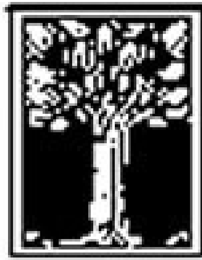

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REVIEWS

Edward W. Said

THE TOTALITARIANISM OF MIND

THE SAVAGE MIND by Claude Lévi-Strauss. The University of Chicago Press, $5.95.

The audacity of Claude Lévi-Strauss's work has a comic analogy in Aldous Huxley's Lord Gattenden, who in *Point Counter Point* announces over the telephone that he has "a most extraordinarily mathematical proof of the existence of God." A little less extraordinary is Lévi-Strauss's postulation of a radical law of mind that is not only the law of the primitive or savage mind but also a very close cousin to the laws of modern scientific thought. For, Lévi-Strauss contends, the difference between primitive and scientific thought is not, as we might like to believe, the difference between simple and complex thought, but between the greater immediacy and intelligibility of the primitive concrete and the lesser immediacy and intelligibility of the scientific abstraction. Yet, there is no way of proving all this except by opening the mind to naked particularity, which entails the resolute denial of everything but the evidence of direct perception. It is because this Cartesian reduction can only be practiced today in the most different and distant of settings—in the unfamiliarity of a Brazilian jungle, for instance—that anthropology has always seemed the method best suited to Lévi-Strauss's adventurous design. In *Tristes Tropiques*, a superb personal document, he frankly admits his "infirmity" for the particular, and formulates his scientific goal as "a sort of *super-rationalism* in which sense-perceptions will be integrated

into reasoning and yet lose none of their properties."

To expose a civilized man to a tribe of neolithic Indians in Brazil is effectively to deny his mind and body their habits and customary protection. So the individual must confront what—Lévi-Strauss said in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1960—is objectively different and subjectively very concrete. *La Pensée Sauvage*, of which *The Savage Mind* is the translation made anonymously four years after the appearance of the French original, is at the same time a system of the mind reasoning at its most completely intelligible, most primitive level, *and*, as the pretty French dust jacket of the original shows, the name of a species of violet. This is super-rationalism fully integrated to the sense perception of a common flower: a pun could not illustrate a point more serviceably.

It is not entirely fortuitous that Lévi-Strauss is the most challenging intellectual figure today. Writing about him means writing him, which is like being in a room empty except for mirrors. It is almost impossible to sum up Lévi-Strauss in a few sentences, or, alternatively, to criticize him in the Anglo-Saxon way. The hardest thing of all is to tinker with his ideas piecemeal. He seems either to require total rejection, which would probably involve the creation of a whole new system that ought to supplant his, or a kind of slavish paraphrase. This kind of problem is characteristic of the best systematic thought, though it is always possible to have nothing to do with the system by ignoring it. My contention is that Lévi-Strauss is too important and fascinating for that. In *The Savage Mind*, one is dealing with a man whose work has made allowances for practically every contingency. As such, the Lévi-Straussian oeuvre is Possibility itself: provided that one accepts a few terms, its structure anticipates nearly every criticism made of it. Thus, *The Savage Mind* is one of the greatest books of the century not because it is *about* something but because it *is* something in a very remarkable way. One is as much read *by* it as a reader *of* it.

By profession a dedicated field anthropologist, Lévi-Strauss is seriously hesitant when asked, as he was by Georges Charbonnier in 1959, to apply the findings of his research to other matters—art and politics, for example. As a scientist and rationalist whose severity reminds one of Leibnitz or Spinoza, Lévi-Strauss seems to feel the gravity of a very serious responsibility; yet, as a student of primitive society whose first book was a massive study of elementary kinship structures,

his tendency is to show "homologies" of the kind that one finds between members of different families, or between primitive and scientific mind. Over the years, he has perfected his so-called structural method so that he can produce the most formidably difficult work in what the French call *sciences humaines*, as well as wittily engaging, even lyrical descriptions of native practices all over the world.

