

THE IDEA OF A PERSONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Heartfelt gratitude is owed David Pocock, not only for permission to print this essay, but for the continuing inspiration it has provided graduate students in America, Australia and Kenya over the years since it was first delivered in 1973. Because it is an important historical document, the form of the paper has been retained as originally written, with only a few very minor revisions.

[The Editors]

1.1 The idea of personal anthropology has a double source. The first and for me the most important is heuristic. Faced for the first time in my life with first-year undergraduates in social anthropology, I appreciated, as all in such circumstances would, the need to counter a dangerous objectification of the peoples and societies with which social anthropologists deal. I use the word 'dangerous', rather than some alternative which would put the weight of my objection on the intellectual position here assumed, because I had simultaneously reason to suppose that this objectification of 'the other' went hand in hand with a variety of unconscious pressures, and conscious invitations to alienation of the self or ego from the grounds of its being in society.

1.2 I started with an injunction, borrowed from an Oxford colleague, that the student "make her own the experience of the people being studied". I learned immediately that someone capable of understanding this injunction without further elaboration was scarcely in need of it. I was obliged, therefore, to take the discussion back a stage to the word 'anthropology' itself and encounter the position that it was a discipline in which one learned about humankind as social animals, an enterprise from which, lip service having been paid to the proposition that we study ourselves, the self of the enquirer was excluded. I was led from this to point out another and older usage of the word exemplified in implicit or explicit judgements about the nature of Man which support theological, political, and politico-economic treatises. Thus one could usefully speak of the anthropology of St. Thomas Aquinas, of Hobbes, or of Locke. One was initially concerned then not so much with explicit theories about the nature of society as with implicit or explicit judgements about the nature of Man on which these theories rested.

1.3 From this position one was led to speak of each student having her personal anthropology -- a whole set of judgements about human nature, authority, sex, money, family, nation, etc. My argument was that in their own enquiries and essays no less than in the more complex and developed theories of social philosophers, the more conscious each person became of his or her *a priori* judgements, the more they might hope to approach truth in communication.

1.4 So much for the present about the pedagogic sources of this paper. I must acknowledge the second more briefly: it is Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge*, which I first read when it was published in 1958. What I took from that book did, I now see, less than justice to its argument to the extent that I was more comforted by his critique of objectivism, than struck by his ultimate concern for objectivity. The view which I shall elaborate in this paper is not then an exegesis of Polanyi, for all that I may have occasion to borrow some of his terms. Nevertheless I must acknowledge that *Personal Knowledge* was an important stimulus in the development of the ideas here expressed.

2.1 In the Appendix to this paper (see p. 29) I present four essays written in response to the invitation to write on the theme 'Myself and my Society'. They are by first-year students and were produced before any of them had embarked on a formal course in social anthropology. Very little guidance was given to the students and this for the reasons that one wanted as spontaneous a reaction to the challenge as could be achieved.

2.2 I shall comment briefly on these essays a little later in this section. For the present let me make the obvious point that untrammelled by anthropological theory or, for the most part, any experience of alternative ways of looking at the world they do clearly reveal the personal anthropologies of the writers.

2.3 In the discussion with the student that follows, and I speak now of a wider range of essays than it was feasible to present to this conference, there are certain obvious key areas on which to focus. What beliefs do people hold about authority? What are their attitudes towards money? How is friendship defined? What are the respective roles of men and women? The list of these questions is almost infinitely extendable and to it must be added a complementary set: what is the relation between one's notions of how things are or should be and what one actually does? The point to be made however is that each student has his or her personal anthropology which is an individual construct derived from a common stock. The ways in which beliefs about justice, for example, are, (or are not), modified by beliefs about class, or race; or the relative values attached to social stability, technological change, moral reform and the like, all go together to make up for each individual an unique complex; unique because he or she is unique.

2.4 This personal anthropology is as a complex unique, but the bits of which it is composed are social, they are shared with others. Even particular areas of one's personal anthropology are shared by people of one's own family, class, generation, and even, on occasion, by wider groupings. Because of this

we can go on to talk of the anthropologies of groups, the shared assumptions in a group about the place of man in the universe for example, and the nature of his rights and duties.

2.5 Let us now turn briefly to the essays in the Appendix and offer a provisional justification of the preceding remarks.

2.6 Essay A (see p. 29) starts with a view of society as a complex of interdependence. This interdependence is not apparently general in the sense that each one of us is dependent upon everyone else. For this writer, "the education of most people in the society does not include the learning of these (necessary) skills, but a bond of dependence is created between those who do not have them and those that do". Incidentally, this writer tends to identify with the specialists who pass on new information, the teachers.

2.7 This view of functional interdependence makes social life a contractual affair; one has bonds derived from dependence. Note that the lack of instruction in domestic skills (A2) is congruent with the denial of filial obligation to elderly parents (A7). We observe that friendships are also determined by the acquisition of functional specialisation (A4).

2.8 Society is in general represented as a powerful external force over which the self appears to have no control; and this extends to other selves. Observe that legislative and judicial specialists are also represented as cyphers, in a sense, which act in the name of "the impersonal body" (A10, 11).

2.9 Over against the view summarised in the preceding paragraph there is a thin line of criticism. This emerges in the discussion of the school (A3); at the end of the discussion of large industrial and business organisations (A8); and at the end of the discussion on economic growth (A9). I say that this line of criticism is thin because the writer does not allow the critical observation to modify the view of the social machine. For the lack of this we can only assume that the school, "an institution for conserving middle class culture", is inevitably, part of the whole irreversible specialising process. The "self" presented in this essay certainly has values, but they can only be gleaned by inference; they are opposed to those of the society, and there is no indication that the self can derive either strength or action from them.

3.1 In Essay B (see p. 32) the opposition of self and society is represented as the opposition of a real self over against a social performance (B 1, 10). There

is some suggestion that this opposition, reality/unreality, is a relative one in the sense that the team is viewed as real in itself, but capable of presenting an "unreal image for visitors and outsiders" (B 5, 7). It stands in the same relation to the outside society as the role playing self does.

3.2 However we note that this "real self" depends upon this role playing: "disruptions . . . anger or embarrassment can occur if the situation ceases to be clearly defined", (B 9). At the same time the "real self" can experience a sense of bad fit between self and role, and do something to change the situation (B 3).

3.3 Despite the reference in B 6 to consciousness, it is not clear how far this writer distinguishes between two different ways in which the word 'role' can be used. First we can speak of a role as in a film or play, where there are limits within which the individual can vary his performance, but which he may not overstep; in this sense we can speak of the role of Hamlet or the role of the Prime minister in the cabinet system of government. A role in this sense must be consciously adopted; the actor or politician steps out of his role when he acts as a father; he must not confuse his professional role with his friendships for example. When, however, we speak of the role of the father or mother in the family we have in mind a state of affairs in which the 'role player' need not be conscious. A father or a mother could not describe their role in such a way that every father or mother would recognize themselves. The self presented in Essay B is sometimes cast in a role simply by virtue of being social, (B 6), while at other times, the self is conscious of role playing, artificiality and the power to manipulate situations (B 5).

3.4 The writer of B depends heavily upon one author, Irving Goffman and is, in a sense, apparently content to fall into the role that he has written. From this point of view it seems that the "true self" never truly emerges. The writer can be identified by only one remark, "myself, a student" (B 8): we learn nothing of his or her sex, age, social background or values. The final sentence of the essay effectively sums up the balance between self and society.

4.1 The self in Essay C (see p. 35) is not subdued as it is in A, nor absent as it is in B. Here the self is seen as reflecting certain conditions in the society, and the society represented is more complex and more mobile than appears in A or B. The general theme is that of uniformity and diversity. Note how, in (C 2), this theme is struck; the writer's experience of cultural diversity is partially equated with and made a reflection of the working class child's experience of school values. In (C 3) the general increase in social mobility is

reflected in the writer's account of present friendships. This compares markedly with A on the question of friendship.

