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Factors and Dependencies in Culture: A Revised Outline for Polysystem Culture Research

I. RELATIONAL THINKING AND THE MAKING OF THE OBJECT

System, or better: relational thinking has provided the sciences of man with versatile tools to economize in the analysis of socio-semiotic phenomena. This approach has allowed the significant reduction of the number of parameters assumed to work in any given context, thus making it possible to get rid of huge nomenclatures and intricate classifications. Instead, a relatively small set of *relations* could be hypothesized to explain a large and complex array of *phenomena.* This explana-tory power of relational thinking has been used with some success in various domains of the socio-semiotic disciplines.

The power of relational thinking does not stop, however, at the level of analyzing "known" phenomena, which is basically explanatory. It lies also, and perhaps even more forcefully, in the ability to surmise unrecognized, yet unknown, objects, thus transforming it into a tool of discovery.

By hypothesizing a relation as an explanation for an object (an entity, a process, etc.), relational thinking can arrive at assuming the "existence" of some phenomena which have not been recognized before. The procedures of arriving at such conclusions are naturally less adequate than in disciplines with the capacity to calculate (e.g., astrophysics or quantum mechanics). Nevertheless, the very pioneers of modern relational thinking have fully used this avenue when they suggested phonology to replace the older classification of sounds. Through hypothesizing *relations* between the sounds, a new entity emerged, *the phoneme.* The series of sounds identified for so many centuries by generations of grammarians was thus transformed into something unknown, into a set of opposition-dependent sounds which for quite some time were considered (and may be considered that way even today) as pure constructs, i.e., entities that cannot be directly perceived. Notwithstanding, one more step was taken in the 1920s by Sapir who argued that a phoneme is not only an explanatory construct but the actual cognitive sound unit, rather than the sound *per se.* In this way, what was "actual" and what was an accidental sound changed positions. The traditional sound has become accidental, while the phoneme was analyzed as the

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actual sound, the sound unit analyzed by the human cognitive apparatus.

The phonology example, however, has not been followed by the majority of workers in systems theories. There, the Saussurian example of chess seems to have been more inspirational. In this example, the object of scrutiny is marked for us, and is fully known, by our established cultural traditions. What relational thinking may have added is a versatile and economic analysis of chess, replacing an endless set of intricate descriptions. The same holds for more complex sets like language or literature, and perhaps also society and semiosis at large. In all of those approaches, system thinking provided a better rationale, and perhaps more sophisticated tools. However, the existence of the object of study as such is not contested or disputed, but on the contrary is taken for granted.

This lack of dispute about the object is typical of large areas of the humanities. It certainly has hampered, in my opinion, scientific practice in these areas. For, while the sciences, in their attempts to develop explanatory tools for nature and life have proceeded by constantly modifying and replacing the objects of study as the hypotheses relating to them developed, the humanities still entertain the belief that the explanations may change, but the objects can remain the same. This has become especially conspicuous in the study of human products and activities which have gained canonized status and hence have become established as indispensable for the dominating forces in various societies. I am referring mainly to "the arts," i.e., painting, music, literature, theater, dance, etc.

Russian Formalism, even at its most initial stage, displayed a surprising breach with this tradition. For, however reduced and textocentric the Formalists' view may have been, they attempted delineating a completely new object, which was to be at the same time the best providable explanatory hypothesis, namely "literariness" instead of "literature." This move, unfortunately never understood in methodological terms as it duly merited, at least opened the road for better attempts, and signaled the possibility of re-defining objects independently of the institutions which may have been established to uphold them. The hypothesis itself was later rejected, and it need not deter us here *per se.*

The later stage of this trend, which I suggested to call "Dynamic Functionalism" (the later Russian Formalism, Czech Structuralism, Soviet Semiotics, etc.; see Even-Zohar 1990), has, through the link it hypothesized between system heterogeneity and change on the one hand, and between change and structure on the other, also made it possible, at least since Tynjanov, to distinguish between a manifest set of features and a set of actions which eventually may have managed to establish itself as a field of action in society. Tynjanov's formulation of the shifting borders of literature, as an institutionalized field of action, where the specific features that operate in, and by, this field of action are constantly changing, has made it possible to be liberated from a commitment to objects marked by the institution of society.

Polysystem theory is — as I believe is widely acknowledged — a continuation of dynamic functionalism. Its concept of an open, dynamic and heterogeneous system is perhaps more able to encourage the emergence of favorable conditions to allow the discovery power of relational thinking. The disposition to consider a multiplicity of parameters at any given instance is definitely a procedure which may create situations of deadlock more quickly than is the case in static system thinking. Such situations of deadlock are instances where the explanatory or heuristic power of the surmised relations is insufficient because the answers it allows may appear too limited.

