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IDEOLOGY, CULTURE AND PERSONALITY

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A significant problem concerning the category of "ideology" becomes apparent when we ask questions about the kind of entity to which it is applicable.[1] Surely the answer is self-evident. It must be the person or human subject, the individual mind or consciousness, revealed to us in language and conduct. Persons are the victims of ideological obfuscations; only they utilise ideologies as a means to further their class interests. Ultimately, whatever the determining role of economic conditions and class interest, ideology "works" only when it penetrates and forms individual experience and consciousness.

I

A reference to the history of physical medicine will check any such overconfident response. The "evident" locus of application of medicine, the "body", a separate and internally determining unity of phenomena and processes enclosed by skin, is, as Michel Foucault argues in *The Birth of the Clinic,* the product of a revolution in medical discourses and institutions at the end of the eighteenth century. The "body" becomes an object of medical observation and practice only when separated from the complex space of humours and harmonies which linked health and disease inextricably with environment and regimen. In like manner, we may say in challenge to this "obviousness" that the "person" is not a given entity. Concepts of "person" differ between cultures and between periods in our own Græco-Christian civilisation. And not only *concepts,* but also the practices, institutions and forms of reference which constitute "personalities" differ, and, with them, language and conduct as well.

Marcel Mauss, the French follower of Durkheim, confronted this question in a brilliant essay, "A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person, the Notion of Self".[2] Mauss challenges the idea that the conception of person or self is a natural concomitant of human experience, a datum of consciousness. Forms of specification of individual agents exist in all societies, but they are not necessarily specified *as* "individual" subjects, as unique entities coincident with a distinct consciousness and will. Individuals may be *named,* specified as places within the system of persons and ritual entities of the clan or tribe. Names and statuses *specify,* but they do not "individualise" in our sense. These developed conceptions of the subject as social agent neither individualise nor identify agency with consciousness. Concerning traditional Chinese forms of specification, for example, Mauss remarks that:

> ...the individuality of the Chinese is his *ming,* his name. ...But at the same time it has removed from individuality all the character of a perpetual, indivisible being. The name... is a collective noun, it is something that has come from elsewhere: the corresponding ancestor has borne it and it will be inherited by a descendant of the bearer. And when the matter was considered philosophically, when in certain metaphysical systems the attempt was made to express the matter, it was said that the individual is a compound of *shen* and *kuei,* two more collective nouns, during his life.

He concludes that these notions "which have made the person a complete entity independent of any other save God are few".[3]

The modern Western concept of the person developed within Graeco-Christian civilisation. Antiquity transformed the concept of *persona* from that of a particular status or role, to which was attached certain obligations, into that of a person as an independent moral entity, a being whose conduct is self-governed. Christianity invested this moral persona, responsible for its conduct, with additional metaphysical attributes. It became both an agent and an immortal soul, the well-being of the soul being influenced by the conduct of the agent. Christianity produces a conception of the individual as a unity in its conduct, as a unique entity independent of particular social statuses, and of a transcendent value irreducible to considerations of social utility. It was not until after the Reformation that this form of individuation clearly linked identity with *consciousness,* and made self-consciousness the ground of individual moral existence. This conception is closely connected with the individuation of Christian belief and practice, with an unmediated relation between the person and God—a relation based on prayer as a dialogue, on introspection and the searching of "conscience". Mauss contends:

> The importance of sectarian movements throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the formation of political and philosophical thought cannot be exaggerated. It was they who posed the questions of individual freedom of the individual conscience, of the right to communicate directly with God, to be one's own priest, to have an inner God. The notions of the Moravian Brothers, the Puritans, the Wesleyans, the Pietists are those that constitute the basis on which was established the notion that the person=the self, the self=the consciousness—and is a primordial category.[4]

Foucault has recently given an interesting confirmation and modification of Mauss's view. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality,* he has stressed the importance of practices of *confession* in defining and individuating the subject. The individuation of the subject in Christian practice is not confined to the Protestant sects; the post-Reformation development of Catholic practices of

confession provides another route to the systematisation of conduct and the differentiation of the individual "soul". We should not be surprised that these two writers so clearly link the development of the modern concept of the subject to Christian practice, rather than, as sociological prejudices would lead us to expect, to the development of capitalism or the modern state. Religion was, until recently, the primary means of conceiving and directing *conduct in general*, and was not merely a set of "ideas" about another world but an institution for organising men and women in numerous activities and training them in numerous capacities in this world.