4.2 In C, as in A, social forces are represented at work making for diversification of communities, and for the diversification of the life of individuals; re-training will be necessary (end of C 7); human inertia is contrasted with the need to uproot oneself and move (C 8).

4.3 This increasing diversification is seen as increasing the richness of social life (C 5). At the same time I am disposed to attach importance to the phrase "frightening powerful forces" at the close of (C 8); and "this potent force that uproots" at the opening of (C 9); social change is accompanied by human suffering.

4.4 However, social forces have also their benign aspect for this writer. We note that diversification and change make for a greater consciousness of difference which in turn assists the process of humanisation (C 3), and can break down the barriers of fear and ignorance (C 5). "Pop" culture provides a sort of alternative cultural home for the younger generation although this is not unaccompanied by friction (C 6), and the re-training of workers could compensate for earlier educational deprivation (C 7).

4.5 In general there is more interaction between the self and the society in C. The self perceives the effect of social forces upon it, for all that these social forces are also regarded as still mysterious, and not fully understood. At the same time the self here feels it necessary to assert values and to evaluate social processes; the individual is not impotent.

5.1 More specifically than A, B or C, D (see p. 37) lays an emphasis upon the historical approach (D 2). It is not only that the past is thought of as essential to an understanding of the present; the future as seen by D, shapes the view of the present relations between self and society. The force of this observation comes out if you compare D with A or with B, where in different ways a fixed relation with little sign of change or development is presented.

5.2 There are two societies in D's essay, and the self has different relations with each of them. On the one hand there is the society of childhood, understandably characterised by the word "security". The adult world of the council estate is governed by norms; it could be relied upon (D 3). Compare this with the absence of any such reliance in A.

5.3 For D the generation group, the gang, is encompassed by the adult world. Here again the emphasis is upon norms and security; even the predictable recurrence of the "seasons" is noted with satisfaction (D 4). It is striking by this point in our review that although D's "gang" is engaged in activities of which the adult would have disapproved, there is no hint of "generation gap" or generational conflict such as is found in the earlier essays.

5.4 The expectations of D's peer group, which appear to replace the gang, are also as predictable as the conker season, and extend the sense of security into the future (D 6).

5.5 The contrast between this secure society and society as represented in the latter part of the essay is marked. Whereas the writer had earlier a precise and well-known scene in mind, now the most immediate society is "Western Civilisation". One gets no impression that anything like the world of D's childhood could exist in this "Western Civilisation". D has relegated it to the past together with his own childhood. For him now, "our society is becoming less and less integrated" (D 10).

5.6 We observe in fact that once D has broken with the expectations of the peer group (D 7) society as a world of face to face relationships has ceased to exist. The relative optimism that we noted in C, here gives way to pessimism, "I see a society doomed to conflict because of the contradictions within it, contradictions which are exacerbated by the lack of shared expectations, and conflicting belief systems" (C9).

5.7 The contrast of the two worlds is so striking that one would be tempted to ask whether the practices and attitudes castigated in (D 10, 11) were completely absent in and round the world of the council estate.

5.8 Finally, the self in the earlier part of D's essay interacts with society, sees itself as a social product: the later self is identified with the thinker to the exclusion apparently of all else; with this change, society also changes, it becomes a dangerous force driving mankind on a suicide course. The self can diagnose and judge, but it can do nothing. The slack of security described in (D 13) when compared with the security referred to in (D 3), sums up the contrast.

6.1 Now what status do I give these essays? The answer will help me to elaborate the idea of a personal anthropology. I do not, to start with, regard them as psychological documents, although some may contain remarks which a psychoanalytically disposed reader might wish to pursue. I do not regard the positions advanced in the essays as necessarily true, in the sense that they would survive a moment's challenge, or do not contain elements derived from the student's anticipation of what was required. All that I claim for them is that they demonstrate to the student *that at the time of writing, she rested a descriptive account upon a certain view of the world of which she was not at the time conscious.* [italics supplied].¹[see p. 41]

6.2 In many cases the critique of the essay is immediately educative. The structure which appears most commonly in the work of the youngest students is that of an ego constrained by society. In this structure the notion of constraint carries with it inevitably the notion of freedom, and this freedom is achieved when the bonds of society have been broken. Here it is sufficient in most cases to question the void in which this liberated self would live for the student to recognise the simplicity with which the constraining society has become identified.

6.3 I would in passing take this simple example to underline the difference between the individual psychology and the personal anthropology. In the kind of essay to which I have referred, the constraining society is often clearly identified with the parents, and the reaction to constraint is by no means always directly hostile; in some cases it is accepted with a kind of hopeless resentment. These features which are distinctive to the individual psyche are separable from the judgements of the person which constitute the personal anthropology.²

6.4 This shareability of the personal anthropology is what distinguishes it from the individual psyche and I am grateful here for the work of a third-year student at Sussex for a piece of work which began in the attempt to understand the place of the concept "sentiment" in Malinowski's discussion of the incest taboo. Malinowski borrowed the term you will remember from an otherwise relatively obscure 19th century writer, A.F. Shand. Radcliffe-Brown also appears to have borrowed the word from the same source, but the place of "sentiment" in the writings of the two differs markedly. For Radcliffe-Brown "certain sentiments" constitute a sort of base line for his enquiry, they are neither described nor discussed; they could be excised from his theory without their absence being noticed. For Malinowski on the other hand the concept "sentiment" is an important one for all that its place in his thinking creates a problem. Apart from considerations of time it would be impossible to discuss this problem in detail without the text in front of us. Let me

simply affirm that the word "sentiment" oscillates in Malinowski's discussion between a biological and a cultural base; at one moment it is a neural precondition for the emergence of culture, at another it is the product of culturally determined relationships. This oscillation is crucial in Malinowski's discussion of Freud, for it constitutes a sort of bridge over the unconscious, the Freudian unconscious which Malinowski was so concerned to deny. For anybody who is interested in returning to the text let me draw attention to the way in which Malinowski uses the word "unconscious". As one reads more closely it appears that the function of the "sentiment" in Malinowski's anthropology is to mediate between two realities -- the biological and the cultural. But this mediation is only effected by the oscillation, the manipulation of language. Malinowski cannot present a genetic theory because underneath the argument he has to deal with two, for him, exclusive realities.

6.5 When we turn to the diary which he kept intermittently in the Trobriands we come to understand something more about his animus with regard to Freud's theories. We learn of his disgust with his own sexuality, rooted as it was in his own incestuous feelings for his mother. Over against this is set an ideal, asexual person, the product of Western middle class society. We come to understand better why in his published works Malinowski was so strenuously concerned to deny reality to the Freudian unconscious, and a psychoanalyst might say we can understand why he failed at the level of argument to achieve this. My point is, however, not that psyche and person are continuous; that is obvious enough. What I am saying is that the underlying realities of Malinowski's anthropology lie concealed beneath his use of words in his published works. They are accessible to us without any knowledge of his psychological difficulties. These assumptions can be made explicit and, so to speak, confronted with the argument which rests upon them. They can be modified, or defended, or, in the last count, asserted as belief; but once they have been rendered explicit they cannot any longer lie as it were disjunct with their associated argument. It can from this, I hope, be seen clearly that the assumptions of the personal anthropology are of a different order from that mass of assumptions, judgements and hypotheses which constitute the individual psyche.

6.6 There are some, I know, who would not be disposed to object with my argument so far. Such people can accept the notion of personal anthropology as a useful pedagogic device but only because its recognition serves the objectivist ideal; one must become aware of one's prejudices, preconceptions and the like, in order to clear one's mind for the receipt of truth. There are, I suppose, today few who conceive a clean sweep possible; but many will still hold that the elimination of preconception as far as possible is a wholesome, hygienic exercise.

6.7 I am sympathetic with and even admire this view of the anthropological quest, largely I suppose because of its similarity to two, at least, of the three great monotheisms. But it is as I have indicated, not a position in which I find myself. This has to be said at the outset because accordingly as one views the notion of a personal anthropology positively or negatively, one's own anthropology is affected, and this most notably in one's treatment of history.