I would therefore like to contend that Polysystem theory has made it almost unavoidable, already close to its embryonic inception in the nineteen twenties, to develop conceptual tools for a large complex of phenomena. I am referring here first of all to works by Bogatyrëv and Mukaiovsky in cultural semiotics, but also to later contributions by the Moscow-Tartu school. It is no wonder that all theories of "literature" were replaced very quickly by theories which aspired at explaining the conditions that enable social life in general, textual production being only one restricted facet and factor thereof. It would not be difficult to sketch a rough conceptual itinerary that leads from the recognition of alternative products — a basic assumption in the history of literature or any other activity — to the conditions under which competing producers wish to take control of the power institution which enables them to market those products they wish to promote. Hence, it is not a complicated way to probe into the source of power of these products which are the target of struggle. Lotman and the Moscow-Tartu school, although still moving within the confines of humans as readers — although as readers of the world, not of texts only — provided us with the concept of modeling the world, of the semiosphere, all of which taken together constitute a culture, an ensemble of tools of comprehension which enable social life.

In short, relational thinking, especially in connection with dynamic systems, has led almost everybody to study culture as an overall system, a heterogeneous set of parameters, with the help of which human beings organize their life. The semiotic approach, as developed in the most sophisticated way by such scholars as Lotman, Uspensky, or Ivanov, is however only one alley which opened at the juncture of *polysystem* thinking and hypothesized semiotic phenomena. The built-in machine of Polysystem theory quickly suggests that organization of life may be not only a matter of more or less passive need for orientation, i.e., understanding the world, but perhaps more convincingly is a matter of active action, of which understanding is just one factor.

On the meta-theoretical level, the question whether an assumed observable "belongs" to a certain assumed set (cluster, "field," or "system"), or is "relevant," or "relatable" to it, depends on our ability to hypothesize (a) "fruitful" (net of) relations for it. Hence the set is not conceived of as an

independent "entity in reality," but as dependent on the "relations one is prepared to propose." No advanced systems theory accepts an *a priori* set of "observables" to be necessarily, or "inherently," part of "a system." Advocating the inclusion into or the exclusion of certain occurrences from the "system" is not an issue of the systemic analysis of an assumed set of observables, but is a matter of the greater or lesser "success" that can be achieved by one procedure vs. another from the point of view of theoretical adequacy.

Naturally, "theoretical adequacy" is not a simple concept. However, the general principle normally followed in this matter is succinctly formulated by Machlup: "The choice between taking a variable as exogenous or making it an endogenous one, a variable determined by the system of functions, is a matter of relevance and convenience" (4). The actual consequences of this methodological approach lead to the development in science generalized by Elias in the clearest possible terms:

> It happens quite often in the development of a science, or of one of its branches, that a type of theory which has dominated the direction of research for some time reaches a point where its limitations become apparent. One begins to see that a number of significant problems cannot be clearly formulated and cannot be solved with its help. The scientists who work in this field then begin to look round for a wide theoretical framework, or perhaps for another type of theory altogether, which will allow them to come to grips with problems beyond the reach of the fashionable type of theory. (Elias and Dunning 189)

In studying culture, workers in dynamic functionalism have found, I believe, that "wide theoretical framework, or perhaps ... another type of theory altogether," to which Elias is referring. This framework does not obliterate the attempts to understand, describe, and analyze better any previously held framework, if the latter is analyzed as a factor of culture. In other words, the polysystemic approach is expected to serve as the theoretical environment for the study of culture allowing it to develop versatile tools which will enable dealing with heterogeneity and dynamics along the same principles that have led to the furtherance of the cultural framework. I therefore believe that the next step should be a program for such a framework, which will be pursued in the second part of this article.

II. FACTORS AND DEPENDENCIES IN CULTURE

The question of the "necessary factors" for the assumed totality of socio-semiotic, or cultural, phenomena, has been enlarged by dynamic functionalism far beyond the pairs of *langue — parole, code — message, paradigmatics — syntagmatics,* etc. Jakobson, in his turn based on Bühler (1934) and the Prague structuralists, ambitiously wished to integrate into his model of language "the

constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication" (Jakobson 1960, 353; also 1980). His major contribution to functionalist systemic analysis has been his insistence that every single event is not a simple relation between an assumed *code* and an implemented *message*, but that both are conditioned by a complex set of interrelated factors. Rather than an idealized unilateral code-to-message relation, Jakobson suggests a whole array of combinatorial axes, involving all aspects responsible for every given act of communication. His celebrated scheme of factors for verbal acts of communication can therefore be adapted, I believe very fruitfully, to the analysis of culture events in general.

The following scheme may thus be produced for the constitutive factors involved with any socio-semiotic (cultural) event:

INSTITUTION
REPERTOIRE

PRODUCER CONSUMER

MARKET
PRODUCT

Beyond differing particulars,[1] it is Jakobson's *frame of mind* that is most pertinent to my suggestion in its general terms. What counts here above all is Jakobson's general approach: Jakobson's life-long view throughout was that "language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions" (1960, 353). This statement unequivocally distinguishes Jakobson's linguistic, literary, and semiotic endeavor from various other trends of our time. Its presuppositions reject the reduced models (perpetuated for quite some time) for which a sign system is a pure structure (or at least can, or must, be studied as such). In those reductive views, all possible constraints that may govern a semiotic mechanism are viewed as "external factors," "background" or "environment." Therefore, if you eventually arrive at a point where you inevitably realize that pure structures are inadequate for explaining the semiotic mechanism, e.g., if you are