We must be careful to avoid two deeply rooted responses in examining this development of the concept of person. On the one hand, we must avoid reducing it to the process of *recognition* of what has always been present, the inherent and irreducible datum of "consciousness". In this view, the modern person differs merely in that she or he gives explicit self-conscious regard to consciousness. Now Mauss, it is true, treats of the development of the concept of person as the career of an "idea", but this is primarily due to compression rather than to any methodological commitments. Mauss is a loyal Durkheimian to the extent that he believes collective representations are always inscribed in and effective as social relations, practices and rules. We may reinforce this by insisting that "consciousness" is *not* a given datum. The capacities of humans for self-representation and self-reflection depend on definite forms of discourse and definite activities in which they are trained and implicated as agents. These capacities vary. The concept of "person" is intelligible only with reference to a definite substratum of categories, practices and activities which together give the agent its complex and differentiated form. Prayer, for example, does not have one universal form, nor are the attributes of the subjects who support forms of prayer universal. The mechanical repetition of the *Ave Maria* and the earnest dialogue with God imply and produce very different subjects. Thus it is important to stress that subjects or social agents are the differentiated terminals of the varied capacities and practices in which they engage. The subject as social agent does not have a unitary form, even if it is *represented* as a unity in various discourses or before various institutions (confession, the courts, etc.). Thus the same person who serves as the mechanical subject of repeated penitential prayer may become in confession a subject interpellated as a responsible being who must account for and review the whole of its conduct.

On the other hand, we must avoid converting the development of conceptions from lower to higher forms of existence. While this view accepts that forms of personality do differ, this is because it considers certain of them to be lower stages in the process of becoming of the "higher" forms. Hegel, in *The Philosophy of History*, saw the development of the subject (or consciousness) as the process of becoming of an immanent potentiality. He regarded the Chinese and other nations who lack the Western concept of subject as the partial moments of fulfillment of that process, frozen at a particular stage of development which is not that of the subjectivity it is Man's destiny to be. This view must be rejected not only because of the weakness of the teleological explanations on which such

evolutionary schemes depend, but also because there is no objective and non-evaluative way of ranking different conceptions of personality. The metaphysics of "consciousness" are no less metaphysical, no closer to the same original "reality" of human experience and no more necessary than are those of Taoism. The modern concept of the person is no less a *construction* placed on certain specific human capacities and attributes. It tends to obliterate this in its claims, making the "person" an inherent, unitary, given and constitutive reality. Mauss, following in the anti-evolutionary tradition of Durkheim, rejects any teleological conception of the development of personality:

> Who knows even if this "category", which all of us here today believe to be well founded, will always be recognised as such? It was formed only for us, among us. Even its moral power —the sacred character of the human person—is questioned, not only everywhere in the East, where they have not attained our sciences, but even in some of the countries where the principle was discovered. We have a great wealth to defend; with us the Idea may disappear. Let us not moralise.[5]

II

The "subject" has become the object of a great deal of fashionable theorising in recent years, especially in the work associated with a number of French authors, Althusser, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and Lacan. One consistent theme in this otherwise highly disparate corpus is the challenge to the metaphysics associated with the modern concept of the "person". This challenge consists first and foremost in demonstrating that the "person" is a metaphysical concept and not a simple reality. Challenged is the notion of the person as a given entity, the author of its acts and centred in a unitary, reflexive and directive consciousness. This challenge has provoked cries of outrage from traditionalists in a number of disciplines, the most recent and vociferous of whom is the historian Edward Thompson in his broadside against Althusser, *The Poverty of Theory*. This outrage was inevitable. "Anti-humanist" philosophy entered the Anglo-Saxon intellectual arena at a time when personalist and existentialist ideas had become established as a main line of defence against the methodological presuppositions of behaviouralism. It also appeared to challenge the defence of human rights and civil liberties to which large sections of the intelligentsia, left, right and centre, had committed their abilities in opposition to Nazi and Soviet authoritarianisms. The new challenge appeared to threaten a universal determinism, in which human conduct became a mere "effect" incapable of dignity and freedom.

