mere fantasy whose whole function is strictly to insure some anti-racist anti-colonialist sentiment, as well as some entertainment in the form of idle romances not in conflict with the Western way of life (Crocodile Dundee).

What is the source of this hostility to taking the Post-modern Vision as an inspiration for action? Why is it so obviously unthinkable that we should live in a modern, highly technological, democratic, civilized society and yet have a high level of integration of our different functions? Are we so convinced that the modern world must be atomized or regress? Is it attested that toying with magic systems in a high-brow fashion is

dangerous? Why do we insist on the separation of different functions even when it is already demonstrably possible to merge or integrate some of them? For, no doubt, it has been shown that learning, play and work need not be as separated as they traditionally are in our society, that we can integrate them--not ever fully, but to a large extent, in a manner more characteristic of magically-oriented societies, yet beneficially so by our own standards.

There is much opposition to any tendency to integrate our societies. For example, there is little sympathy among educational theoreticians with the Montessori educational system, which aims at some integration of learning and play, and which is much more successful than the standard educational system. Another example is the movement for improvement of the quality of working life, or for industrial democracy. It stands for increased training on the job, for job rotation, for organizing semi-autonomous worker teams and for similar means for the indefinite prolongation of worker education. There is a tremendous hostility to that movement just because its major aim is to integrate work and education. What is the source of this hostility to simple attempts at integration? Why is this hostility particularly strong among the Post-moderns who mislabel themselves Marxists?

The self-appointed defenders of Marx oppose all effort to improve present society short of going to the barricades. Their advocacy of a civil war in a relatively peaceful and secure society is certainly much the greater offence than their opposition to this or that improvement of it (as improvement reduces the likelihood of a revolution), whether improvement in accord with the Romantic Vision or the Post-modern Vision or otherwise. Nevertheless, their hostility to modern society gets particularly virulent when it is directed against attempts at integrating it. Their hostility is not to integration as such; on the contrary, and paradoxically, their hostility to any effort to integrate present society is fed by their endorsement of the Post-modern Vision: this vision gains

respectability on condition that it is not taken seriously and only as long as it is not taken seriously. This proviso precludes realistic efforts to pursue integrative aims.

Taking Integration Seriously.

Taking integration seriously means, at the very least, doing so responsibly --without populism and irrationality. Here comes a thesis that has created much controversy, and I wish to dodge a part of the controversy. Karl Popper noted that one obvious way to avoid responsibility is to go for the jackpot or for nothing. Speaking of social and political engineering (the terminology is that of John Dewey) he distinguished between a total or utopian engineering and partial or piecemeal one; and he recommended the latter, as the former is irresponsible (The Open Society and Its Enemies, *passim*.). Since he did not mean by piecemeal small-scale, and since today some total, non-utopian plans to save our planet are urgently required, it is better to avoid distraction into the controversy about how irresponsible utopian engineering in general is. Suffice it if it is admitted that Popper has scored against the irresponsible revolutionaries who advocate revolutions even if these are avoidable. It would then be also admitted that little chance to go to the barricades just now, it is irresponsible to insist on the choice between the barricades and inaction. Perhaps Walter Kaufmann's characterization of this recommendation as a decidophobic strategy is correct. It is not the whole truth, as some irresponsible individuals are more trigger-happy than decidophobic; yet, in the present context they are better ignored.

The idea that Romantic ends are better not treated as plans is an admission that they can be pursued only Romantically. And the Marxists reject the idea that these ends can be pursued responsibly, that they can inspire programs that may be attempted by critically-minded realists. And those who respect the hankering after the integration of pre-literate

society on the condition that the hankering is not critically debated are merely following the Marxist practice of inaction.

This is a special case of a general point made decades ago by I.C. Jarvie, which has aroused no comment in the literature: every dream may be dreamt as an excuse for insistent inaction and yet it may nevertheless also constitute an inspiration for a plan. (See his "Utopia and the Architect", in our Rationality: The Critical View.)

Accordingly, it is worth pursuing the aim of the Post-modern Vision, the aim of planning an integrated, coherent, progressive society. Let us assume, then, that the hostility to genuine pursuit of integration, regrettably so common in our society, is rooted in some error or another and so need not be studied just now. (It will invite study as parts of some concrete proposals, so as to counter the hostility with appropriate arguments and with compensation for those whose interests will be hurt by the implementation of these concrete proposals.) How can we go about it? Before we can discuss this, we have to glance at the causes of integration and separation.