1 Jakobson's scheme has "context," "code," "channel/contact," "message," and "addresser" and "addressee." The "context" means "the CONTEXT referred to ("referent" in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized;" an ADDRESSER (e.g., "speaker") and ADDRESSEE (e.g., "one spoken to") may have "a CODE fully, or at least partially, common" to exchange messages between them, and this message needs some CONTACT or CHANNEL to come across. All of these concepts are expressed in my proposed scheme, too, with the exception of "context," which, I believe, is implied by the relations between producer and consumer via repertoire and market. On the other hand, the constraints of institutions on the nature of communication lie beyond the scope of the Jakobsonian conception (and perhaps of "classical semiotics" at large).

prepared to consider the role of the relationship between a producer and a consumer of a product, you may do that only by *adding* one more branch to "the discipline proper," for example, in the case of linguistics adding "pragmatics" (or "socio-linguistics" and "psycho-linguistics"). For Jakobson, contrariwise, studying "language" already includes both awareness and consideration of all of these factors, to be investigated in their mutual relations rather than as discrete occurrences.

This framework requires no *a priori* hierarchies of importance between the surmised factors. It suffices to recognize that it is the *interdependencies* between these factors which allow them to function in the first place. Thus, a CONSUMER may "consume" a PRODUCT produced by a PRODUCER, but in order for the "product" to be generated, then properly consumed, a common REPERTOIRE must exist, whose usability is constrained, determined, or controlled by some INSTITUTION on the one hand, and a MARKET where such a good can be transmitted on the other. None of the factors enumerated can be described to function in isolation, and the kind of relations that may be detected run across all possible axes of the scheme.

Let me now explore in some detail the major concepts suggested in the scheme.

REPERTOIRE

"Repertoire" designates the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the *making* and *handling*, or production and consumption, of any given product. The communicational term adopted by Jakobson, CODE, could have served the same purpose were it not for existing traditions for which a "code" applies to "rules" only, not to "materials" ("elements," "items," i.e., "stock," or "lexicon").

In the case of making, or producing, we can speak of an *active operation* of a repertoire, or, as an abbreviated term, an *active repertoire.* In the case of handling, or consuming, on the other hand, we can speak of a *passive operation*, or a passive *repertoire.* The terms suggested here are for convenience only; the repertoire is neither "active" nor "passive," but can be used in different modes in two different circumstances, as described above, namely, in an event where a person produces something, in contradistinction to an event where a person "deciphers" what others produce.

What does a culture repertoire consist of? If we view culture as a framework, a sphere, which makes it possible to organize social life, then the repertoire *in* culture, or *of* culture, is where the necessary items for that framework are stored. As Swidler puts it, culture is "a repertoire or 'tool kit' of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct 'strategies of action'" (273). This is an adequate description of what I labeled above *active repertoire.* To paraphrase Swidler's formulation for the *passive repertoire*, it may then be

defined for culture as "a tool kit of skills from which people construct their 'conceptual strategies'," i.e., those strategies with which they "understand the world."

The idea of a repertoire suggests not only systemicity, i.e., dependencies between the assumed items of that repertoire, but also the idea of sharedness. Without a commonly shared repertoire, whether partly or fully, no group of people could communicate and organize their lives in acceptable and meaningful ways to the members of the group. In other words, there will be no shared framework to bind them together as a group and provide them with any strategies at all. Naturally, the larger the community which makes and uses given products, the larger must be the agreement about a repertoire.

Students of culture often tend to identify "culture" almost exclusively with a repertoire. I would like to emphasize, in contrast, that the approach propounded here suggests that it would be more fruitful to think of "culture," or any socio-semiotic activity thereof, as the network that obtains between all of the factors interdepending (interrelating) with the repertoire.

While the nature, volume, and amplitude of a repertoire certainly determine the ease and freedom with which a producer and/or consumer may move around in the socio-cultural environment, it is not the repertoire itself which determines these features. Rather, it is the interplay with the other prevailing factors in the system that determines these features, primarily institution and market. For example, the existence of a specific repertoire *per se* is not enough to ensure that a producer (or consumer) will make use of it. It must not only be *available*, but also legitimately usable. The constraints of legitimate usage are generated by the institution in correlation with the market. Moreover, the availability of a repertoire may often be an idealized state from the point of view of an individual producer. For many members in a society, large parts of a repertoire, most importantly the dominating one, may not be *accessible* due to lack of knowledge or competence (such as lack of education, etc.).

REPERTOIRE AND REPERTOIRES

Given the hypothesis of heterogeneity in socio-semiotic systems, there is never a situation where only one repertoire may function for each possible set of circumstances in society. Concurrently, different options constitute competing and conflicting repertoires. Often one repertoire manages to establish itself as dominating, thus excluding the others, or at least making their use either inefficient or unrewarding. On the other hand, the alternative repertoires may be in full use in different social clusters, where the dominating repertoire may be rejected as undesirable, and hence unrewarding, too. Eventually, however, a rejected repertoire may push itself to domination.