6.8 There are some who, to the extent that they think the history of social anthropology relevant at all, regard and represent it as the rather rapid emergence out of darkness into light. They are consequently in a position to use with security and assurance what one colleague has described as a "conceptual tool bag". For those who like myself would reject this progressive view of our history the position is less secure, but by no means hopeless.

7.1 If starting from the position that anthropology *is* its history, one studies with one's students the sources of contemporary problems and solutions in the problems and solutions of the past, one recognises that one is engaged in a process of induction into a history which, apart from its institutionalisation in the university, sanctioned by the examination system, *can claim absolutely no authority over the history of the initiate*. From this recognition it becomes a matter not of requesting the student to set his or her personal anthropology aside but rather to suggest that he or she interact it with the anthropologies of the received authorities, which must here include those presiding over the induction process [italics supplied by editors].

7.2 How is this to be done? Obviously the simplest way is to remind the student that she must make up her own mind about her relation to the facts. What is being described or explained is being posited of human beings. She is a human being, does she believe the facts as they are described, does the explanation truly satisfy in the sense that she can positively affirm, "Yes, that could be true of me". Or can she with equal conviction insist that she does not believe that human beings could ever believe this, act or be motivated to act like that. *Either response to the extent that it is a personal one is the beginning of genuine interaction* [italics supplied].

7.3 The latter, negative reaction, is usually the more productive and often the more honest. It is productive because it draws the student's attention to her own definition of humankind, or it sets the ground for a creative critique of the mode of presentation, or theory, which restores the humanity of the people under discussion and obviously heightens the appreciation of the problems of the anthropological enterprise. I say that this reaction is often the

more honest because an element in that objectification of which I spoke at the outset is a prior disposition to credit anything one is told about an alien society to the extent that the primitive is that to which, almost by definition, the most nonsensical rubbish may be attributed: curiosity is not the same as interest and the dictionary will instruct us how the meanings of these two words has diverged.

7.4 Alternatively the student can be encouraged to study the interaction of the professional anthropologist with the material. Whether the writer claims impartiality, objectivity or not it is obvious that he inevitably interposes himself between the reader and the people about whom he writes. The student must then be encouraged to understand as best she can both what it is that is thus interposed and its inevitability. It is not in other words a matter of setting aside theoretical assumptions now discarded by the trade, but of appreciating as fully as possible the historical interaction of a person, (an anthropologist), with some people, (the people about whom he or she writes), and the society, (his or her fellow anthropologists), to which he is communicating this interaction.

8.1 It is not easy to accomplish this kind of approach and it is even more difficult to win an appreciation of the epistemological position to which it leads. The two are inseparable because unless the student understands that she is being led towards a proposition about knowledge, the work involved is tedious and apparently nit-picking.

8.2 What then does one ask the student to do? It is best to start with a text which attracts her interest on whatever grounds: a period of acute boredom will inevitably follow all too soon. One then invites the student to distinguish two levels, the level of argument and the level of implicit assumption, with the injunction that the former must be set aside if the hidden argument, the personal anthropology, is to be touched. The analogy is with listening to music. One reminds the student that a favourite piece of music is heard time after time and that at each hearing new structures of sound emerge; what was striking at the first hearing gives way after several hearings to new forms initially concealed, and so on. The analogy cannot be carried too far because few anthropological writings have the richness of orchestral music such that they can be read time after time for pleasure. *But this is what has to be done.* It is only after several readings, only after the formal argument has been totally assimilated to the point at which it is no longer followed but fully possessed, that the reader's mind begins to pick up the concealed message [italics supplied].

8.3 This must be the counsel of perfection; the student must expect the barrier of boredom. In fact, some texts are easier to handle than others. What one can assure the student is that once the concealed assumptions begin to be appreciated, a creative interest is then likely to replace the boredom as she pursues the shape of the implicit anthropology.

8.4 I suppose there is one guiding assumption in the enquiry and that is that nothing is irrelevant to it. The use of this adjective rather than that, or the lack of adjectives is to be taken as significant. The use of such conditional constructions as, "it could be argued" is not to be discarded as mere scholarly convention or caution. One undergraduate at Sussex University has done, to my mind, a remarkable analysis of F.G. Bailey's use of pronouns in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of his *Stratagems and Spoils* which, she has argued, brings out a moral dilemma in this author which relates with and illuminates the ambivalence of his approach to politics. In general I would suggest to a student that she approach the text with the rule that every usage, turn of phrase, or cliché must be *shown* to be irrelevant before it can be discounted. Again, because this sort of analysis is time consuming and tedious, this is a counsel of perfection.

9.1 Let me now give an example; consider the following passage:

This generation of the recently married or about to be married, was divided into age-groups, cutting across caste, while it was at school. Having left school it begins to divide again, but this time into caste coterie. These new divisions become more observable as the life of school with its artificial divisions into classes and sports teams recedes. If I compare the groups of friends which I observed in 1951 with the groupings of 1954 the same feature is marked at every point. The ties of biological generation were loosened and the caste sympathies were re-affirmed. The young men of the same caste who had not previously shown great interest in each other now began to form their own groups for passing the evenings or among the slightly older for commercial ventures. In each case there was no conscious withdrawal from old friends but only a vague and undefined discontent with their company. The new groupings express their sense of their internal homogeneity even in jokes and petty common interests. The caste-based gossip and affairs of the adult world are beginning to affect them.

9.2 May I now draw your attention to that well-worn phrase "cutting across", why not "age-groups drawn from various castes", for example? Is its function to prejudice the reader? Note how rapidly these school divisions become "artificial" and then equated with "biological generation". This last equation is

quite illicit because as far as one can see, age continues to be significant; it is the *young* men of the same caste who now draw together. Note also the apparently gratuitous introduction of the question of consciousness, "there was no conscious withdrawal". The purpose of this seems to be to stress the strength with which caste exercises its attractive power. Had it been a matter of a conscious decision would the *argument* have been affected? I do not think so.

9.3 You may say that this is merely a piece of careless writing, and that despite the carelessness, you 'see' what the author is trying to say. You may, however, concede that a little astringent literary criticism can do no harm: but that is not what I am concerned to argue here. Look at the following from an article by the same author published a short time after the above:

Many castes are represented in [this area] but all are bound together by a common language and a common body of custom which allows of diversity. Despite these unconscious bonds of common experience castes remain closed and endogamous and are arranged in a hierarchy such that the highest and the lowest castes are clearly placed both in each village and in the area as a whole.

9.4 Will you not begin to think that consciousness or unconsciousness matters to this author in a way which is irrelevant to the level of his argument? Certainly he is determined to stress at almost any cost the durability of caste in the face of change but what has consciousness to do with it? Note the word "despite". He is right to use it because in the earlier passage the "unconscious bonds of common experience" were powerful indeed, and the common experience of school had to be eliminated by the device which we have noted. We can strengthen our critique by remarking that if in the first passage quoted it is just possible that the ethnographer has authority for the proposition, "there was no conscious withdrawal", here, where large numbers of people are concerned, the imputation of an unconsciousness of cultural "bonds" can in the nature of the case not be justified.

9.5 It seems to me that consciousness in this passage is equated with intra-caste relationships, caste values, and the importance of a caste system. For the time being I note this and contrast it with the earlier use of unconsciousness which was related precisely to the affirmation of these relationships, values, this system.

10.1 Four years later, (two years after the publication of Lévi-Strauss's *Anthropologie Structurale*), we find the same author confronting the concepts "social unconscious" through an examination of some of Sapir's writings. He

equates Sapir's desiderated science, (variously described as "social psychology", "science of interpersonal relations" and "psychiatric science") with Durkheim's "special branch of sociology, which does not yet exist . . . devoted to research into the laws of collective ideation". From this equation our author moves eagerly to claim that Sapir's social psychology is "in spirit, no other than the structural approach being advocated in our own time". There is no further development of this position for reasons which may emerge.