The discussion here is not an attempt to defend any specific concrete program for partial integration. There are such programs, and some of them were mentioned earlier, especially the partial integration of study and play or study and work (not to exclude the partial integration of work and play). The point mentioned here is advisably general: there is a traditional hostility to the mixture of work and play (in the name of discipline), for example, and there is a traditional proposal that atomizing society is for the good, that excessive division of labor (Taylorism) is excellent for many reasons, and so on. Without going into detail, we may observe that, as in all matters, the truth may go hither and thither, and so there is an understandable hankering for integration that deserves study--for both theoretical and practical purposes. Even the hostility to integration as magically oriented deserves study. Let me then discuss

magic, since many scientifically-oriented writers, such as Gellner, agree that integration is historically rooted in magic.

Between Religion and Magic

Why is magic integrated and religion not? The question deserves a better formulation, since, evidently, we have integrated and atomized cases of both magic and religion. For, magic is integrated in pre-literate societies and atomized in industrial societies in which it appears. (In our Rationality: The Critical View, Jarvie and I have argued empirically that we know of no magic-free society; Gellner is amused by our incomprehension of the view of a cucumber as an ox to be carved coupled with our acceptance of the wafer as the flesh of Christ to be cannibalized.) And religion is atomized in modern society because modern society is atomized (on which more soon), but it is highly integrated in the relatively pre-literate societies of Medieval Europe (as our Romantic historians keep reminding us) and to some extent even of contemporary, still pre-industrialized pockets of Europe. So the question is, why is industrial society so atomized, at least by comparison to pre-industrialized, especially pre-literate, societies in general? This takes us away from the fact that most pre-industrialized societies are primitive and that primitive societies are governed more by magic than by religion, where magic is viewed as a combination of magic rites with an animist-fetishist religion of sorts, and that magic is more prevalent in pre-industrial than in industrial societies.

Perhaps the question is still misplaced. Perhaps it is not industrialization but, as Gellner observes, literacy, or education in general, or scientific education in particular, that causes the frightfully isolated individuals; so much so, that it was surprising for many social scientists to learn about certain strong social ties there. It is not easy, then, to assess its degree of integration, but it clearly is low in the sense that it harbors so much loneliness; yet it may and often does remain magic-ridden, despite the fact that its vicinity to industry makes it prey to missionary influences so

that it usually is Christianized. Voodoo, that paradigm of magic within Christianity, is indigenous to typically slum society.

This leads to the question, though, is there something in magic that makes it a good social glue? Is magic, because of its animism and fetishism, a specifically integrating characteristic of its society? Despite our rejection of Voodoo, may we approve of its integrative aspect and declare that its practitioners are more integrated under its influence than they are after they lose it? This question is seldom asked, because of the interference of the Post-modern Vision. This is but one example of the fact that this vision is less innocuous than it seems. Indeed, the benefits of research into questions that it blocks can scarcely be assessed; in my opinion, the loss is great.

The question, then, is, how does magic act as a social glue?

This question received an answer from anthropologists, especially from those under the influence of the British school. It is very clear, even though I do not think this fact has been noticed before sufficiently critically: their answer is, magic is more integrative than religion, because the former is much more directly related to the empirical world than the latter.

How, then, can magicians hold an obviously false view of the world and keep it integrated with their empirical experience? This question has two traditional answers: the Bacon-Frazer answer and the Durkheim answer. Both require some background explanation, I am afraid. The Durkheim answer is easier to present: it is well within the sociology of knowledge, whereas the Bacon-Frazer is within the psychology of science.

Bacon and Frazer on Magic as Pseudo -science.

The Bacon-Frazer answer is based on two classic discoveries of Sir Francis Bacon, the one that we refuse to accept empirical refutations of our preconceived notions, and the other that we constrain the meanings of terms we use in order to escape these refutations. Both of these

discoveries are significant and they are rediscovered repeatedly and attributed to diverse thinkers, though they are clearly and forcefully stated in Bacon's immensely influential Novum Organum, (1620).