The more proliferated the repertoire, ideally the more available the resources for change. This is frequently linked to the age of a given culture. When the

culture is in its inception stage, its repertoire may be limited, which may render it more disposed to use other accessible cultures. When it has accumulated more options, it may have acquired a larger and more multiform repertoire, and may thus be more likely to attempt recycling repertoremes during periods of change rather than seeking extraneous repertoires. However, even when a culture is working with a large and multiform repertoire, a deadlock may occur by blockage of all alternative options. It is then that adjacent, or otherwise accessible repertoires, may be used for replacing the ones people wish to reject. This is how *interference* becomes a strategy of a culture to adapt itself to changing circumstances.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPERTOIRE

In general terms, one can analyze the structure of the repertoire on two distinct levels: individual elements and models, as follows.

1) The level of individual elements. This includes single disparate items, like morphemes or lexemes. Pike's "behavioreme" may encourage us to suggest terms like "repertoremes" as a general term for any item of any repertoire, while using "culturemes" for repertoremes of culture. The borders of this culture unit may be less obvious than the borders of morphemes, or even lexemes, and is often debatable. However, even if we accept that the way people *acquire* these items, produce them, or understand their value, is always via the clusters in which they are embedded, i.e., whole models (see below), individual units may be there not only as abstractions but also as working items for making new strings.

It is questionable whether culturemes are ever deciphered or acquired as isolated entities. However, I do not think we can do without this level either logically or empirically. There may be some use for the idea of culturemes as distinctive features. On the other hand, there is no doubt that culturemes may at least be identified as discrete and distinct entities within a larger flow.

In addition, units may cluster not only horizontally to create strings (and eventually models) but also vertically, i.e., in various conceptual vicinities. For example, the concept of ego, "I," cannot function without that of "you," "he/she," and "they." This well-established hypothesis in all sciences of man has made it possible to think of sets of units as structured options rather than as a disorderly inventory.

2) The level of models. Analytically, models are the combination of *elements* + *rules* + the *syntagmatic* ("temporal") *relations* imposable on the product. If the case in question is an "event," then the "model" means "the elements + rules applicable to the given type of event + the potential relations which

may be implemented during actual performance." For instance, if one possible type of relations is the network of positions into which the various elements are inserted, then the "model," from the point of view of its potential producer, includes some sort of pre-knowledge pertaining to these positions. A knowledge of order (sequence, or succession) is therefore an integral part of a model. It tells the producer what to do when. For example, it is not sufficient to know that certain sentences should be said when addressing someone; one ought to know in what order these sentences should be said.

Of course, in the actual circumstances of producing, people normally do not employ models analytically. Evidence tends to show that they must have learnt them as wholes. But the more proficient the producer, and the more specific the product, analytical knowledge may be quite regular. An artisan or a cook may have acquired their know-how synthetically, but a modern industrialist may have fuller explicit knowledge of the models in terms of their components and combination rules both in time and space.

For the potential consumer, the "model" is that pre-knowledge according to which the event is interpreted ("understood"). Perhaps it should be noted here that the models used for producing need not overlap — and as a rule do not — with the models required for understanding, or any other usage on the consumption end. Again, while "understanding" may occur as a simultaneous act of deciphering, it may also be a series of attempts made by decomposing the actual product to its ingredients, which are then analyzed in relation to their positions in a known repertoire. Thus, explicit understanding, such as verbalized interpretation, is a regular activity in all cultures.

There is no need to attempt classification according to the class, or size, of the model. There may be models in operation for a whole possible event, yet there may also be specific models for a segment, or portion, of this whole.[2] For instance, there may well be a model for "a meeting," but there will also be one for "conversation" during a meeting, etc.

The idea of the *model* is by no means new, nor is it confined to theoretical analyses of culture. It is often used by people in the culture who assume positions of instruction-givers or educators. However, the concept has been avoided since Romanticism because there were attempts, on any level of culture, to create the image of the freedom of individual action, unconstrained, as it were, by directives. In the Romantic view, "creation" means law-free action,

2 Some traditions, especially in linguistics, tend to consider limited strings, i.e., combinations roughly equivalent to a collocation in language, as a separate level. For example, "how do you do" or "shaking hands" may be considered such strings. This level can be dropped altogether, to be viewed as a segment of "models."

and hence original and unprecedented. Boundness is therefore considered as a negative constraint on freedom. Thus, a "true creator" (in literature and life in general), a "free spirit", cannot be bound by extant "models." Thus, it became obligatory to attribute actions taken by individual producers to non-systemic "inspiration, " and those taken by mass anonymous producers to "the spirit of the collective" (such as community or nation). It is perhaps not far-fetched to interpret some trends of individualistic bias in psychology within this Romantic tradition.

The model hypothesis is strongly supported by contemporary work in very diverse areas of culture research, not only in classical anthropology but also in memory studies, cognitive studies (with its concept of "schemes"), and various areas concerned with linguistic and textual competence, such as translation studies. In addition, practical tasks like editorial work, or the teaching of style and composition at school, produce accumulated information about models-at-work. Also, the growing awareness of the degree of givenness of everyday types of discourse (such as conversation and everyday storytelling) in various socio-linguistic and semiotic studies has contributed a lot to our liberation from the Romantic concepts of "unconstrained production. "