10.2 One year later we read:

Before proceeding any further two comments on the following discussion must be constantly borne in mind. The breakdown is analytic, that is to say it is conducted from the outside. I do not pretend that the three categories into which I shall sort the *jajmani* relationships are categories reflecting the collective representations of these relationships. I believe at the same time, however, that in certain contexts of social life, they may yet be found to do so.

And a little further:

This is not to say that these relationships are clearly distinguished by the people themselves, still less that they constitute a system . . . I am not suggesting that the Hindu peasant land-holder distinguishes categorically any or all of these services the one from the other. The distinctions are those of sociology although, as we have seen, they find their basis in popular ideas and language.

10.3 Consciousness is now an analytic consciousness which at once separates itself from the collective representations and yet tentatively offers itself as *true*. To take one example in justification of this last proposition, "the distinctions are those of sociology although . . . they find their basis in popular ideas and language". Are they, we can legitimately ask, "analytic . . . conducted from the outside" or are they not, in fact, categories in Indian peasant thought?

10.4 Later in the same article the author is more explicit. He cites two colleagues:

Their sociology, which I find congenial, represents an atemporal system of symbols and meanings on the one hand which is opposed, on the other, to the specificity of actions which belong, evidently to the world of time and space . . . This seems to be a worthwhile distinction which allows us to see an interaction between atemporal representations and the necessarily time

governed activities . . . Following the authorities cited we appreciate a certain tension in this organisation between economic needs and activities, which they relate to the temporal, and the formal ideology of caste, which they relate to the atemporal.

10.5 The article concludes with a hypothesis about social change. Discussing population increase, "changing reality", our author observes, "The more it is denied in principle by caste ideology the more disruptive are its effects likely to be". We seem very close here, and elsewhere in the article to consciousness = social values, "reality" = unconscious, and the latter tends to be, not the word, "disruptive" of the former. I could go on to demonstrate that for this author "reality" is a broad category embracing biological events, puberty change and population increase, the sphere of political and economic activity, activity in general, the individual, and duration which is explicitly opposed to time, or time-reckoning. This all emerges in an article published in 1964:

If distinctions of age are important, or if distinctions of occupation are important, or distinctions between sacred acts and profane ones -- if all these distinctions mark the centres of value for a society, then it is quite obvious that these are precisely the areas in which individual preference, natural sympathy and biological development, summarily the fact of difference, must be subordinated to principles upon which that society places value. Difference, whether in the individual person or group, is experienced, biological duration, for example, cannot be ignored, but through rites these differences are subsumed. The notorious unevenness of biological development, the vagaries of human wills constitute a threat to the valued order. We can imagine what would happen to the distinction between pre-puberty and manhood in a given society if it were left to the biological process to produce men. On the contrary society does not change precisely to the extent that it is able to cope with the effects of duration by denying them any individuality and consequently any historicity.

11.1 The above does not amount to an analysis, it is the beginnings of a breakdown and a sorting of possible significant themes. I must omit further steps in the demonstration and present the synthetic view, confident that those who are interested can confirm it for themselves. In general this author seems to operate with three realities each one of which is at any particular moment exclusive of the other two. There is first his own judgement variously presented as 'from the outside', 'analytic', 'abstractions' or 'sociological'. Then there are the collective representations of the people studied, which are referred to as such, or as 'the formal theory', 'consciousness', 'meaning', 'what people themselves think'. Finally there is reality, which is often described as such, or as 'experience', 'unconscious', or that of which the indigenous theory

takes no cognizance, 'biological facts', 'politico-economic activity', 'activity', 'the individual', 'duration'.

11.2 These realities for all that each one is exclusive of the others are not of equal strength so to speak, and in relation to the collective representation set, the anthropologist's judgements are weak. I note how on several occasions the problem is proposed which is in fact the anthropologist's problem but it is shifted onto the society under discussion, and is then 'solved' by being shown to be no problem. Typically as more facts are presented the people concerned are shown as handling the alleged problem.

11.3 This tendency is associated with the author's defence of, amounting to an identification with, the Indian caste system. Despite occasional references to social change, reality two is opposed to reality three as positive to negative, as consciousness to unconsciousness. We note the number of times that the latter is represented as a threat, or a challenge, as disruptive and the like. This third reality is nevertheless presented as the source of change, a kind of force which is either handled, mediated or cancelled by mechanisms of collective representations, or, as I say, the indigenous theory etc. shows itself incapable of coping and so crumbles away. Typically a new state of affairs is represented as the survival or renewed manifestation of something which was there before hand, but unconscious or not emphasized.

11.4 The anthropologist rarely speaks for himself. Most commonly he allies himself with the indigenous theory e.g. "I have been concerned with the logical fact only where it has become sociological, where it is enacted in a particular society". Occasionally however he identifies with reality three as part of those "outside forces" which threaten the system.

11.5 Now I would not have engaged in this self-analysis, tedious for me and possibly embarrassing to the reader, if I believed either that it was solely a self-criticism in the vulgar sense, or that I was peculiar in some way. It seemed to me that tact and tactics dictated that I should explore my own writings in public rather than those of some colleague, although the latter task is obviously the easier. This floating reality for example seems to underlie the work of several contemporaries and the tendency to identify with the "real" reality "outside" the society studied can be found perhaps more marked in the works of some of the immediately preceding generation.

11.6 In concluding this section let me say that I shall have failed in my endeavour if I elicit a response to the effect that I should not try to justify my

own carelessness by claiming that something equivalent to it is shared by my colleagues. Let me make it abundantly clear that I no more intend to criticize myself in public than I intend to criticize the personal anthropologies of others. It is fundamental to my present position that the implicit anthropology is inevitable. I might criticize continued attempts to deny that this is so.

12.1 There have been two adverse reactions to the kind of approach that I am advocating here. The one is that I choose privileged texts which are peculiarly vulnerable, or, worse, texts which provoke my animus. To meet this objection, to the extent that it is made in good faith, would take me back to an earlier stage of the argument, and I shall not be concerned with it here. The second, the "so what" reaction, is the more interesting and I shall conclude this paper with an attempt to meet it.

12.2 First it must be apparent that in the interest of saying what one means, the kind of critical approach that has here only been sketched, must be salutary. But this could be abused, in my view, if it implied that the object of a critique should emancipate himself from all preconceptions, for this would imply that he can emancipate himself from language; one can only mean what one says and no more. In practical terms there is a limit, and just as a man who has his own speech relayed to him by earphone while he is speaking falters and finally cannot talk, so there is a point at which we are so close to ourselves or to colleagues that, fortunately, our need to communicate in argument or discussion overrules to a certain extent our reflexive capacity. It is obvious that in such discussions only those implicit assumptions which are *not* shared are brought to the surface by questioning.

12.3 This kind of analysis is useful in helping the student to sort out problems at the level of argument. Consider for example some of Durkheim's writings. I have recently been working on some of them with first year students in a preliminary course which is by no means intended solely for social scientists. We have frequently been struck by the way in which Durkheim maintains an apparently coherent argument resting on the society/individual opposition by a sliding re-definition of the latter term, which naturally affects the former. Thus the society and the individual which are opposed at any point in the argument differ according to the writer's need. It is revealing then to go into the matter a little more and to explore the affective context which lies at the base of this need. I have earlier shown its value in trying to understand some of Malinowski's arguments.

12.4 To sum up so far, the kind of analysis that I am advocating is occasionally therapeutic for the professional anthropologist, and it is helpful when intransigent ambiguities emerge at the level of argument. As such, I take, its intentions are salutary even if you remain unconvinced about the procedures.

Controversy may arise over the earlier assertion that the hidden argument, this personal anthropology is not only inevitable but desirable.

13.1 We or some of us at any rate, talk so much of the need for precise definitions and our ideal tends so much to be a language having the purity of mathematics that any arguments which appear to question that idea as a realistic one stand open to the charge of pyrrhenism. Yet it is my contention that precisely because we believe that we can objectify our language, I mean in the sense that it should float free of our historical selves, neutral and available to the apprehension of other neutral observers, because and to the extent that this is our aim, we are at loggerheads with our personal anthropologies.