Politics and the metaphysical status of the "person" are closely entwined. The opponents of "anti-humanism" were wrong to suppose that its challenge presages a descent into savagery. What is challenged is not the social *status* of

person, as free agent or subject of right, but rather the claimed ontological foundations of that status and the forms of explanation of social relations which follow from such a claim. The notion that persons are "free agents", directed by a sovereign and integral consciousness, is a metaphysical "fiction". It is not an illusion, any more than the notion of God was an illusion to our recently departed Christian civilisation. It is implicated to a greater or lesser degree in our legal system, in our conceptions of contract and the wage-labour relationship, in many of our assumptions about education, and so on. A follower of Althusser, Bernard Edelman, has shown in his *Ownership of the Image* just how important the theory of the "free" subject is in the categories and practice of French law. It cannot simply be "written out" of social organisation because it does not comply with certain conditions of philosophical argument. The philosophical challenge has a serious purpose, however, and one which touches questions of social organisation. Social organisation and conduct do not, and cannot, correspond to the suppositions of personalist metaphysics. In certain circumstances individuals are held to be "free agents", in others they cannot be. Social organisation and social relations cannot be reduced to the "fiction" of a domain of interacting and consenting "free agents". Problems of social policy, political organisation, and so on compel us to think in other ways. The Christian idea of God gave rise to chiliastic fantasies of a purged and pure dominion in which right would prevail. The metaphysics of the "person" gives rise to fantasies in which social organisation is made consistent with the needs of the "free agent". Fantasies of this kind have abounded before and since Rousseau's *The Social Contract.* They consist in the idea of a libertarian social order in which no man is constrained or compelled to conduct save by his own consent.

Savageries are no less possible in the service of a metaphysics of personal freedom. It was Rousseau who gave us the famous and chilling paradox of men being "forced to be free"—a "forcing" which has been put into practice on countless occasions since 1762. Challenging the metaphysical "fiction" that persons are "free agents" in the interests of a more complete account of the determinants of their conduct and capacities in no way commits one to a rival deterministic metaphysics. It certainly does not mean rejecting categories which organise social relations and practices *because* they have metaphysical implications. All social life as we know it involves beliefs about agents, conduct, and entities which condition action involving such undemonstrable suppositions. Categories like "person" cannot be treated as propositions which are either "right" or "wrong"; these categories cannot be accepted or rejected as such. Beliefs and categories are not mere propositions about states of affairs; they are the means of organising and conducting social relations. Personalist metaphysics is not merely a product of the systems of philosophers; rather, those philosophers construct systems on the basis of the categories in popular patterns of belief. Just as the medieval Christian had regular cause to use the category of God, so all of us today, whatever our philosophical position, are compelled to act on metaphysical suppositions about persons. The categories which organise an inescapable social practice like law—such as contract, obligation, responsibility, fault and guilt—

involve definite suppositions and beliefs about persons. But the social practices these categories articulate do not depend upon individuals being in some inherent, ontological sense "responsible" for their actions and, therefore, in essence guilty or at fault. Rather, categories and doctrines enable conduct to be attributed to persons, and forms of restitution or control in respect of that conduct applied to them. Lawyers and judges use categories which suppose that, except in certain specified cases of incapacity, actions arise from the consciously determined purposes of individuals. Outside the courtroom we can afford to be sceptical. We are not bound to hold this to be so, anymore than we are bound to believe that people can bewitch others.

Social relations can be organised in terms of categories of social agency and beliefs about the determination of conduct other than those categories and beliefs which we find in modern personalist metaphysics. Anthropological accounts like E.E. Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* present us with social relations organised in terms of conceptions of universal determinism, in which concepts of "responsibility" like ours have at best restricted use. Events for the Azande could not be conceived as merely coincidental or accidental. They are instead seen to be caused by some agency or other with an interest in the outcome. A man killed in what in our terms would be an "accident" is for them a victim of witchcraft. But witchcraft is not merely a conscious malice effected through occult means. Witchcraft can for the Azande be an involuntary and unconscious act, a product of the inheritance of witchcraft "substance". In such cases, as when detected by an oracle, the witch was held liable for the consequences of his "actions" even if he was unaware of them, and was compelled to desist and make restitution. In a similar manner, the Azande directed conduct by means other than supposed acts of "will"—any significant course of action was referred to an oracle, and in their belief-system the oracle "decided" whether an action was appropriate or whether any of the alternative courses of action was to be followed. Such methods of attributing guilt or governing conduct would be intolerable to us. Evans-Pritchard was provoked to say: "Witches, as the Azande conceive them, clearly cannot exist".[6] All of us believe this. But can we say, examining our own beliefs with as much scepticism as we can muster, that conscious acts of "choice" exist. We "believe" in them much as the Azande believe in witchcraft.