Bacon lived in Elizabethan society, a society permeated with both magic and religion. He took it for granted that magic as he knew it, as well as religion as he knew it, were sets of dogmas, prejudices and superstitions. For, he proposed that any hypothesis one entertains long enough becomes all three: a dogma, a superstition and a prejudice. He did think magic was possible, in the sense that many wondrous claims of magicians, to do with the transmutations of metals, with wonder cures and with longevity, are lies, but they can be approached scientifically and rendered successful. (He reported observations of magical cures.) As to religion, he did think that (since it is not science) of necessity it is dogmatic, and so he preferred its claims to be utterly non-factual.

In Bacon's view, in short, magic is pseudo-science. Bacon considered almost all extant intellectual activity spurious: university scholars are engaged in endless, ridiculous disputation. They did so because, he said, their views are refuted by empirical observations; and, quite generally, refuted errors are not rejected as they should be. This theory led him to suggest the varieties of ways in which apologetic thinkers argue. One of these is particularly sophisticated: the false theories undergo change: they have their scope narrowed so as to exclude the refuting instances as irrelevant to them; the narrowing of scope is done either by altering the intended scope explicitly, or, more often, covertly, by the narrowing of the meaning of the terms used to state them. (Karl Popper called this move the conventionalist twist and surreptitious change; Imre Lakatos called it monster-barring and concept-shrinking.)

Frazer, together with most thinkers, accepted all this as a magic emptied of its contents. He therefore declared religion inferior to magic, as it is a step in the wrong direction the way Bacon described it: the retraction of meaning instead of the relinquishing of error. (The evolutionist aspect of

this theory will explain why magic is ancient in origin, religion its newer replacement. This is highly seductive, until articulated, and then it becomes clear that this is just the Post-modern Vision. Magic rites are extremely hardy and prevalent in all pre-industrial societies and in many industrial ones, whereas Christianity absorbed the animism-fetishism of pre-Christian Europe to a surprisingly large extent. Ironically, this last point about the survival of animism-fetishist faith and of magic rites in European Christendom is the very point extensively and excitingly illustrated in Frazer's The Golden Bough.)

The Bacon-Frazer theory, that refutation of the factual claims of religion empties it of its factual content, is extremely popular. (Its latest growth is Gellner's elaboration of Russell's view of communism as a religion: Gellner proposes (Thought and Change) that Marxism was emptied of all factual content as a result of clashes between theory and facts. This is a bit harder on Marxism than on Christianity, where the counsel, Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's is replaced by the Praxis Theory of the Unity of Theory and Practice.) This is quite remarkable in view of the fact that the theory in question is a psychological view of magic and of religion, according to which both are mere matters of opinion, and inferior competitors to science at that. (Taking science as the body of true, demonstrated opinion, or even as merely the best opinion around, one cannot but see them as ousted by science and their adherents therefore as the rear-guard. Feyerabend's just complaint is rooted in this fact.)

The Bacon-Frazer theory of religion and magic has been ousted by a more sophisticated, positivist, institutional theory of magic and of religion, which is better, though also quite inadequate (as shown in detail by Gellner, in his Cause and meaning in the Social Sciences, Chapter 6, as well as by Jarvie, in his The Revolution in Anthropology). It is inadequate in that it altogether ignores all doctrines as opinions. (This inadequacy indicates that Gellner is groping for a third theory that includes elements from the two traditional ones; indeed, it calls for a theory of

institutionalized opinions proper, a theory I have suggested an outline of in my Towards a Rational Philosophical Anthropology.)

Durkheim on Religion and Magic.

The most influential variant of the positivist theory is that of Durkheim. Durkheim answered the question how do religion and magic act as social glue? His answer began with the acceptance as a matter of course of the Baconian thesis that taken literally religion either has no empirical content or it is bunk: it is mere superstition and prejudice. The true meaning of religion (magic included), then, is not literal but metaphorical: it is society extolling itself. (This theory of Durkheim is a variant of what Friedrich Nietzsche warned against under the title of "secular religion".) (All philosophers who sanctify ordinary language, and who have incurred the wrath of Russell, Popper and Gellner, take this theory for granted when they notice the prevalence of religious contentions in everyday discourse.) Durkheim's disciples have admitted that his theory has been most uncomfortably confirmed by the advent of Fascism and Nazism (see Stephen Lukes' scholarly monograph, Emile Durkheim). Yet, the critic of this doctrine has to take account of the fact that in his wisdom Durkheim clearly stated that religion is more integrative than magic. Admittedly, this same fact is usually overlooked by Durkheim's disciples, and with some justice. When he declared religion more integrative than magic he was not reporting any empirical observation. He was conveying a vision of a highly integrated society, as described, say, at the end of his classic The Division of Labor in Society and a faith in progress of sorts.