13.2 I do believe, you see, in the value of consciousness, but in my argument this consciousness recognises itself as functioning by virtue, so to speak, of what it is not conscious of at any given moment, even though this may be staggeringly clear to everyone else.

13.3 The recognition of unconscious operations in our communications is no alibi or excuse for irresponsibility. On the contrary it heightens the demand for responsibility; one aims simply to be as conscious as one possibly can recognising the limitations built into the enterprise. One of our students, for example, who has written the essay discussed in Section 2 can ask herself whether the characterisation of the relation self/society is made with universal intent such that it is believed to be true of all selves in all societies. And by answering the question she assumes responsibility. Either she holds tenaciously to her position or she conceives the possibility not of error but of alternative structures which are open to her. Nor are these alternatives, propositions about "them", endorsed by an academic "them"; they are offered as truths worthy of acceptance into her conception of what is human. The academic, not one jot less involved in this heuristic enterprise, commits himself to the fullest extent possible to the implications for himself and humanity of the views or theories which he advocates.

13.4 I hope that the words which I have chosen to use in the preceding paragraph will show how very far I am, in fact, from pyrrhenism or scepticism. I may indeed be pyrrhenistic as regards any enterprise in our discipline which sees the nature of man as in some sense outside there to be discovered. *This outside other becomes an object for my knowledge and understanding when I enter into relationship with it, and what I call my understanding is a report on that relationship not on the essential being of that other.* I personally enter into this relationship and make my report upon it. It is this making of a report, the offering of my understanding of the relationship as *true*, having universal intent, and therefore open to the acceptance, modification or rejection of my colleagues that constitutes the difference between my subjective experience

and my personal anthropology. "The solitary comprehensible fact about human experience is that it is incomprehensible". The pessimism to which my highly respected colleague, Dr. Needham appears to be moving is justified if indeed it is that "human experience" which I intended in the first place to comprehend. But if I start from the position that my understanding is contingent upon what I do not understand, and that my understanding is itself a relationship, then I can claim a future for anthropology and justify its vocation as a new humanism (*italics supplied*).

13.5 The problem remains that even when the pretensions of objectivism have been swept aside its ghost lingers. If the theories of European and American anthropologists manipulated the life of other societies to serve their ends, the aftermath of empire presents us with a spectacle of members of those same societies representing themselves to themselves with a false consciousness. Indian sociologists pose problems formed out of British experience of India and found answers in the same tradition. This alienation of consciousness from experience is quite alien to the spirit of anthropology as I understand it and poses a grave threat to the discipline. It is blatant that when political imperialism has been ended economic imperialism can continue but more insidious that this are the effects of intellectual imperialism. Anthropology cannot possibly justify itself as a new humanism if it goes the way of the T-shirt and the Coca-cola bottle. Its business, as I conceive it, is precisely to counter the effects of this homogenisation by insisting upon and encouraging as far as it can distinctive understandings of distinctive experiences. I mean that the Indian anthropologist, for example, working in England, Japan or Sierra Leone must work from the personal anthropology of an Indian for it is only then that he has something to interact with the anthropologies of his colleagues in other countries.

13.6 Let me conclude with a passage from Polanyi and lay my own emphasis on the final sentence:

To accept commitment as the framework within which we may believe something to be true, is to circumscribe the hazards of belief . . . The paradox of self-set standards is eliminated, for in a competent mental act the agent does not do as he pleases, but compels himself forcibly to act as he believes he must . . . The possibility of error is a necessary element of any belief bearing on reality, and to withhold belief on the grounds of such a hazard is to break off all contact with reality. The outcome of a competent fiduciary act may, admittedly, vary from one person to another, but since the differences are not due to any arbitrariness on the part of the individuals, each retains justifiably his universal intent. *As each hopes to capture an aspect of reality, they may all hope that their findings will eventually coincide or supplement each other.*

David Pocock

APPENDIX

The four essays which follow were written by social anthropology first-year students at Sussex University. Before commencing their social anthropology, they were asked to write an essay on 'Myself and My Society' in the preceding vacation. The students' ages vary from 19 to 25 and one is by a mature student of 30. The essays are printed as they were written with minor corrections of obscurity.

Essay A

A 1 One of the most striking features of my society is the complex division of labour which it has evolved. This division of labour binds each group to the others because they are interdependent. The essential requirements for survival - food and shelter, are looked upon as something which had to be provided by specialised groups in exchange for money. We have evolved a system where it is necessary for only certain groups to possess the necessary skills and resources. The education of most people in the society does not include the learning of these skills but a bond of dependence is created between those who do not have them and those that do. I am not prevented from acquiring such skills but like many others, I have chosen to be educated in a different way and to fulfil a different role in society to that of a builder or a farmer. Improvements in technique and technological advance create the need for a new category of people to master them and transmit them to others. Usually those possessing certain skills or who are educated in a particular field are made responsible for the practice and transmission of their own special knowledge or skills. By selling our own talents and labour, we are able to buy the special skills and labours of others. We fulfil a certain need in society, and rely on other people to fulfil the rest.

A 2 In the field of education, children are taught by a series of educational specialists and only in very early childhood are children left in the complete care of their parents. However, educational specialists are encouraging parents to send young children (3 years old), to nurseries and organised play groups as an "essential" part of their education. From the age of five the main part of one's education is left to trained specialists. My education was gained mainly through books and the formal learning at school. My mother having left school at fourteen was soon inadequate to help me in any academic way. Domestic skills, not taught in school, were learnt from her but haphazardly from watching her rather by instruction. My mother's fourth child was born when I was twelve years old. This gave both me and my elder brother an opportunity to learn about the rearing of young children through observation and practical experience. This opportunity was exceptional amongst our friends who mostly belonged to smaller families in which the children had been born within two or three years of each other and had no real experience

of bringing up young children. Formal education does not deal with this aspect of life and few middle-class children have the opportunity to observe closely for themselves. Contact with my father has always been so restricted it has been difficult to learn very much from him. His employment kept him from the house for as many as eleven hours a day and when at home he tended to watch television. This gathered us together in one room but by its nature prevented much conversation.

A 3 The formal education I received was at a northern single-sex grammar school. Here middle-class values were stressed and praised. Loyalty, honesty, obedience and endeavour were strongly recommended to the pupils. The staff demanded a high standard of conformity to middle-class values and culture. Any show of non-conformity was punished by a general harshening of staff attitudes, less interest in a child's academic achievements and subjecting her to such ridicule as wearing a beret in school throughout the day. The school was an institution for education in middle-class culture. It tried to restrict all intrusions of popular sub-cultures by controlling such manifestations as hair styles, clothes and books. They commended only those creative works classed by the middle-class as works of art. It is reasonable to suggest that works of art have no single common characteristic other than being called a work of art. But our category of works of art only contains those works preferred by the dominant class. To exercise its social superiority it evolves a vocabulary which suggests that the works that they prefer have objective value and they pay enormous sums of money for works of art. Their vocabulary is very pervasive and schools commend it and their category of works of art rather than popular music or comics. The school serves as an institution for conserving this middle-class culture.

A 4 My circle of friends has to a large extent been determined by educational establishments. At infant and primary schools I formed friendships with children of widely varying ability and, within the district, of wide social backgrounds except for those who attended private schools. When we were split into ability groups to go to secondary school, I soon ceased to know or speak to the friends who had not gone to the same school. I associated with those that had, for another two years, especially those who lived near me. However streaming at the end of the first year made contact with old friends more difficult as new friends were made in the new group. In the sixth form, when division was by subject not ability, old friends re-appeared and new friends were made within the subject group. Now I know no-one who attended infant school with me, one who attended primary school with me but was also in my sixth form. The rest of my friends from school are those who took one of the same A level subjects with me. Contact with them is becoming increasingly difficult as most of them are scattered over the country at educational institutions or in employment.