Evans-Pritchard wisely avoided considering Azande beliefs as mere "superstitions". He demonstrated their implication in social relations. They are not "ideology"—a cloak for "interests" or a means of performing certain social functions—they are simply, functional *and* dysfunctional, part of the warp and weft of Azande social life. In the same way we find such unlikely bedfellows as Mrs. Thatcher and E.P. Thompson, firm believers in the human subject as an autonomous agent, using a category as pervasive in our culture as that of witchcraft for the Azande. If the issues at stake in the contest of humanism and anti-humanism were merely those of one set of philosophical "ideas" versus another, then the question of which general conception of social agent prevailed would be no more important than the dispute between the Big-endians and

Little-endians in *Gulliver's Travels*. The concept of the person is made problematic by forces which determine the conduct from a site other than "consciousness". Psychology was confronted with the phenomenon of psychic "intervention" in the nineteenth century. "Animal magnetism", first propounded by Mesmer in the 1770's, provided a new means of investigation of the mind and a new therapeutic technique. It was through hypnotism that Freud, studying under Charcot at the Salpêtriere, began his path to the discovery of the "unconscious". Freud soon rejected hypnotism as a means of investigation and therapy in favour of "psychoanalysis". He discovered phenomena which, from the standpoint of the philosophy of "consciousness", could only be considered as "psychic intervention"—thoughts, images and wishes emanating from a site *other* than the consciousness of the subject. This *other site* he called the "unconscious". Intervention takes many forms: some trivial interventions in the order of statements, unmotivated by the consciousness of the speaker—like "slips" of the tongue; some regular and everyday—like dreams—which Freud showed could be interpreted as expressing, in an overdetermined and distorted form, unconscious wishes and desires; others bizarre—like compulsions to perform certain acts or avoid objects and places, compulsions unintelligible in utilitarian terms; and others which transform the equilibrium of the body—like hysterical paralysis. The unconscious is not the unthought or the forgotten. It cannot be accommodated as a hidden resource of consciousness, potentially subject to its recall and dominion. Freud scandalised orthodox psychology and philosophy by insisting that the unconscious is a distinct *psychic* system or register, using what appears to be contradictions in terms like unconscious "thoughts" or unconscious "wishes". Freud did more than merely construct an intellectual system. Many others before him had come close to the concept of the unconscious mind, notably Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Freud produced his theories on the basis of a new technique of production of psychic phenomena, psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is the practice of investigation and therapy guided but unconstrained in its results by psychoanalytic theory. Freud strove throughout his life to make the theoretical superstructure of psychoanalysis consistent with the constantly developing results of its practice.

The unconscious divides and fractures the subject of consciousness. Conduct must always be examined with reference to the complex and often incalculable effects of the *other site* of psychic determination. The human psyche is therefore inconceivable as an integral "subject" coincident with consciousness. Consciousness and the ego are formed in the splitting consequent upon the repression of wishes, desires and fantasies prohibited by the social order.

III

Theories of the social agent cannot conceive individuals as necessarily unitary subjects centred in a determinative consciousness. This point is evident if the

results of ethnography and cultural analysis (which reveal *other* modes of conceiving and specifying social agents) and of psychoanalysis (which challenges the view of the subject as self-possessed by consciousness) are taken into account. Perhaps the most serious attempt to theorise social agents as other than constitutive subjects of consciousness is that offered by Louis Althusser. He tries to produce a concept of social agent which does not explain its actions as originating in some pre-given "subject" or in free-will, or as being determined by external causes. Althusser seeks to conceive of a *socially constituted* agent who is at the same time capable of being the "bearer", and not merely the effect or cipher, of social relations. He does so for reasons which are very different from my own. His objective is to explain how capitalism as a system is perpetuated, why it functions as a "society". He conceives social relations as *totalities,* as a whole governed by a single determinative principle. This whole must be consistent with itself and must subject all agents and relationships within its purview to its effects. I, on the other hand, consider social relations as aggregates of institutions, forms of organisations, practices, and agents which do not answer to any single causal principle or logic of consistency, which can and do differ in form and which are not all essential to one another.