Lévi-Strauss is nothing if not methodologically secure, however, and *The Savage Mind* with his *Totemism* represent, in his own words, a pause and a theoretical reprise. There he had summed up his previous work before launching a vast and interminable enterprise, of which *Le cru et le cuit* (*The Raw and the Cooked*), subtitled *Mythologiques* (another pun), is the first and only volume to have appeared. To say that *The Savage Mind* is also a damaging attack on Sartre is to remark how Sartre and Lévi-Strauss now divide French intellectual life between them: the purpose of this lofty controversy is to show whether historical thought or ahistorical, systematic thought is really the most "objective" subject of men's attention, Sartre arguing for history and Lévi-Strauss for system. Since Lévi-Strauss's rationale is highly nuanced, its impulse demonic, its manner vigilant, one is made to feel that Sartre's antagonism to system is the result of an insufficient thoroughness. Very few writers give the impression of having thought more energetically than Lévi-Strauss. Sartre becomes *included* in Lévi-Strauss's book; literally, of course, the last chapter of *The Savage Mind* is the critique of Sartre, but the chapter is also Lévi-Strauss's way of showing how even the most intractable opponent can be assimilated to and given a place in his thought. It is a victory of form over matter. With an adversary like Sartre, the assimilation is no mean feat, and it is suitably left to the end of the book, after Lévi-Strauss has set up the machinery to do the job. (Sartre, I understand, is now preparing an answer: it all promises to be the great intellectual debate of the decade.) But there is a demonstrable continuity between this amicable cutting-down of Sartre, which is prefaced and concluded with genuine protestations of admiration, and Lévi-Strauss's description of how the savage mind confronts what is different from it.

"Difference," before all, is the wedge between things that makes possible their perception as intelligible objects. Object *A* derives its intelligibility for the perceiver not from itself alone but from its difference from object *B*. The significance of *A* is primarily its divergence

from *B* and *C*, and so on; as to what that divergence might in fact be, it is not really possible to say without assembling several enormous lists. To a musician, a piano is different from a violin for reasons other than those an antique dealer would advance. Similarly, one society has a whole theory about the importance of a cow as opposed to that of a dog. The diversity of knowledge is something with which Lévi-Strauss begins. What is common to all people, nevertheless, is the perception of difference, the activity itself, not the reasons for each difference.

Every society codes, or institutionalizes, its view of the identity and character of things based on their differences—hence, a system of words, a language. The reason for a code, or a system of signs (words) intelligible to every person who uses it, is communication. Communication cannot depend on a one-to-one correspondence between words and objects if only because words are not substitutes for objects: their spheres are different. And although Lévi-Strauss offers no explanation for the necessity of communication, he does suggest that it is the only way in which man *differs* from animals. All societies have language: this is a "given." Lévi-Strauss attempts now to show that the primary activity of the mind is classification, an activity that always takes place on an unconscious level.

It used to be thought that primitives name things that are naturally useful to them. The converse is true: things are useful *because* they are named. In *Totemism*, Lévi-Strauss wrote that "the relation between man and his needs is mediated by culture and cannot be conceived simply in terms of nature." Frazer, however, believed that "savages" did everything arbitrarily, as people do who are governed by emotions and confusions. But nothing is more basic to humanity than a rage for order, and, while the mytho-physical order of Australian natives may appear arbitrary and absurd when compared with the structures of nuclear physics, there is no real reason why, by the highly complex, even precious, standards of the aboriginal Arandas, physics should not appear to be very sloppy. Hierarchies of value that place society *A* above society *B* are local myths that turn up when a pre-literate society acquires writing. In a fascinating speculation he allowed himself as he chatted with Charbonnier, Lévi-Strauss reasoned that, since writing seems to have appeared in a great number of different societies during the neolithic age, there must be something all writing has in common. In fact, he says,

almost always the writing corresponds to and reflects a feeling for power and for private property. Words are first written in inventories, catalogues, lists of slaves, tax records—primitive dictionaries. This bears on a culture's scale of values, for *writing* begins as an instrument of power that consigns things to place; the power to classify is attested to in writing.