A 5 As I mentioned above, those educated in a particular field are made responsible for transmission of their special skills or knowledge. The skills are learnt by participation in the work, in apprenticeships or trainee schemes or by attending an educational establishment on day-release or more permanently. Some institutions teach people to fill certain roles, for example Sandhurst or a police college. Others are created to educate people in certain fields - universities, colleges or polytechnics. People attend such institutions for the education they provide or sometimes to attain a degree or diploma which will act as a "ticket" to another sphere or higher level.

A 6 A large proportion of young people are leaving the home environment for purposes of education and employment. Long periods spent some distance away can cause the weakening of family ties. When one sees relations for only short periods after long intervals, interests become widely divergent and there are few common binding experiences. Whereas those living together find it much easier to maintain close contact.

A 7 The welfare state in which we live makes it less necessary to maintain large family groups with close emotional and economic ties. The family is not expected to support or even care for its old and infirm. Contributions are made by working people to the state system which provides homes or financial assistance to those who are too old, too ill or unable for other reasons to work. The parent is no longer expected to provide his child with an education, and if he refuses to bring up the child the state will take care of it. The eventuality of old age is provided for by contributions to the National Pension Scheme, insurance policies, investment and savings. Independence in old age is regarded as very desirable. Living in the house of one's child is thought to cause friction and to be detrimental to the young family. I do not, therefore, expect to provide for my parents' old age even though they have supported me for nearly 20 years of my life. It is not necessary to make provision for them in my plans for the future. This does prevent the possibility of parents becoming a burden or liability to their children but can cause many single old people to feel isolated and lonely especially when the family has left the district and they are not incorporated into any group.

A 8 The feeling of mutual responsibility between employer and employee is disappearing as relations in industrial and business organisations become increasingly impersonal. This development must be due, to a large extent, to the size of such institutions which are created in preference to smaller, less efficient ones. Mass production by such specialised industries is thought to be the cheapest and most efficient way of providing society with the commodities it needs. Efficiency and cheapness are the goals of most producers. Small, local shops are becoming increasingly more rare as they are replaced by large supermarkets with few assistants. The reduction in personal service and benefit gained by bulk buying, make prices slightly lower and thus for some people the supermarkets are more attractive. In such shops, the large

and constantly changing body of customers are not recognised or known by the staff and in large firms the large numbers of workers are often little more than working parts in a massive system, who are not treated as individual human beings. The personal contact between individuals in such places is automatic and superficial.

A 9 But economic growth is the goal of many of the politicians who govern our society. Increased productivity and increased buying power can raise the standard of living. That the standard of living should be constantly improving is the desire of most people in this society. This means to them, a larger and improved set of material goods - houses each having a fridge, television set and a central heating system. However these improved material standards do not always guarantee a qualitative improvement in life. People do not always enjoy living in a brand new house if other needs are not satisfied. The increase in delinquency, and depression in housewives on new housing estates tend to suggest that material well being is not the complete solution.

A 10 The people who make the decisions in the governing of our society are chosen in elections by the people. Amongst themselves they form a power hierarchy. They rule in the name of the people, not for themselves. The system of our government rests on the assumption that they make decisions which benefit the majority of people, and not in any way for their own personal ends. One chooses the representative whose ideas correspond most closely to one's own, if any do. Their success is judged by the amount of things they do which please the majority of people.

A 11 Offenders against the laws made by the government for society are caught, judged and punished by groups of people who represent society. Society takes responsibility for the actions taken, not any person or groups of people. The actual people who carry it out are seen merely as representatives of the impersonal body and their actions, when they are fulfilling the representational role, are expressed as the actions of society not the actions of individual human beings. It is the will of society not theirs personally that a certain punishment should be carried out.

A 12 Such specialists as judges are made necessary by the size of our society and made possible by the high degree of social organization which has evolved and in which we all play a part.

Essay B

B 1 In every society the individual has a specific role or roles, which he must perform to an accepted standard in order to become a member of his society. As Goffman suggests, in his book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, the performance of these roles often becomes an act for the individual, and his

true self is not displayed to his audiences. These roles can be considered in two parts: the personal role which involves the individual's "style" associated with the individual's "name label"; and the societal role such as acting as a citizen of a town which involves conforming to local customs, etc. We can witness that the personal role is altered to fit different audiences, and the "name label" can be altered to fit differing performances, by the use of full titles or nicknames.

B 2 The social structure of the British Isles is greatly orientated around advanced technology and urban life, although in more remote areas folk-like cultural characteristics can be observed. The crofting community of the Shetland Island studied by Goffman shows a folk-like culture: a traditional way of life associated with specific occupations, but even here the urban culture has had some effect, for example, many young men now work for higher wages in factories, although they still wear traditional crofter's clothes to show they're still part of the community. The presence of this sub-cultural variability must always be borne in mind when viewing the society of Britain as a whole.

B 3 In most areas of our society we can find the horizontal division of society into social classes, arising from members having different access to resources and positions of power. This division has been observed by Goffman in the Shetland Islands, and anyone living in an urban community can notice it for themselves. This division can lead to much stress if an individual is not satisfied with the societal role he is playing as a member of a certain class, and wishes to change his position. He will have to change from one group of people to another, and must first go through the process of proving himself acceptable to the group he wishes to join.

B 4 There are many kinds of social group of which the individual may be a member; residential, kinship, peer group, social group and institution, all of which can vary in formality and permanence. The members of a group will often maintain a team performance to present the desired image to their audience, they will also act differently with members of a group and outsiders.

B 5 The team performance can be guided in many ways, from glances exchanged between members, portraying encouragement or disapproval, to a complete pre-planned course of action. If the performer is concerned with presenting a certain image, for example parents entertaining guests, he will pick team mates who are reliable, and such members as children or those with little tact or intelligence will be excluded.

B 6 Although we are not always conscious of the fact, most people are members of some sort of group or team. The society itself can be considered as a large group, with sub-cultural variabilities. Even those individuals who consider themselves to have "dropped out" of society, in fact only go to make

up the group of people who do not wish to conform to society's standards, but who are, nevertheless, still part of society.

B 7 One of the most common groups in the British society is that of the family, and most members of the society, myself included, are associated with such a group. The family group can vary in size and "closeness", a whole family of three generations may live in the same house or district and form a close-knit group, or alternatively an individual may live in relative isolation with only his spouse and children.

B 8 My own family group extends to close-knit ties between grandparents, parents and siblings, and to a lesser degree aunts, uncles and cousins. The behaviour in such a group obviously varies with the strength of the kinship bonds between individuals, temperaments and so on. There is usually a strong urge to protect this family group from outside intrusion and criticism, although open criticism is often allowed between group members. The family group will also act as a team to present an unreal image for visitors and outsiders, for example, parents will not argue, children will behave, or meals will be served in formal surroundings instead of in the kitchen.

B 9 For a member of society, such as myself, a student, membership of many different groups or teams is involved. For many students the membership of two residential groups is unavoidable, one being the family "home", the other being created by the environment of the university or college accommodation. The latter may take many forms, but often comprises a number of colleagues forming a team, permanent or otherwise, which varies in the degree of cohesive interplay. From this division between "home" and "away" two social groups will develop possibly providing at least two or more teams of which the individual is a member. Further team membership may arise from religious or political affiliations.

B 10 Much common social interaction can be viewed as a dialogue between two such teams and their members, and many disruptions such as anger or embarrassment can occur if the situation ceases to be clearly defined; previously stated positions appear less tenable or the participants find themselves without a clearly defined course of action. Such disruptions can be more far reaching, and a team or member may find his "real self" showing through the performance he is presenting for his audience. From the observation of such teams functioning, class structures, communications and other aspects of the society as a whole, much can be learned of oneself in relation to this whole: aspects of behaviour which are easily recognised in others are less easily identified in oneself. In some cases the emphasis laid on team performance and social grouping can tend to reduce and obscure the role of the individual in society. In the British society the rights of the individual to "act his own part" is still respected to some extent, but even an individual performing the supposedly uninhibited role of a student is expected to conform to social con-

ventions to some extent, and this can tend to obliterate the "real self" in favour of the social front.