Historically, however, attitudes which had been current prior to the Romantic Age did not have any problems with the idea of dictated life. Not only was the act of producing then understood in the context of implementing known models, but the very notion of achievement in any field, even the prestigious field of text-making, was connected to the producer's capacity to successfully implement such models. As Zink succinctly formulates it (apropos medieval poetry): "Cette poésie est une poésie formelle qui dans tous les domaines, tire ses effets, non de son originalité, mais de la démonstration qu'elle fait de sa maîtrise d'un code qu'elle applique minutieusement et qu'elle soumet, à des transgressions calculées et menues" (73-74). The same may hold for the consumer's capacity to decipher such models.[3]

A significant contribution to the link between the socially generated repertoire and the procedures of individual inculcation and internalization is

3 Remarkable evidence of norms prevailing in connection with both the making and understanding of "poetry" in everyday life is the story about the Icelander Gisli Sursson who, relying on the obscurity of the poetical model he was able to use, takes the liberty of impertinently telling the whole world, at a very crucial moment of his life, that it was he who had killed his adversary, something "which he never should [have said]," as comments the narrator. As expected, nobody understands his message, with the exception of one single person, his sister, Thordis, who happens to be his adversary's wife. She "got the verse by heart from the one hearing, and goes home, and by then she has worked out its meaning," only to reveal it a short while later to Gisli's foes. Yet, even she needed some time to perform her deciphering (English translation, *The Saga of Gisli* 1984, 26). In the particular case of Gisli, and medieval Icelandic culture in general, "poetry" is of course not an out-of-the-ordinary sort of action, but a fully usable product for regular interaction.

Bourdieu's *habitus* theory. Bourdieu supports the hypothesis that the models functionalized by an individual, or by a group of individuals, are not universal or genetic schemes, but schemes conditioned by dispositions acquired by experience, i.e., time- and place-dependent. This repertoire of models acquired and adopted (as well as adapted) by individuals and groups in a given milieu, and under the constraints of the prevailing system of relations dominating this milieu, is labeled "habitus": "[It is] a system of internalized embodied schemes which, having been constituted in the course of collective history, are acquired in the course of individual history and function in their practical states, for practice (and not for the sake of pure knowledge)" (Bourdieu 1984, 467).

THE DYNAMIC PARAMETERS OF REPERTOIRE USAGE

In view of the heterogeneity hypothesis, for any production or consumption event, there is no way to predict the exact trajectory of the interaction between the participating factors. Clearly, there are cases with high predictability, such as the more repetitive models used by people, like daily and other rituals. These may appear like ready-made scripts, well-defined flow-charts, hermetically contoured batches. On the other hand, most cases are not like that, but rather of varying degrees of predictability. How much fixedness is required for each single event, or how much leeway is allowed to maneuver, depends on the possibility to combine various models. The latter, in turn, depends on the power of the institution and the position of every single member in the culture *vis-à-vis* the institution, and in relation to the ability of accessing repertoire resources.

Consequently, it seems inadequate to conceive of the relations between repertoire and implementation in terms of fixed execution of a non-modifiable set of commands. Flexible implementation must be recognized as a real option, i.e., one which allows combinations from various sources, as well as errors. It could be helpful to think of the execution of a model in terms of the situation described by Boyd and Richerson, as inspired by Pulliam and Dunford:

> investors can give their brokers a set of initial instructions, which cannot subsequently be changed or canceled. Some investors might wish to give their brokers detailed instructions about which stocks to buy and sell at each future time. In an unpredictable environment like the stock market, such an investment strategy is likely to be disastrous. Wiser investors would give their brokers a flexible set of instructions. (Boyd and Richerson 83)

This means that a model qua set of instructions is not conceived as a hermetically closed batch, but as an open chain with various possible branchings. These are made possible because the actual *mise-en-oeuvre* of a repertoire is a dynamic negotiation between known options and the details of the ongoing event. To quote Boyd and Richerson again: "Humans modify their

behavior in response to environmental changes through a variety of mechanisms. These mechanisms range from the simple conditioned responses that are studied by behavioral psychologists to the cognitively complex processes of rational choice studied by cognitive psychologists and economists" (83).

THE MAKING OF REPERTOIRES

Since we hardly know of any society without an established repertoire, we tend to take such repertoires as the accumulative output of generations of anonymous individuals. Repertoires are thus conceived of as spontaneous creations of "society." This view is incontestable in the sense that we cannot really trace "who generated what" along human history, although it is quite common among historians to attribute certain repertoires to the making of specific societies. For example, school is attributed to the Sumerians, whose *é-dubba* is thought to be the first model for all sorts of schools and academies, as well as their manifold products, such as textual canons. Similarly, "democracy" is attributed to the ancient Athenians, etc.

On the other hand, there is incontestable evidence about the *deliberate* action of individuals in the making of repertoires, whose success can also be witnessed along history. True, mythical, or hardly verifiable figures, such as Moses or Kadmos, are considered with suspicion as to their actual role in the making of the repertoires attributed to them by the literary traditions. But there is an impressive accumulation of evidence about individuals whose role can be verified, who have initiated, elaborated, and successfully inculcated repertoire innovations.

Such evidence is available for various levels. Even in matters considered to be the general creation of large groups, like "language," the making of the specific repertoire required for a language can often be traced to named individuals. This is the case of Luther, Gottsched, and Goethe for German, Lomonosov, then Pushkin, for Russian, Vuk Karadžić for Serbo-Croatian, Ivar Aasen for New Norwegian, etc. Such examples even allow us to be less skeptical of figures like King Ramkamhaeng of Sukhothai Kingdom, the believed founder of the Thai alphabet (and possibly more parts of the Thai culture), or Constantine, who entered the monastic order as Cyril and who is believed to be the founder of the Slavic alphabet and initiator of the Slav's Christian culture.