We believe that a New Guinea tribesman is inferior to us because he has not advanced in time as we have, which is another way of saying that he has not been able to acquire as much as we have. Thus, we submit our reasoning to the determinism of temporal succession, diachrony (to get better is to go forward, which is to have more), without considering the other determinism, synchrony, that of space, which is primarily a system of relations between co-present societies. Lévi-Strauss argues that spatial systems—so-called totemic classifications, for instance—are more satisfactory in the last analysis because they deal completely with what is present, as well as "regaining" time that has been lost. Of course, a great deal less is present to an Eskimo than to a Parisian, but the Eskimo has a perfect science of the concrete that the Parisian, who is a particle in a vast ocean he can neither fully see nor comprehend, cannot approximate. The Parisian is dealing directly with events he is unable to mediate—the scientist's concepts are not helpful in a traffic jam—or filter through some efficient decoding apparatus. The rule is that "the greater our knowledge, the more obscure the overall scheme." Who can presume to say with Gobineau's certainty (Lévi-Strauss asked in *Race and History*, a UNESCO pamphlet) that one race or culture is superior to another only because the quantity of objects available in an advanced literate society is greater? The documents (which are objects) of history in a cumulative society such as ours provide testimony that assures a sense of progress; yet, in what he calls a stationary culture, whose standards are purposely systematized in order to ensure perpetual equilibrium and a sort of enforced calm, the method of functioning is just as complex as ours.

The distinction between a so-called primitive and a modern culture was described by Lévi-Strauss to Charbonnier as the difference between a mechanical system, like that of a watch, and a combustion engine, which functions because of the disparity in temperature between its parts. One runs through a set of unvarying cycles (a culture governed entirely by rites and

minute laws of behavior), while the other functions at a greater level of energy, far less calm and egalitarian, ruled by the principle of entropy (the modern society, with its class conflicts, political upheavals and so on). On the one hand, unanimity, on the other, internal conflict.

Lévi-Strauss is saying that there are two ways of dealing with and to some extent resisting historical change. One way is to submit to the sequence of events merely by acknowledging the power and unintelligibility of history. A primitive, however, confronts the world of discontinuous particularities, of discrete events, and begins immediately to classify, to connect, to order, and to encode. This is a group activity—Lévi-Strauss *never* speaks of an individual—because it is a universal human trait, and because men are never alone. He says, in *Race and History*, that the one thing man cannot bear, aside from disorder, is to be alone.

How then does man order? Since every society has a completely different classification, or language, it is impossible to explain every particular of every system; rather, one must discover what *forms of order* are available to the mind. Syntax and grammar are more capable of general description than vocabulary is. Lévi-Strauss writes in his *Structural Anthropology* that the anthropologist's "goal is to grasp, beyond the conscious and shifting images which men hold, the complete range of unconscious possibilities." The main principle of order is that it be *orderly*: to be a system, a system must be systematic. To be systematic means that certain relations between objects and classes of objects must on the one hand appear to link the objects *meaningfully* to each other, and, on the other, that it (the system) can be detached, like a grid, or decoding machine, from them and be applicable to a similar group of objects. The code is therefore translatable—which explains the correspondence in certain societies between kinship structures, let us say, and a set of taboos. This is the essence of totemism, where certain animals—an eagle, a dog, a bear—are linked by their differences, and yet this system of differences is applicable to the differences between clan *A*, clan *B*, clan *C*, and clan *D*. As Lévi-Strauss puts it in *Totemism*: "it is not the resemblances which resemble each other, but the differences."

The perfect analogy for the grid, and, in nearly every way that I can think of, the perfect model for it, is musical tonality, or the very notion of natural scales. E flat, for example, *is not* Beethoven's Third Symphony and Wagner's

Prelude to *Das Rheingold*, but it is a tonality that makes both of them intelligible to the ear. Every note in these two scores has a double character; on the one hand, each expresses the system of E flat in some way, and, on the other, it is a "term in the system" or a species, as Lévi-Strauss calls it. The first aspect is essentially harmonic, or synchronic, the second melodic, or diachronic. Lévi-Strauss believes that the synchronic or harmonic aspect of music plays the controlling part, though it does not mean he has no interest in or regard for melody. Harmony and melody are inextricable. It is far easier, he would argue, to study and define harmony than to define melody. We can say and show that Beethoven's *Eroica* is in E flat by illustrating our analysis with a study of the harmonic system. Yet, what are we to say of the melody as melody? Other than its sheer presence, can it be adequately described in any but imprecise terms? The same question applies to the difficulty of describing history as the succession of events.