His view of the extreme division of labor (on which more soon) as integrative shows him mistaken and/or having a different view of integration than is commonly held. And so, disciple and critic of Durkheim alike should return to the question, of magic and religion, which is more integrative?

For, the question, "is pre-literate society more integrated than industrial society?", is clearly answered in an empirical manner. The better

integration is claimed to have been observed repeatedly. Rightly or wrongly, it is claimed that pre-literate people cannot differentiate religion, politics, economics, ritual, the best candidate for the status of the true explanation is that it is magic that does it. This holds only if magic is more integrative than religion, of course.

Why? What is the difference between religion and magic? The positivist theory takes both magic and religion to be not opinions at all but rites (including the ritual reciting of the official doctrine), and rites with some symbolic social significance. It is but an elaboration of the theory of Durkheim of religion as a social glue, without his claim that magic is inferior to religion. But then both magic and religion are presented--or rather should be presented (but its advocates are disingenuous, says Jarvie)--as of equal status: the question we have asked about the difference between magic and religion receives the denial of its presupposition: there is no difference.

Is there then at least a difference between degrees of integration that magic and religion offer? Yes; and this depends on the division of labor in society, since pre-literate society is dominated by magic and has a coarse division of labor. True or false, this is a move back to Durkheim all the way: we do not know where to stop. And then we have swallowed Durkheim's view that religion is more integrative, whereas according to his positivist disciples magic is (so that possibly the Post-modern Vision is nowadays more a part of social anthropology and the loveliness of remote pre-literate tribes rather than of political theory and a Reactionary pretense of a return to our own lovely folkways). Moreover, Durkheim (and his collaborator Mauss) feared that we must include as social glue, not only magic and religion, but also science: is science too, they asked (end of Primitive Classification), a mere matter of ritual? Hopefully not, they said.

Durkheim's followers among the anthropologists do not raise his question concerning the status of science. His followers among the sociologists,

however, do. Some of them are true Romantics; they play anthropologists and say, "Yes: science, too, is a (magic) ritual". Some of these Romantics still endorse the claim of science to truth: it is both a ritual and a valid opinion. Others stick to the ritual: science has no exclusive right to be the true opinion; no more than magic. Of course, the former have an over-determination on their hands (i.e., too many sufficient causes cooperating in harmony), the others have the success of industrial society to make science a particularly potent magic.

Be it so. Is industrial society better integrated than pre-literate society, though? Durkheim said, yes. The Post-modern Vision says, no. Assume that vision, and Durkheim is out. Elaborate on the argument in favor of that vision, and Durkheim slips in. We are stuck.

The confusion is very interesting, and was pointed out, as far as I know, only by Bertrand Russell, in his Science and Society. Technologically, primitive society has its household provide most of its necessities and so the individual is more integrated, whereas pre-literate society is more atomized in comparison to technological society, since the latter enjoys a higher degree of division of labor and is therefore more integrated — at the expense of its members being less economically integrated. Moreover, we see here that economic dependence and moral dependence appear as opposites of sorts: members of pre-literate society have more of the one, members of civilized society have more of the other. Here, incidentally, Russell is making use of Georg Simmel's theory of the web of affiliation. It is also akin to Simmel's in that it neither reduces the individual to society nor society to the individual, since it views the integration of the standard individual as different from that of the society as a whole; it is thus systemic (ascribing to systems and to its members different characteristics).

Why is Industrial Society so Atomized?

In which manner is industrial society less integrated than pre-literate society? This question is at the heart of the discussion and it is

unavoidable; it is usually avoided due to the Post-modern Vision, which is fuzzy; and then the discussion on it, when at all attempted, becomes equally fuzzy. The answer that can be given the status of an observation report is that in modern industrial society activities are fragmented or compartmentalized, so that members of such a society, even if quite uneducated, can pre-literate society can hardly do so or even notice the distinction between the different activities. And religious thinkers have always looked with awe at people who consider themselves engaged in the worship of God no matter what activity holds their attention in addition to that. Moreover, the fragmentation or compartmentalization observed in any situation whatsoever is but a matter of degree, and its high degree is not a matter of industrialization or civilization but of the puritanical ethos that has traditionally gone with the industrial or modern ethos.