Essay C

C 1 I think the task of writing about myself and my society is a rather difficult one and I have doubts as to whether I will be able to do justice to the subject. My difficulty results from the fact that I see elements of society especially if one has lived for a considerable time in a large cosmopolitan city, as complex and multi-directional and as a result quite frequently not very well defined. However I still consider that the basis of my society is the class system and that these structures are correspondingly perpetuated by the type of educational system in operation in this country. In terms of job opportunity educational qualifications are a definite advantage and equally so one's job tends to determine one's place in the social system.

C 2 The introduction of the comprehensive system of education is still in its infancy in Britain and one cannot yet see the advantages (or in some people's eyes the disadvantages) of this type of training. Society is still affected by the public, grammar and secondary modern type system. The attitudes and values expressed in schools are essentially middle-class ones. Michael Carter in his book, *Into Work*, demonstrates that the working-class child experiences conflict during school life because the values experienced in their own lives as against those they are expected to assume within the school system are in conflict. It is a similar conflict that I have experienced although from a slightly different point of view. My initial schooling up to the age of eleven was in a convent in this country and then my family emigrated to Canada where I went to an un-denominational high school. I was now associating with other children from varying backgrounds and for the first time, for me, from varying religions. I was to experience a widening of my attitudes and thinking which I believe is reflected in how I see my social environment today. The increasing complexity of life created by industrialisation and technology is also manifested in the greater mobility of people within the class system. A change in a person's life style generally assures that the children, having benefited from a higher education of the parents, will assume a different role in the system. Referring back, however, to the beginning of my essay I consider that this new identification is more difficult to see in large cities.

C 4 Further changes have occurred within the last ten years or so affecting my social environment caused by "pop" culture. I think for young people unable to find a group identity within the traditional class system "pop" has become the new life style. Dress and language have taken on a different appearance causing friction on the one hand from the older generation group who find it difficult to understand these changes and on the other from the younger generation group who feel a greater identity with their peers than

with their parents. However the kinship system in my society does not have the same prominence as it does in small scale communities and as a result the social relationships established take on a different form. This possibly explains why younger people do not feel bound to adhere to the patterns of life established by their parents.

C 5 Education in any society plays a crucial role today and is of no less importance in my own life. Alexander King writing in an article in *The Listener*, September 1st, 1966, so aptly sums up the present situation that I am taking the liberty of quoting what he says:

Until recently the process of education, with its mixture of cultural and vocational aims, has been conceived mainly as transmitting accumulated experience to the young in order to provide them with a knowledge of the nature and history of their society, together with sufficient background information to enable them to acquire later the skills, both intellectual and manipulative, that they will need throughout a productive career. Within the slowly evolving societies of the past this approach has provided continuity and made progress possible. But since the end of the war all this has altered. Social, economic and indeed political evolution have been rapid, spurred on by an explosive rate of technological change. And this is just the beginning of a process of change that will last at least to the end of the century when those now entering school will be at the peak of their careers. In such changed circumstances the affiliation of new concepts and information have become too slow and, in fact, traditional education tends more and more to transmit the ideas of the past rather than of the present; to prepare young people for life in a rapidly vanishing world and not for the future.

C 6 Five years later this point of view is even more valid. How are people to adjust to increasing change in their lives brought on by highly advanced technology? In a conference I attended last Autumn on Cybernetics and its effects on society one of the speakers stated that in the next fifty years we will acquire more knowledge than we have since time began. As a result of this knowledge explosion people are going to need to be trained and re-trained at least two or three times in their industrial lives. My own view is that not enough resources are being allocated to these needs. Difficulties experienced by a man in his forties coping with new ideas and methods are self-evident and the re-training programmes quite frequently do not meet his type of need. Fear of the changes brought on by advances in methods is a real problem that I do not believe we have started to cope with. Increasingly the worker feels an even greater alienation from his work and as a result can find no identity within his industrial set-up. Education could play an important role in alleviating this problem of fear of the future. Training programmes in industry if well run, can open up for many people aspects of their own talents

that hitherto have not been cultivated because of an education deprivation at an earlier age.

C 7 My own situation is part of this educational dynamic. As part of my work at London Airport I witnessed the problems associated with those people attempting to gain access to this country on a semi-permanent or permanent basis. My initial incredulity at the desire of whole families or individual members of a family thus breaking up family units, wishing to enter and make their home here changed from pity to respect and admiration. Why should an apparently happy Indian family, for example, tear itself from a presumably deep-rooted supportive friendly environment to jump into a totality of meaningless cultural contradictions where everything, but everything, shrieked hostility. Economists and personnel directors propound the dogma of "human inertia" as being the planners' greatest problem in terms of innovation and change. Implicit in this notion of human inertia is the reluctance of geographic migration as exemplified by such groups as the ship builders of the northeast of this country, the coal miners of South Wales, the dock workers of the northwest or the families of east London. If this is a particular human phenomenon, reluctance to move away from house, friends, etc., why are so many Indian, Pakistani, and West Indian families disregarding this "human inertia"? It would be arrogant to attempt to explain the insistence of other peoples to remain in this country as indicative of our cultural superiority. Yet, again, to look for one particular cause of this apparent cultural suicide would indicate a purely superficial understanding of the frightening powerful forces at work.

C 8 As stated above I feel a part of this potent force that uproots people from a known environment into totally alien environments. I don't pretend to be able to provide one set of answers to explain this international migration but I perceive what I think is a similar desire on both sides, a desire to attain, for want of a more suitable phrase, a "better" way of life. Better, in this case, not to be thought of in terms of superiority but as an advancing and widening of one's horizon.

Essay D

D 1 My present position in my society is one which depends upon both my past and my upbringing, and the future as I see it in terms of my hopes and projections.

D 2 An essay of this type must to some extent be an historical essay since my childhood is, as I am aware, extremely important and any interpretation of my relationship with society today would be futile without any knowledge of my enculturation.

D 3 The first fifteen years of my life were spent with my parents in a council flat in south east London. Looking back on these years the principle feeling that comes to mind is one of security. Our flat was one of some 2,000 that constituted the estate on which we lived. Even the design of the estate was such that one felt enclosed by the blocks of flats which formed a square enclosing a lawn, albeit a decimated one scattered with air raid shelters, and a large concrete area which was a playing area, parking area and which contained many posts between which lines were strung for the drying of washing. It was a very close knit community, everybody being at least on nodding terms with everybody else, and usually everyone knew everyone else's business. As a child I had among my neighbours a number of "aunts" and "uncles"; that is these were adult friends of the family who were very close to my parents. These people formed a distinct category as it seems in retrospect of whom and towards whom distinctive types of behaviour were expected. For instance one always ran errands for them without expecting or accepting if proffered any reward: one always received Christmas and birthday presents from them; also one could always rely on them for shelter or supervision in the absence of one's parents.

D 4 The other main feature of my childhood which contributes to the impression of security that I have is the "gang". The gang was really quite simply all the children in the estate between the ages of seven and the age when one's interest in girls passes from the realm of masturbatory fantasy to a desire for actual contact - usually about fourteen years of age. The gang fulfilled the needs of the children in three ways; firstly it gave one a sense of belonging, each member knowing his place in the hierarchy based on guile and fighting ability; secondly it provided recreation for its members, the year being divided into distinct "seasons" - the kart season, the football season, the fag card and the conker seasons; thirdly and most importantly the gang was the source of one's attitudes and ideas, for instance I was smoking two or three cigarettes daily at the age of ten and knew the rudiments of sex at the age of eight, I even remember announcing to my parents that I would be refraining from attending Sunday School on the grounds that I had become an atheist at the age of eight. The gang had few rules but those that it did have were strictly enforced: the supreme crime was to "split" on someone, i.e. if you were caught for some offence to give the name of your accomplices; although we were not above even stealing lead from church roofs and selling it to scrap metal merchants if the need for pea shooters or fireworks was pressing enough.