One important ground rule is that the eagle, the dog, and the bear have no intrinsic meaning before they enter the system; they are chosen simply because they are available, and they acquire systematic meaning once chosen. If totemism is a system of signs, it is therefore a language, albeit a different one from the one spoken. Here Lévi-Strauss draws on the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, for it is Saussure whose work guarantees the following remarks in the inaugural lecture: "men communicate by means of symbols and signs; for anthropology, which is a conversation of man with man, everything is symbols and signs, which stand as intermediaries between two [or more] speaking subjects." The very fact that men do communicate on many levels, through speech, art, marriage, and politics, convinces Lévi-Strauss that these levels are codes of exchange (conveying a variety of messages) that parallel each other. Their systematic character is due to a logic common to them all rather than to a common subject matter. It is as if the codes of a society were puns on each other.

Nonetheless, it is still not easy to accept the proposition that language, and by intention the mind's activity, can be shown to be based on a rigorous logic. This, however, is what Lévi-Strauss persistently proposes in *The Savage Mind*—although, I should add, he is only doing in anthropology and primitive psychology what has been done in linguistics and mathematics during the last 75 years. Peano's arithmetic was an attempt to base all the oper-

ations of the discipline on three primitive axioms and five primitive rules. Frege—and later Bertrand Russell—superceded Peano and grounded mathematics in a logic, one of whose central tenets was an idea of *structure* that held relations together; as Russell wrote in 1919, "it is clear that the structure of the relation does not depend upon the terms that make up the field of the relation." Form and syntax, in other words, matter far more than vocabulary, and, Russell adds, this "is the state of our knowledge of nature." for "we know more about the *form* of nature than the *matter*.... What matters in mathematics, and to a very great extent in physical science, is not the intrinsic nature of our terms, but the logical nature of their interrelation."

Lévi-Strauss's theory is that objects become terms in the mind's logic at the species level: when they are identified with relation to objects near them—an eagle, let us say, with a duck. Objects therefore become signs, which stand as links between images or percepts and concepts, between facts and ideas. A sign, as C. S. Peirce had said, "is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." In a phrase that echoes Merleau-Ponty (to whom *The Savage Mind* is dedicated), Lévi-Strauss told Paul Ricoeur that a sign is born during the moment between sense and non-sense; "any classification," he says in *The Savage Mind*, "is better of identity is usually one of opposition—as, for example, besition—as, for example, between high and low, dark and light, one direction and its opposite. But, says Lévi-Strauss, the mind's instinct is always to "totalize," to link everything in sight to this basic pattern of "binary opposition," so that even in very primitive Australian tribes one notes a fantastic and subtle logic capable of extraordinary gradations, existing in several dimensions, along many different axes.

This logic, as I have called it, is best expressed in *myths*, and it is in his analyses of what mytho-logic has the power to do that Lévi-Strauss is remarkably brilliant. Created out of bits and pieces, myths are superstructures capable of incredible metamorphoses. Like Wemmick in *Great Expectations*—who means a lot to Lévi-Strauss—the primitive myth-maker indulges in "bricolage":

> The "bricoleur" is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments

is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with "whatever is at hand.". . . The set of the bricoleur's means cannot therefore be defined in terms of a project (which would presuppose besides, that, as in the case of the engineer, there were, at least in theory, as many sets of tools and materials or "instrumental sets," as there are different kinds of projects). . . . They [the sets] each represent a set of actual and possible relations; they are "operators" but they can be used for any operations of the same type. . . . It might be said that the engineer questions the universe, while the "bricoleur" addresses himself to a collection of oddments left over from human endeavors, that is, only a sub-set of the culture.

Thus, the bricoleur's apparatus is a set of basic "permutation groups" that fabricate the system of names given by tribes to flowers and weeds. In a dazzling manner Lévi-Strauss applies his theory to names we give to pet dogs, race horses, and tame birds. Here is a passage on the logic of names:

> Some societies jealously watch over their names and make them last practically for ever, others squander them and destroy them at the end of every individual existence. They then get rid of them by forbidding them and coin other names in their place. But these apparently contradictory attitudes in fact merely express two aspects of a constant property of systems of classification: they are finite and inflexible in form. By its rules and customs, each society, to impose a structure on the continuous flux of generation, does no more than apply to a rigid and discontinuous grid, and a slight shift in its logic is enough to secure this in one position or another. . . . As their distance from the grid increases, [the dead] lose their names which are either taken by the living as symbols of positions which must always be filled or are done away with under the impact of the same movement which, at the other end of the grid, extinguishes the names of the living.