Althusser's theory, as presented in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", will be briefly summarised here insofar as it bears on our discussion of ideology and personality.[7] Althusser argues that "ideology" is an inevitable component of any social totality because man's "lived" relation to his social relationships can never be an adequate account of the conditions on which these relationships depend. The thesis that men are self-conscious subjects and that "society" is nothing but the results of their intersubjective relationships one with another is inadequate, precisely because it ignores such conditions. It must convert society into a pure act of will by its various members, as in Rousseau's *The Social Contract.* Althusser argues, on the contrary, that far from assenting to society in a constitutive act of will, men live in an "imaginary" relation to it, a relation which depends on conditions which are, in Marx's words "prior to and independent of their will".

Because they are not mere effects, mere causal traces, men cannot exist in social relations without means of generalisation and systematisation of conducts which are directly accessible to them. This is what the "imaginary" relation is: it is a form of presentation of the agent's existence in such a manner that a definite pattern of conducts is implicated. For Althusser the imaginary relationship to the totality of the subject's social relations is both constitutive of the subject and the basis for its action "as if" it were a free, self-determining consciousness. The imaginary makes the metaphysical "fiction" I referred to earlier appear to be a reality—and, as Althusser says, to the extent that subjects act "as if" it were, so it is.

The means by which such subjects are constituted and given the capacity to act "as if" Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses". ISA's create subjects with conceptions and capacities appropriate to their places as agents in the (exploitative) social division of labour. In the feudal mode of production the coupled

institutions of Church and family conditioned individuals to accept their lot. In the capitalist mode of production the Church is superseded by educational institutions. The coupled institutions of school and family have a more complex task than to justify an exploitative and hierarchical, but relatively simple, class structure that characterises feudalism. They must distribute individuals in roughly the right proportions required by a complex division of labour based formally not on status but on ability and acquired skill. The educational system must produce many people capable of functioning as managers, as technicians, as skilled workers, and as unskilled workers who accept and conform to their allotted role in this (exploitative) social division of labour. ISA's must make subjects capable of being exploited; and they must produce subjects for whom, at the same time, this exploitation is invisible. They must "live" their social relations in a specific "imaginary" manner, one which makes work appear to be a chosen and necessary conduct.

The subject and its imaginary relation are constituted through the ideological mechanism of "interpellation". This mechanism involves what Althusser calls the "dual-mirror" structure. This structure is composed of a master Subject (the Other, who "hails" the subject) and the subject (who is hailed, "interpellated"—literally, interrupted by being spoken to). This structure constitutes concrete individuals as social subjects, who are assigned the attributes of the definite ideological formation. The subject is constituted through its recognition of an imaginary master Subject (God, conscience, etc.) which hails its recogniser. The Subject addresses the subject, recognising it, speaking to it as a subject. In being interrupted by and in recognising this address, the subject recognises itself as subject, as spoken to as a subject. All ideology involves a form of master Subject as one pole of the dual-mirror relation. This structure of duality is called a "specular", a reflection and counter-reflection of a single image. The being the subject becomes is a reflection of its Other: the Subject made by Its word in Its image. Subject and subject exist only in mutual recognition. The subject comes into existence as subject only through its recognition of itself in the Subject, only because it accepts both being spoken to and being the content of that which is spoken. The Subject exists only through its recognition by the subject; it has no being apart from its effects, apart from its activation in the recognition by the subjects. There is no originary constitutive Subject or subject prior to this imaginary dual-mirror structure. Concrete individuals become social subjects of a definite form through this process. This process begins with the infant in the family (the being of the mother becomes whole through the imaginary, as an Other [it should be noted that Althusser draws on the concepts of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan]) and develops as the child encounters articulated ideological systems (religion, ethics, knowledge) and enters the social practice of the school. Through "living" the commands of the Subject, the subject constitutes itself as the bearer of a pattern of conduct.

Constituted as a subject in the imaginary relation to the Subject, the subject recognises itself as *constitutive*. It is spoken to, interrupted, as if it were an already existing, self-subsistent being-as-subject. The Subject speaks to it as if it

were a constitutive subject and the subject responds by recognising itself as such. The effect of interpellation is to constitute a subject which thinks of itself as free, which chooses to obey the commands directed at it by the Subject, and which commits itself to patterned actions as the consequences of principles it itself has chosen. Subjects "work by themselves", internalising their subordination in and by ideology as choice and autonomous will: "the individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection".[8] It is in this way that the ISA's produce subjects capable both of operating in the ways required by the relations of production and of accepting the forms of imaginary representation of those relations as necessity. Ideological practice thus serves to provide agents appropriate to a certain form of totality, while this "society effect" is produced by articulating the subjects into structures through the imaginary relation.