The same holds for the variety of culture repertoires which may have proliferated, modified or augmented due to the deliberate work of individuals. The origins of repertoire need therefore be viewed under different perspectives. While they may be anonymous, they need not always be conceived of as spontaneous; nor need they be viewed as uninterfered with by the deliberate desires and aspirations of individuals.

THE MAKING OF REPERTOIRE AND THE INSTITUTION

The groups and individuals who are interested in controlling, dominating and regulating culture often are also active in the making of its repertoire. It may be argued, however, that rather than producing new repertoires, these groups — to which we refer here under the common term of "institution" — are more inclined to stick to extant repertoire rather than initiate new options. On the other hand, contenders, i.e., those who struggle for achieving control and domination, may have to do that by offering a new repertoire. In periods where the circumstances are favorable to repertoire shifts and competition (such as times of crisis of whatever cause), such individuals and groups may then become highly involved with the making, not only perpetuation, of repertoire.

REPERTOIRES AND IDENTITIES

It is a common procedure in human groups to extract certain conspicuous items from a prevailing repertoire for demarcating the group as a distinct entity. This is described as creating a "sense of self," or "collective identity." This aspect of culture was already highlighted by Sapir who claimed that "Emphasis [in this aspect] is put not so much on what is done and believed by a people as on how what is done and believed functions in the whole life of that people, on what significance it has for them" (Sapir 311). The selected items may be drawn from any area. The size of the item may be as minute as that selected by the ancient Arabs as a feature of distinction, the peculiar emphatic *d* sound, known by the letter Dâd. Thus, they let themselves be known as "those who pronounce the Dâd, " (with the plausible insinuation: "nobody can pronounce that sound except us"). Certain foods, cloths, scents, bodily features (like beards or whiskers or wigs) and gestures, or general preferences for coziness, cleanliness, or order, are only few of the items widely used.

PRODUCT

By "product" I mean any performed set of signs and/or materials, i.e., including a given behavior. Thus, any outcome of any action, or activity, can be considered "a product," whatever its ontological manifestation may be, be it a semiotic or a physical "object: " an utterance, a text, an artifact, an edifice, an "image," or an "event." In other terms, the product, the item negotiated and handled between the participating factors in a culture, is the concrete instance of culture. Obviously, a culture product is any implemented item of the repertoire of culture.

PRODUCT VERSUS REPERTOIRE

Products cannot be made without a repertoire. No one is able to make completely new rules and stocks for every individual product while in the process of producing it. New items, including new combination options ("rules"), can be generated only in connection with the available repertoire. This does not mean that a product is only an implementation of a model. The repertoire allows more than one possibility of combining both discrete items and ready-made models. Therefore, any instance of producing falls between meticulous implementation of known and established models on the one hand, and innovation on the other. Innovation, in its turn, may be the result of either plain lack of competence, or, contrariwise, of high degree of it. In the case of lack of competence, "errors" may occur and, with the suitable market conditions, these errors may create new repertoire options. On the other hand, high competence may allow deliberate combinations which eventually may be accepted as new options.

Hence, the status of a producer *vis-à-vis* a repertoire should not be viewed as always confined to reproducing ready-made options exclusively. Inasmuch as producing is an implementation of options, it is also, permanently and inherently, a dynamic negotiation with these options.

ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS

It is not a simple matter to determine what produces certain activities, or "fields of action. " Activities normally consist of complex sets of events, thus they are naturally able to generate diverse products. However, it is in specific products that their *raison d'être* normally lies. For example, banks are institutions for handling money, but what is it that they actually produce? It is not "money" (even in those cases when a bank literally prints money bills or make coins), but perhaps "the serviceability of financial exchange. "

Ultimately, the answer depends on the level of analysis. For instance, it is definitely acceptable to argue that the most evident (and obvious) product of speech is "voice" (or "voiced material"), or "sound(s)." Nevertheless, we conventionally regard "voice" as merely the *vehicle* of some other, more important, product, i.e., the verbal message, "language" in the sense of "communication. " Similarly, to take a different example, the product of schools may be defined as "students." Again, this is not an unacceptable answer, in the sense that officially, and visibly, it is students who engage the energy of schools. We talk about the number of students (and society calculates budgets in accordance with them), the life and treatment of students at school, the relations between teachers and students, etc. But even the most conventional views of schools normally conceive of students as *vehicles,* and/or *targets,* of some other products for which schools are supposed to be responsible, i.e., a

certain body of desirable knowledge, and a certain body of desirable norms and views. In this sense, "students" are analyzed only in relation to these products. The success of these issues is evaluated in relation to the ability of schools to inculcate them in their students, and the extent of distribution and perpetuation in society that the students manage to accomplish.