The grid, or operator, or basic tonality, or structure, as Lévi-Strauss most often calls it, is thus a total system of classification such as is to be found among primitive people everywhere. The mind that creates this is characterized by its "consuming symbolic ambition . . . and by scrupulous attention directed entirely towards the concrete." It receives all of empirical reality and translates what is admitted into ideas of unity, number, multiplicity, category, and elements. Through it men, dogs, plants, and fish can be filtered and "come out" in a meaningful synthesis. Hence, the mythology of the Brazilian Bororos, a system that takes in all phases of the tribe's existence. The structure's impulse to totalization derives from the logical observation of

the rule of the excluded middle: if there is order and meaning, it must be everywhere. Conversely, if there is *no* order, there can be no order at all. There is no third possibility. The mind elects the first alternative, perhaps because it cannot tolerate "the blank stare" of a "virgin landscape . . . so monotonous as to deprive [even] its wildness of all meaning."

Boldly, Lévi-Strauss states that modern science faces the same predicament, and it too elects the alternative of order and meaning. It codes its findings—the chemist's table, the biologist's lists of species, the mathematician's symbols and equations, the physicist's processes and formulae—into languages whose correspondence to the empirical reality they describe is formal and abstract rather than simply referential: $e = mc^2$ does not account for a specific isolated event. Rather, the formula belongs to a sign system, in which *e* and *m* and *c* are identities that have their *place*, whose sphere is total. The system is highly developed, of course, but—as with all systems—it parallels objective reality like a miniature model. The technique of miniaturization and codifying is formally similar, though materially different, in cybernetics (the programming of computers with quantified information) and in totemism (the creation of a model in which a lion, and eagle, and a bear divide the world between them). All of Lévi-Strauss's thought rests on the parallelism between modern science and neolithic culture.

The literary criticism of Roland Barthes, the writer whose work has provoked the most vehement reaction among academics in France, demonstrates how still another discipline is amenable to Lévi-Strauss's theories. Barthes' interest is neither the individual work nor the individual writer's biography. Instead, he lays bare the structure of "mythology," or syntax, animating and making intelligible the world of a given ensemble, be it that of a historical epoch, or that of a formal whole we call Racine. Like Lévi-Strauss, Barthes considers written documents as sign systems, so that one work by Racine, for example, is an object of measurable linguistic density, not simply a play *about* Phaedra or Andromache. In Racine's work, Barthes says, "language absorbs, in a kind of exultation, all the functions elsewhere assigned to other forms of behaviour; one might also say that it is *polytechnical.*" It has become possible for Barthes now to speak of "writing" as an intransitive verb, since, by extension, all human activity is the creation of sign systems, of which verbal language is the domi-

nant one. The human experience with which literature deals is transformed, as it was in the work of the Russian formalists, into a series of linguistic propositions; one regrettably feels, however, a corresponding lack of passion in such criticism, for literature is as much concerned with regions where form cannot penetrate as it is with successes of form.

Because Lévi-Strauss's work touches the mind at every point, his system bears acutely, and inevitably, on psychoanalysis. In *Structural Anthropology*, he reinterprets Freud's theory of the unconscious, reducing it to a "function—the symbolic function":

> the preconscious is the individual lexicon where each of us accumulates the vocabulary of his personal history, but . . . this vocabulary becomes significant, for us and for others, only to the extent that the unconscious structures it according to its laws and thus transforms it into language. Since these laws are the same for all individuals and in all instances where the unconscious pursues its activity . . . the vocabulary matters less than the structure.

Whereas Freud has grounded the meaning of our actions in the universal dictionary of the unconscious, Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan, an avant-garde psychoanalyst who seems influenced by "structuralism," refuse to believe that the unconscious is any more than a classificatory grid, ordered like a language.

The introduction to *Le cru et le cuit,* Lévi-Strauss's latest book, correctly defines his philosophy as "Kantian, without any transcendental subject." There is no thing-in-itself to which all structures ultimately refer and by which they can all be reduced to a univocal meaning. The very concept of meaning as it is defined in the tradition of Western humanism is itself a myth. All language and system are myths, and are to be read as lines in a gigantic musical score; it is not difficult to understand why Richard Wagner is Lévi-Strauss's god. Music is the distant model of all languages because it is at the same time clearly intelligible and finally untranslatable.