The early Romantic philosophers who put great value on the integration that was later observed in pre-literate society, took for granted that individuals who live in a more integrated life-style are more at peace, more economically autonomous, belong to a more stable and integrated society, and so on. They are allegedly in a better position in all respects except science and technology. The distinction between culture and civilization was introduced by somewhat Romantic writers in various ways, but always as a means to suggest that in matters of culture the uncivilized is superior to the civilized. This has made it difficult for these thinkers to say what exactly culture is; it made their writings difficult and so deep; in brief they hoodwinked their readers.

This leads naturally to a group of questions about modern society, especially whether modern society is necessarily industrial, rather than technologically advanced, and whether it is necessarily, or at all, puritanical, rather than hedonistic. The classical answer is Marx's technological determinism, so-called: history had to progress, if at all, more or less according to the observed scheme; in particular,

industrialization is the only path to modernization. It seems that increasing number of thinkers now break increasingly further away from technological determinism. They find it not difficult at all to imagine a society that is technologically advanced, yet not industrial in the sense in which Karl Marx or Alfred Marshall described the major traits of trade and industry (as large-scale production process utilizing hired labor at the machine's controls and trading its products in relatively free markets). As to the question of Puritanism, the situation is still controversial.

The debate now rages between the school which views science as puritanical (Max Weber and Robert K. Merton if not Immanuel Kant) and the school that views science as hedonistic (chiefly Lewis Feuer, if not David Hume and Adam Smith). The dispute seems to be rather vague. After all (as we learn from Bronislaw Malinowski if not from Karl Marx), a tradition can advocate conflicting views, or profess the one and practice the other. Marx claimed that the pillars of society in his day professed water and drank wine. More likely (as Heinrich Heine so astutely observed), they professed to be hedonist and behaved systematically in a puritan manner.

There is even a classic hedonist excuse for the systematic adoption of puritan conduct: it is known as deferred gratification: the hedonists who do not enjoy what they might enjoy may claim that the enjoyment is all the greater when postponed, and then it is postponed indefinitely till it is too late.

And so, the prime hypothesis for the atomization or fragmentation or compartmentalization of modern society is this. The cause of fragmentation is only indirectly industry or modernity. It came with the modern lifestyle in a package deal (Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book,, p. 103). The package can now be disentangled. We may then choose from the packet what we like, and we may declare, if we wish, that increased integration of one sort or another should play the role of a criterion of choice. But we may also use a different criterion, and even if we choose

this criterion, the outcome is not uniquely determined thereby, at least not as long as we go for increased integration, not for total integration.

The package deal was a complex matter. Even on the question of integration and fragmentation it offered a complex alteration. As was mentioned already, the economic autonomy had to give way to moral autonomy. Moreover, as Gellner notices (Nations and Nationalism), ethical attitudes within integrated societies are always complex due to the very integration of the group: there were always multiple sets of rights and duties between two members; yet relations with strangers had to be highly simplified and each side of a transaction had to prove its reliability. Now this attitude required deference both to traditional religion and to the facts of science, thereby imposing a separation between religion and science. It was the "mixing" of religion and science that Sir Francis Bacon so vociferously blamed for so many of our ills. He thus viewed compartmentalization as the cost of modernization; and he was in error--at least if we are allowed to choose a religion that may very well go with science.

Deconstructing the Package Deal of Industrialism

The package deal required an attitude of utter and complete personal autonomy which was then taken over by the early Romantic philosophers as the vision of the Hero: only a saint or a genius or an otherwise exceptional person can be truly autonomous in the sense of the philosophers of the scientific and industrial revolution. This led to re-enchantment, to use the term of Max Weber and Ernest Gellner, and then the hedonists had to hide behind the theory of deferred gratification, or behind any other flimsy excuses for conventional conduct, in order to endorse harsh, puritanical mode of education and lifestyle, harsh "capitalist" attitudes to workers as lazy, and so on.

The question will arise at once, how much can one separate the items in the package deal? Moreover, what will be the cost of giving up some items in it?