Organized activities like "literature," or "the arts" in general, can be analyzed along similar lines. Even in those periods in which the major effort of literary activities was oriented towards producing "texts," the status of these "texts" was, for all intents and purposes, analogous to that of "voice" or "students" in the examples quoted above. This does not mean that "texts" are transparent in any sense, but only that as an entity for consumption, different levels of texts must be considered. For instance, from a literaturological point of view it may suffice to analyze the patterns of composition and "story," moods and craft manifested in a "text." However, "literature," conceived of in its turn as a field of action, a complex activity which can be analyzed in accordance with the modified Jakobsonian scheme, produces many more products than "texts." For example, it produces also "writers," who in their turn behave in accordance with models gradually established in culture at large. Frequently, such writers, often an obligatory commodity of power, are also major distributors and supporters of the repertoire endorsed by power. In addition, or alternatively, they may become major producers not only of new "literary," but also of the general repertoire or culture. They thus function as "entrepreneurs" who "try to interfere in the social process" (Roseberry 1026).

Moreover, "texts" circulate on the market in a variety of ways, and hardly ever, especially when highly canonized and eventually stored in the historical canon, as integral texts (i.e., the way "literary critics" prefer to see them). Thus one may also argue that textual fragments (segments) for daily use are a very widely used product. Quotations, short parables, and episodes readily referred to are some instances of such fragments. Indeed, in certain cultures, such as the French, fragments are almost all one gets at school from the inventory of the national canon. Hardly ever does one have any contact with integral texts before having reached a more advanced stage in one's schooling.

Further, as has been pointed out time and again (and most effectively by the Tartu-Moscow semioticians), the most consequential socio-semiotic product of literature lies on a completely different level, i.e., on the level of images, moods, interpretation of "reality," and options of action. The products on this level are items of cultural repertoire: models of organizing, viewing, and interpreting life. They thus constitute a source for the adopted models, *habituses*, prevailing in the various levels of society, helping to direct, preserve and stabilize it. These may be achieved not solely by the making of texts, but also, and often more so, by various aspects of institutional activities within literature. The same argumentation holds for "the arts" in general, where the

word "text" can be replaced by "a work (of art)" (sculptures, paintings, musical compositions).

PRODUCER

A "producer," an actor, is an individual who produces, by actively operating a repertoire, either repetitively producible or "new" products. While reproducibles may work successfully for a producer, if the relevant other parties (consumer, etc.) share at least major parts of the same repertoire, "new" products may risk being inefficient, and consequently "unmarketable," or rejected by the target, as well as by the "institution." In short, the common denominator of all manifestations of being a producer in culture is being in a mode of activating a product, in contradistinction to being in a mode of deciphering, or "under-standing," the meaning/function of a product. The competence and know-how for producing is indispensable for any person in a culture, but the degree of competence, as well as the willingness to deviate from accepted repertoire vary greatly.

While the notion of a producer is normally associated with performed products, it may also represent potential products, i.e., "models" (see below). Such models are produced either *directly*, i.e., by deliberate elaboration of items for a possible repertoire, or *indirectly*, i.e., through a procedure of extraction and inference from a performed product. In the latter case, a producer must proceed by first identifying certain features in the product which then can be transformed into models for direct production. This is probably the "normal" way for members in a culture to acquire culture repertoires in the first place. In addition, individuals may act as arch-producers of repertoire, i.e., major makers of repertoires. For example, rulers may on the one hand become a source of repertoire through their actual actions. On the other, they are empowered with the task of supplying items of repertoire by direct directives and dictations. Other individuals may also acquire a similar status through institution and market relations along the ages. For example, intellectuals in general, and especially men of letters, have acquired in some societies a status of legitimate, even licensed, producers of repertoires for society as a whole. This means that they are often *expected*, and in any case *allowed*, to provide new options even when these are neither explicitly requested nor eventually followed.

PRODUCER AND PRODUCERS

Individual producers normally have no particular impact on a culture in the sense that their regular actions do not lead to change, i.e., modifications of a culture repertoire. Even if their actions may have led to such change, they may have remained anonymous and in no sense part of some power factor able to

impose items of repertoire. On the other hand, there are individuals who become engaged in innovative production, and who, sometimes as part of an organized group of similar producers, are accepted, either in an established way, or *ad hoc*, as actual or potential providers of stock. The group-like activity of such producers, certainly the overt, but also the more subtle types, constitutes some sort of "industry" whose products are more forcefully competing on the market than those unmarked products of casual producers. Throughout history, various groups have successfully institutionalized themselves as such industries: politicians, legislators, religion makers and churches, intellectuals, artists (writers, poets, painters), magistrates, etc.

CONSUMER AND CONSUMERS

A "consumer" is an individual who handles an already made product by passively operating a repertoire. "To passively operate" basically means to identify relations (connections) between the product and one's knowledge of a repertoire. In common language this is often described as to "understand," "know what it is about," "work out," or "decipher." Naturally, using these skills is relatively smooth when a consumer is confronted with recognizable products. It is less so when confronted with a "new" product which may then require higher skills of adapting and relearning. Although any person-in-the-culture is normally both a producer and a consumer, the knowledge and skills required for production are not identical to those required for consumption. The higher the complexity or the expertise involved with the product, the more likely the disparities between the ability to produce and the ability to consume. In the plainest terms, the ability to interpret does not necessarily lead to, or overlap with, the ability to act.