To all of this, Sartre's philosophy is opposed. What of history? What of human action and work, of the immense flux, even confusion, of human actuality? Both in his reply to Sartre's philosophy at the end of *The Savage Mind* and elsewhere, Lévi-Strauss returns the same answer: history is fascinating, but it is merely one among many modes of knowledge. The complexities of history and the turmoil of reality are either capable of linguistic formulation, or not. If yes, they then enter the system of language as terms in

it; if not, then they remain perpetually outside it and consequently cannot be described. If you say, yes, history is partially described in language, Lévi-Strauss would agree. For, he says, it is quite obvious that a description of the French Revolution and the actual event are two different things, object and word, but the description is present when spoken, the other lost forever. "A cracked bell," he says, "will never give forth the ring of bygone harmonies." Primitive thought recognizes man's predicament in a way that Sartre, claiming for dialectical reason a priority and veracity it can never have, does not. The savage's myth is a fabrication, a way of linking disparities, of reconciling contradictions, of explaining the inexplicable; a myth, in short, is radical inauthenticity. This, however, is not to say that history is, by definition, more authentic, even though Lévi-Strauss concedes that it is "the point of departure in any quest for intelligibility."

Historical, or dialectical, thought, as Sartre calls it, is constituting thought: it constitutes the events it describes. Historical actuality, like the Russian Revolution, is elevated to the status of a whole, real event in the work of a historian, yet it can always be reduced to psycho-chemical processes in the brain of everyone who participated in the events of 1917. It would, however, take many lifetimes to make the reduction and thereby properly to re-create the event, and will it not then require further psycho-chemical analyses of the researchers' brains? Objectivity is best discovered in the rules of any discourse (history, sociology, physics), its grammar, rather than in its subject matter, which is ever-changing. Lévi-Strauss sums his thought up in *Le cru et le cuit*:

> Having made possible an investigation of the conditions by which systems of truth become mutually convertible into each other, and by which they become capable of treating different subject-matter, ethnography, as an ensemble, acquires the character of an *objective* reality, independent of any subject.

He has defined objectivity in terms of his science, yet he leaves open the possibility that any science, or art, so rigorously in search of its roots may accede to the same objectivity. One may legitimately wonder whether such an end may be the reward of only a few gifted individuals like Lévi-Strauss himself, rather than a sort of built-in aspiration within any discipline.

The Savage Mind is a ruthless, mind-obsessed book. It could have been called *The Predatory Mind*: it is very much a book reminding, and

warning, the mind of its powers. To it, language is the realm of the possible and the intelligible, and, for the possible, everything is possible, simple or complex. No longer "an uninvited guest"—as Lévi-Strauss had once called it—the mind is the tonality of all discourse, presiding over all activity like the great E-flat chord over Wagner's *Ring*. Experience, or what the Marxists call *praxis*, is clearly "the fundamental totality for the sciences of man." Yet, that totality is only apprehended as an object of study through the structure of the mind, a structure everlastingly being translated into the language it employs in the operations of intelligibility. Like Vico, Lévi-Strauss is a Faustian grammarian of the spoken, and consequently a grammarian of culture. Concerning language he might say, with Roman Jakobson, "*linguista sum: linguistici nihil a me alienum puto.*" Lévi-Strauss is either a colossal pun, a fantastic wordplay, a satanic myth of knowledge, or a scientist and philosopher of genius. He is really all those things, I believe, but especially an ingenious scientist, and a super-rationalist. If he is also a totalitarian, it is because the mind, which he respects for its profoundly neutral energies, is itself the totalitarian instrument ne plus ultra.

Lévi-Strauss is aware that the totalitarianism of his system is only one tendency of the mind. The mind's opposite tendency is its appetite for particularity and diversity. *Tristes Tropiques*, which seems strangely out of place in his system, is a Virgilian hymn to cherished particularities that are sadly "beyond thought and beneath society." The tendency for diversity is also behind Lévi-Strauss's frequent lament over the recent extinction of many small primitive cultures all over the world, cultures that have submitted to and disappeared in the systematic study of their souls by Western totalitarian anthropologists like Lévi-Strauss himself. The act by which this extinction occurs is not unlike the operation of a gigantic computer internalizing all information. Yet, Lévi-Strauss's remarkable moral sense, like that of Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, recognizes the abyss that such a process creates. Man's only grace is to call a halt to it, for all societies long "for leisure, and recreation, and freedom, and peace of body and mind." Humanism and religion, as Erich Auerbach argued, validate such yearnings, which are all the more real after such a vision as Lévi-Strauss's.