Here Gellner's philosophy comes as a straight answer. On the one hand, on his view science and technology are inseparable (not in the sense that we cannot imagine a society with science and yet without scientific technology; this has been proposed in Samuel Butler's Erewhon; rather they are inseparable in that Erewhonian society is not likely). On the other hand they are separated from almost every social institution, especially those belonging to alternative ways of life, more sophisticated or less so: there is a Great Divide between science and all else. Moreover, thought and change are interwoven. In particular, "the growth of knowledge forces a "trans-valuation of values" whether we like it or not" (Gellner, Thought and Change, p.217).

It is this transition that he deems essential, the crossing of the Great Divide, from the traditional (pre-literate or literate) ways of life and values to modern, science-and-technology-based ones.

We still face the question raised here: what do we have to give up in order to overcome the Small Divide between integrated and atomized or fragmented or compartmentalized society? What can be done in order to render our societies increasingly integrated, though not necessarily in the same manner everywhere?

The first answer is autonomy: we have to educate the citizen to be able to choose and to exercise choice freely. The great modern division between philosophers, social thinkers, authors, political leaders and so on, is that between those who advocate autonomy and those who oppose it. All else is secondary. Customarily, the advocates of autonomy see autonomy as natural and as easy, and their opponents oppose autonomy on the ground that it is an impossible burden. One of the great insights of Karl Popper (The Open Society and Its Enemies) is that attitudes for and against autonomy signify more than assessment of the ease or difficulty of its

imitation: the valuation of autonomy as an important asset will bring about the search for ways to implement it with as much ease as possible. The ones who oppose such experiments are ones who value social stability over against autonomy.

Come to think of it, the same holds for social stability. It is hostility to autonomy that supports the view that widespread autonomy risks social stability and that it thus risks the very existence of society. This may be true, but it is stated not as an empirical observation, not even as a well-tested theory: it is stated as an excuse for the hostility to the proposal to educate the average citizen towards autonomy. Now the theory may be true even if it is an untested excuse: we may want to test it. More likely, it may easily transpire that the excuse is correct only under given conditions, usually very primitive ones, and that accepting the excuse as a general truth supports insistence on the demand not to deviate too much from traditional society, as does the Romantic Vision.

The question, then, is, what should we replace technological determinism with? What are the options of tilting history's course this or that way and what is the preferred option? The answer is pluralistic, and in a multiplicity of ways.

In particular, the reason religion is so remote, if there is any truth to the Bacon-Frazer theory, is not so much that we rescue it as we do, but that we take it to play a sensitive role as a social glue ` la Durkheim and so dare not revolutionize our view of it. This can be easily seen when mystic religion and established religion are compared: it is established religion, as established, that is so remote from daily life in the modern world.

If so, and if social stability is deemed less important than tradition everywhere claims, then the future of religion is wide open, and so is the future of any factor, integrative or atomizing. The choice as to how integrated our society should be, then, is not the choice between civilization and culture, but of the way we prepare our package deal. We may therefore institute a variety of experiments in devising social glues of

diverse sorts. We may then find that the main question is, do we really need social stability, and if not, do we really want it and at what price?

It is the question of price that makes the difference between the responsible and the irresponsible program--or between the program and the enjoyable harmless myth. Myths are at least indicative of what we would like to have were the price right. This explains the success of some cardboard popular heroes as compared with others. And on the basis of this contention we may bring the latest popular cardboard hero, Crocodile Dundee as a witness for our deep wishes. Though there are only two movies about him, it is clear what has caught the fancy of vast crowds on many continents. Crocodile Dundee is a westerner, not a Westerner like you and me, but like any western hero. He also is at home in the Australian bush. He does not move in the bush like a hero in an ordeal: western mythology, including many that have been created for the silver screen, are full of ordeal in primitive terrain of all sorts. Dundee is different. The bush is his home--his second home, no doubt, but that matters little. He has friends in the bush, who are at home in the civilized world: it is their second home. There is no hint that primitive culture and magic are exempt from criticism, and they are certainly not presented in a relativist fashion as equal to western science. But the image is suggested that there are valuable and reprehensible aspects to each society, that one can move freely from one to another with a little human understanding, that a sense of proportion does a lot to bridge gaps. More one cannot possibly ascribe even to serious movies, let alone to trash. And trash these movies certainly are, as there is not even a glance at the problems raised in these movies. They are mere pastime, they entertain. They could not be found that entertaining were they not able to tickle our fancy the right way, even if only as a mild joke. The Post-modern vision may be vulgar, but it presents a strong yearning.