Althusser's theory is ingenious and suggestive. It explains the interrelation between a particular form of the subject and a pattern of conduct. It accepts the necessity of *constituting* agents. It correctly recognises that the social agent is not given in the human individual, and at the same time that the result is an *agent*, whose conduct, although patterned, is not determined. But it has a number of important weaknesses. These generally derive from Althusser's attempt to link this concept of subject to the question of how a mode of production, as a totality, reproduces itself. The result of this linkage is to convert the agent into a mere means of continuing the system, a socially obedient cipher. The concrete individual and the subject of "interpellation" tend to be identified. As a result, Althusser's subject becomes identical with the unitary self-possessed subject of "consciousness".

But the dual-mirror structure of interpellation is historically specific. It characterises only *certain* forms of social personality. It fits most clearly the modern Christian concept of the person as a subject before God. Now, within Christian religious doctrine and practice, the person is indeed treated as a patrimony or property given by God into the subject's own charge; the person is the steward of his own soul and answerable for it before God. But there are *other* forms of specification of social agents which do not make them unitary, self-possessed entities whose whole conduct is under the surveillance of an all-seeing eye. In *other* religions, for instance those of the Homeric Greeks, or of peoples who have become anthropological classics like the Azande, there is no single "Other", who hails the subject. Rather there is a multiplicity of expectations and taboos related to context, and conduct is not subject to the notion of a unitary locus of supervision. Again, the "consciencisation" of conduct is by no means inevitable. Conduct may be patterned, but not by reference to a systematicity in the *will* of the agent; it may depend more on the decisions of non-subjective and non-manipulable techniques like oracles. Systematicity in conduct, therefore, may not be located by the prevailing social discourses *in* the subject, but in a pattern of cultural obligations and techniques. Other "mechanisms" of ideology would be needed to account for these different social forms of construction of personality.

Althusser tends to assume that the "consciencisation" of conduct leads to social *order*. This is because he conceives ideologies as deriving, ultimately, from a coherent social whole whose needs they serve. Once this supposition is removed, the systematisation of conduct by reference to an ideological doctrine and its interpretation by "conscience" are by no means conservative and preservative of social stability. They can equally serve as a means of deviation from patterns of conduct specified by authority. If the Reformation ushers in this conception of person and conscience, it also confirms this point, for it began with an act of unparalleled religious disobedience. Luther's "Here I stand, I can do no other" exemplifies the socially explosive nature of the person as the steward of his own soul. If the "Other" is a transcendental subject, whose commands cannot be fixed in prescribed moralities, then prophecy, revelation and judgment can serve to plead God's Will against social obligation or law. Doctrines systematising conduct can serve many different and often unexpected roles. This should make it clear that "values" have no necessary social consequences and no inherent logic in social relations: a point worth insisting on when attention to issues such as these almost invariably conjures up the name of Max Weber and the dreaded charge of "idealism". Confucianism, for example, is generally assumed to be the ideological foundation of a stable, hierarchical and patrician social order. But Liu Shao Chi's *How to be a Good Communist*, a text for revolutionaries, is suffused with a Confucian ethic: a point which did not go unnoticed in the later stages of the Cultural Revolution. A great deal of revolutionary discourse transforms and utilises religious models; such discourse substitutes "nation" or "people" for God as the reference-point before which conduct is judged and justified. This is not a criticism of such discourse, merely an illustration that "values" and ways of thinking are not confined to definite social locations.

"Consciencisation" has its limits, however, for the concrete individual is *not* a "subject". The "steward" does not confront a unitary entity. Discourse and statements cannot be confined to an origin in consciousness—as forms of "interruption", slips of the tongue, dreams, and so on indicate. Conduct likewise owes part of its determination (and by no means the minor part) to that *other site*—as compulsions, obsessions, fears and aversions indicate. We must never reduce individual social agents to obedient social performers of required roles or inflate persons into "free agents" rather than entities that operate "as if" they were "free agents".