D 5 The first change in my life which affected me to no small extent was my passing the eleven plus and my admission to a (locally at least) highly esteemed grammar school. The reaction to this on the estate was quite astounding, my peers in the gang treated me with a mixture of admiration and contempt whilst my mother was given advice as to how I was in danger of finding my home "not good enough for me any more" and becoming a snob. In-

deed with the pressure of homework and other commitments the style of my life did change, but not my outlook and for some time I was very sorry for myself. However at school there were some five or six people in the same position as myself, that is they were working class children in a school which catered for mainly middle class children, most of the pupils commuted from the suburbs to the school in Southwark whereas we walked to school.

D 6 This small group constituted my peer group now, and as was pointed out on several occasions we had "chips on our shoulders". We never quite fitted into the school properly, we scorned book work but all did well in games. We despised the suburban kids but secretly wished we lived in the suburbs. This period was extremely important and affected us in different ways; although now I lived under the same conditions and was subject to the same kind of influences as middle class teenagers at school, I still maintained the same expectations as my former friends in the gang. These expectations were as follows: from sixteen to eighteen or nineteen one sowed as many wild oats as possible, drinking, sexual promiscuity were to be indulged in as often as possible and there was a great deal of influence attached to how one appeared, i.e. in terms of dress, particularly appearing "clean cut and smart" (an attitude still to be found among "skinheads" who in the main come from backgrounds similar to mine); after this period of seeing the world one found a girl with a view to becoming engaged and then married. It was essential that this girl was a virgin and that she at least was seen to remain so until you were married. Engagement was essential and so was a church wedding followed by a "good job", which in practice meant saving for several years in order that one's relatives and friends could first fill themselves with food and then with free drink. This pattern is or was accepted without question by us and our contemporaries of the opposite sex and sure enough it fulfilled itself or at least in some cases - almost.

D 7 I was engaged two months after leaving school, my fiancée who was older than me paying for the ring. This also happened to my friends most of whom went on to get married. However after leaving school I discovered George Orwell and began to "think". My interests widened immediately and my desire to just get married and find a good job waned. Within a year of being engaged and after many more stimulating books, we broke up. I decided to try to go to university and the girl, nothing daunted, found another fiancée and within a year was married.

D 8 Having been completely uninterested at school my 'A' level grades were hopelessly inadequate to equip me for the university entrance race. I took H.N.C. in Biology and obtained a place at Aberystwyth but badly broke my leg and could not go. At this stage my mind was in a turmoil and I was completely disorientated, my old expectations and values were no longer adequate. A brief excursion into Marxism faded and even my passion for science could not quell the storm in my head. Taking advantage of the time at

my disposal, as I had now been offered a place at Sussex, my first choice was philosophy. I took a job as a lorry driver, not as a regular driver but as a spare driver, replacing men who were ill or on holiday. This job gave me plenty of spare time and I read avidly, trying to find a justification in a priori terms for the socialism that at the moment was based on emotional grounds. After reading many writers from Plato to Russell I learnt two things, that the safest position was one of Huxleyan agnosticism, and that Man was a paradox which seemed to be beyond the comprehension of any particular member of the species.

D 9 All of which brings me to the present. I now conceive of my society, in the sense of what is important to me, as being all of mankind and I believe that there is a fundamental unity in Man which is capable of rationalising his affairs; but I also believe that the likelihood of these potentialities being realised is almost non-existent. I see a society doomed to conflict because of the contradictions within it, contradictions which are exacerbated by the lack of shared expectations, and conflicting belief systems. One part of the world is disproportionately consuming the earth's resources and ensuring that there will be a rapidly decreasing capability on the part of the earth to support life in the future, while the majority of the world still finds it impossible to secure enough of the basic necessities. In the face of mass starvation the right to irresponsible conception still enjoys priority over the right to a full belly, in what is laughingly called the list of basic human rights.

D 10 In my more immediate society, i.e. "Western civilization" I find even more grounds for fear and frustration. Consumption has become the objective in life, or rather to be seen to be consuming. The profit motive drives us to extremes of lunacy which to an impartial observer must be scarcely credible. Pragmatism is the ruling philosophy; "what should be" is condemned by virtue of the fact that it is what should be and not what is. The problem seems to be that changes in the environment which call for modifications in behavioural patterns are left unanswered. The result is that our society is becoming less and less integrated. The categories and plans, although not all of them, that we use today, lead very often to hopelessly inappropriate responses. For instance when we think of a large corporation we expect it to maximise profits and/or growth, and to do this at the expense of its rivals, and indeed they do do this. Now quite apart from the moral question this also leads to an even more controversial position. This is the question of pollution; each company will do as little as is legally possible (and very often less) to cut down on pollution because such measures are expensive and therefore cut down on return, and also because all the other corporations (abroad if not at home) will be trying to do the same; consequently the decimation of our land, sea and air carries on inexorably, a menace which will affect us all in a very great way in the not too distant future. Because of our attitudes to sex which still is largely regarded as taboo, education on the subject is little more than laughable. The population increases in an alarming fashion

despite the widespread malnutrition in the world. Volumes have been written on the biological effects of individuals of population excess, yet they remain in the specialist journals unread except by specialists. Because of the attitudes to sex which are culturally inherited, which condemn sex before marriage but in no way prevent it from occurring, serious attempts to educate children about pregnancy and V.D., and ways of preventing conception are piecemeal if they are not thwarted entirely. The net result is not the prevention of sex before marriage, but the rendering of the sex that does take place ill-equipped and irresponsible.

D 11 Other examples of inappropriate responses to situations in our society could have been quoted. It can be argued that what I have been attacking is not so much intransigence as a lag, since practice does in the end affect our beliefs. However this seems to me to be an academic argument since the danger is here waiting to be dealt with now, and time is getting short. The way in which lemmings control population may be effective but it is hardly rational, or at least it would be irrational, if the lemming had more effective and less painful ways of achieving the same ends and yet did not use them. Man's plight is even more perilous since not all the lemmings species jumps into the sea, a fate which is a distinct possibility for *homo sapiens*.

D 12 A culture must be judged, if we are not going to remain too aloof or too pusillanimous to judge it, by the stability it exhibits and the scope and security it offers to its members. Using these criteria it seems to me that the society in which I find myself is certainly found to be sadly, if not dangerously lacking.

NOTES:

¹ The word 'consciousness' intruded here despite my recognition in section 11 of its inchoate state in my writing. I would have been more faithful to Polanyi's guidance had I written 'a certain view of the world of which she was not at that time *focally aware*'. For the distinction between focal and subsidiary awareness, see Polanyi 1958: 55-65 and *passim*.

² This reification and isolation of 'the individual psyche' blurs the originality of Polanyi's conception of the personal. I would have done better to stay with his distinction between the personal and the subjective (see Polanyi 1958: Preface and pp. 300-3, 324, and 346).

REFERENCES CITED

[I would like to acknowledge the unpublished dissertations of Sussex undergraduates, Jane Deighton and Paul Yates].

Malinowski, B. 1967. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. London.

Needham, R. 1972. *Belief, Language and Experience*. Blackwell, Oxford.

Pocock, D.F.

1955. "The Movement of Castes". *MAN*, LV, May.

1957. "Inclusion and Exclusion". *Southwestern Jour. of Anthropol.*, 13(4).

1957. "The Bases of Faction in Gujarat". *Brit. Jour. of Soc.* VIII(4).

1960. "Sociologies; Urban and Rural". *Contrib. to Indian Soc.*, 4.

1961. "Psychological Approaches". *Contrib. to Indian Soc.*, 5.

1962. "Jajmani Relationships". *Contrib. to Indian Soc.*, 6.

1964. "The Anthropology of Time Reckoning". *Contrib. to Indian Soc.*, 7

Polanyi, M. 1958. *Personal Knowledge*. Chicago University Press, Chicago.