The aggregate of consumers is not an additive group of individuals, but a relational network of power which can determine the fate of a product. Actually, this network can be defined as a *market.* When a certain product, actual or virtual (i.e., a model which can serve for making a specific product), is targeted at an individual consumer, its efficiency can be checked immediately through interaction. On the other hand, when such a product is targeted at an anonymous group of actual or potential consumers, the parameters of success may vary greatly and there is normally no way of knowing beforehand what degree of efficiency can be achieved. The aggregate of these parameters, again, can be analyzed as the relevant market.

INSTITUTION

The "institution" consists of the aggregate of factors involved with the control of culture. It is the institution which governs the norms, sanctioning some and rejecting others. It also remunerates and reprimands producers and agents. It

determines which models (as well as products, when relevant) will be maintained by a community for a longer period of time. In blunt terms, the institution may be viewed, like the market, as the intermediary between social forces and repertoires of culture. But in contradistinction to the market, it is empowered with the ability to make decisions to last for longer periods of time. I am referring here not only to "collective memory" as a long lasting cohesion factor, but to the very basic task of preserving a canonized repertoire for transmission from one generation to another.

Official agents who are part of the administration may be the most conspicuous members of the institution. For example, all the agencies engaged in educational repertoires, like the ministry of education, other ministerial offices and academies, educational institutions (schools of whatever level, including universities), the mass media in all its facets (newspapers, periodicals, radio and television), and more, may function as central institutions. Nevertheless, it would be too unidimensional to conceive of institutions only as perpetuators, keepers of culture. The institution may also include, or otherwise give its support to, those producers who are engaged in the *making* of repertoires. These may be in a state of competition with other actors engaged in the same task, normally possessing, however, better positions from the outset. Naturally, this enormous variety does not produce a homogeneous body, capable, as it were, of acting in harmony and necessarily succeeding in enforcing its preferences. Inside the institution there are struggles over domination, with one or another group succeeding at one time or another at occupying the centre of the institution, thus becoming *the* establishment. But in view of the variety of culture, different institutions can operate at the same time for various sections of the system. For instance, when a certain repertoire may already have succeeded in occupying the centre, schools, churches, and other organized activities and bodies may still obey certain norms no longer acceptable to the group who support that repertoire. Thus, the "institution" in culture is not unified. And it is certainly not a building on a street, although its agents may be detected in buildings, streets, and cafés (see, for instance, Hamon and Rotman, with all due reservations; also Lottman). But any decision taken, at whatever level, by any agent, depends on the legitimations and restrictions made by particular, relevant sections of the institution. The nature of production, as well as that of consumption, is governed by the institution; naturally, inasmuch as it may be successful in its endeavors, *given the correlations with all other factors working in the system.*[4]

4 Bourdieu's formulation is very much to the point on this matter as a word of warning against a simplified explanation of reputations: "Ce qui 'fait les réputations,' ce n'est pas, comme le croient naïvement les Rastignacs de province, telle ou telle personne 'influente,' telle ou telle institution, revue, hebdomadaire, académie, cénacle, marchand, éditeur, ce n'est même pas

MARKET

The "market" is the aggregate of factors involved with the selling and buying of the repertoire of culture, i.e., with the promotion of types of consumption. Like the institution, the market mediates between the attempt of a producer to make a product and the chances of that product to successfully reach a target (a consumer or consumers). It is thus responsible for the transformation of attempts into chances. This applies in actual circumstances to the efficiency or lack thereof of an actual product, but it is not the product as an object, or an implemented sequence, that is negotiated by the market, but the repertoire (model, etc.) which makes such products possible. In the absence of a market there is no space where any aspect of the culture repertoire can gain any ground. The larger the space, the larger the proliferation possibilities. Clearly, a restricted market naturally limits the possibilities of a culture to evolve. The market may manifest itself not only in overt merchandise-exchange institutions like clubs and schools, but also comprises all factors participating in the semiotic exchange involving these, and with other linked activities. While it is the "institution" which may try to direct and dictate the kinds of consumption, determining the prices (values) of the various items of production, what determines its success or failure is the kind of interaction which it is able to establish with the market. In the socio-cultural reality, factors of the institution and those of the market may naturally intersect in the same *space:* for instance, royal courts, or literary "salons" are both institutions and markets. Yet the specific agents playing the role of either an institution or a market — i.e., either marketers or marketees — may not overlap at all. A regular school, for instance, is a branch of "the institution" in view of its ability to endorse the type of properties that the dominating establishment (i.e., the central part of the institution) wishes to sell to students. But it is also the actual market which sells these goods. Teachers actually function as agents of marketing, i.e., marketers. The marketees, those to whom the goods are targeted, who willy-nilly become some sort of consumers, are the students. The facilities, including the built-in interaction patterns, which are made available by the school, actually constitute the market strictly speaking. However, all of these factors *together* may, for the sake of a closer analysis, be viewed as the "market."

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l'ensemble de ce qu'on appelle parfois 'les personnalités du monde des arts et des lettres,' c'est le champ de production comme système de relations objectives' entre ces agents ou ces institutions et lieu des luttes pour le monopole du pouvoir de consécration où s'engendrent continûment la valeur des oeuvres et la croyance dans cette valeur" (1977, 7).

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