But forms of systematisation of conduct and social forms of personality *do* differ qualitatively in the capacities and attributes they make possible. Different qualities of conduct between civilisations are often considered absurd, because all too often they have been conceived in an essentialist manner. Culturalist anthropology, as exemplified by Ruth Benedict or Margaret Mead, often registers these differences but makes them an emanation of culture patterns as such. "Cultures" are a form of totality no less dubious than Althusser's "mode of production". "Culture" conceived in this sense unifies a complex of discourses, practices and institutions as if they expressed a common *habitus* or spirit. Belief "systems" are seldom systematic either in their component discourses and categories or in their

social consequences. "Culture" is at best a limited practical and not an explanatory device. Hence attempts by writers like E.P. Thompson to get away from the economic determinism and theoretical rigidity of Marxism by importing categories like "culture" or "experience" fail, precisely because these categories offer as many problems as they solve if they are taken seriously as theoretical concepts. Thompson is dependent on the very category of "person" which I have tried to show is culturally specific and more a category implicated in the practices of our "culture" than a means of explanation of it.[9]

Althusser's work was introduced here in order to indicate that the specific forms in which social subjects are constituted have important consequences, consequences which would not arise were his theory no more than a variant of universal determinism. Althusser's theory draws directly on a cultural tradition, the significance of which it hardly bothers to recognize. Our civilisation has displaced the subject of Christian belief and the mass of social disciplines and practices that accompanied it. Althusser's "school-family-couple" lacks an adequate substitute for this complex. Only in this century have we attached to secular educational institutions the tasks of training and socialisation previously conducted under the ægis of religious institutions, and invested education with some of the expectations of a "better world" previously associated with religion. Most of us no longer believe we will be judged in another world, or accept the need to steward our souls, or accept the stewardship of the confessor. This is a double-edged good. For all the benefits of freedom of conduct or freedom from anxiety which stem from a decline in religious practice, subjects are no longer "interpellated" as obligated to duty and charity. We face problems of motivating people to behave in altruistic and considerate, dignified and conscientious ways without transcendental goals. This is not a matter of "ideals" or "morals" but of a daily practical mechanism of conduct, keyed-in to practices and institutions. No civilisation can provide its members with means of conducting themselves that depend entirely for compliance and performance on utilities, pleasures and satisfactions, and reasons. Means to resolve conflicts, to cope with failures and suffering, to endure everyday dullness, are necessary in every social order. Social democrats and libertarians alike predicate the future of social organisations on an unproblematic world of satisfactions: the one a managed utopia of material means provided by economic growth, the other a world of conflictless plenty in which there is popular freedom and an end to exploitation and oppression. Those Marxists (if there are any left) who believe that the mode of production determines the conducts appropriate to it will also echo these views. Socialism as an economic and political system will necessarily create corresponding and satisfactory forms of social organisation. I beg to doubt this.

Conducts are *constructed*. They are not mere "subjective registers" of economic relations—which are somehow more "real" or "objective". Our problem is that for all our wealth, technique and knowledge, indeed, *because* of them, we lack the ideational means to order and justify social actions possessed by many "poorer" and more "ignorant" peoples. The word "culture" registers but does not explain this difference—although differences in the beliefs, expectations and motiva-

tions of social agents are significant determinants of the outcome of social relations, and ones which cannot satisfactorily be explained by reference to economic structures, modes of production, or class interests. "Culture" is not a solution but a highly problematic concept. Further, certain anthropological analyses of other cultures, like that of Evans-Pritchard, carry the disturbing implication that *all* social agents are subject to definite belief systems, that world-views riddled with metaphysical suppositions and undemonstrable premisses are not merely the consequence of class society. These analyses correctly warn that there can be no "end of ideology", in the sense of a society attuned to "reality" and freed from the organisational consequences of belief systems.

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Notes

1. This essay draws upon a book by the author and Penelope Woolley, *Social Relations and Human Attributes* (London, 1982).
2. In Marcel Mauss, *Sociology and Psychology* (London, 1979).
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 90. Mauss delivered this paper at the London School of Economics in 1938. It is quite evident that he understood what needed to be defended, and against whom. Yet even when confronted with Nazism, Mauss refused to try to present his conceptions against theirs as part of the nature of things.
6. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford, 1976), p. 18.
7. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London, 1971); cf. my earlier, critical discussions of this essay in *On Law and Ideology* (London, 1979).
8. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", *op. cit.*, p. 169.
9. These remarks on "culture" are merely suggestive, and are developed more fully in *Social Relations and Human Attributes*, *op. cit.* E.P. Thompson's conceptions of "experience" and the individual are considered and criticized in detail in my essay, "The Necessity of Theory", *Economy and Society*, vol. 8, 4 (November, 1979), pp. 417-445.