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THE TELEVISION MESSAGE AS SOCIAL OBJECT:

A comparative study of the structure and content of television programmes in Britain

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London School of Economics and Political Science.
ABSTRACT

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THE TELEVISION MESSAGE AS SOCIAL OBJECT:

A comparative study of the structure and content of television programmes in Britain (excluding public affairs, children's television and shorts). The thesis will be both a theoretical and empirical examination of the applicability of the varieties of analysis of symbolic orders which have been advanced by such writers as Lévi-Strauss and Foucault.

The thesis is an exploration, through the study of the narrative structure of a series of television drama programmes, of the relationship between television, myths and folktales.

Following upon work done principally by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Vladimir Propp, but also others writing in the field of semiological and structural analysis, a detailed examination of the video-recorded texts of a thirteen part drama series is presented.

It is argued in the context of an examination of, respectively, television and language, television and the mythic, and of the nature of narrative, that the television drama preserves the forms which otherwise might be thought of as particular to oral culture and communication.

Television, in its preservation of these forms, and in its generally mythic character, gains its effectiveness thereby and must be understood sociologically in such terms. The effect of such an understanding, it is argued, will be to challenge any comprehension of the medium simply as the particular product of a particular historical period and/or an imposition in culture of one world view on another.

The television message is both a collective product and a trans-historical one. It is argued that on both counts it needs to be understood as a genuine expression of a social need, though in its expression of that need it does not necessarily simply act to preserve existing social and cultural conditions.
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FOREWORD

There are a number of disparate points that I must make.

As far as the long title of the thesis is concerned, two things will quickly become clear: firstly that the empirical analysis is exclusively concerned with television drama - the comparative work involves reference to a number of separate episodes of a television drama series; and secondly, the theoretical framework, while it owes much to a reading of Michel Foucault, nevertheless is less specifically dependent on him than other so-called structuralist writers.

Work done on and through the texts of Intimate Strangers was much helped by the kind cooperation of London Weekend Television, who produced and transmitted the programmes. They not only gave me permission to video-record them, but they provided me with copies of the scripts. Needless to say I am particularly grateful to them.

Finally I would like to point out that some of my reading of the French texts discussed throughout this thesis was in translation; I refer in the footnotes to the sources I have consulted in the original and to those I have consulted in translation.
CHAPTER I

Television and Culture

Television is important. 94% of the population of the United Kingdom over the age of five has access to a television set. Each member of that population watches it an average of 16 hours and 27 minutes per week.¹ This much at least is certain and demonstrable. Less demonstrable, however, though equally certain, is that television is qualitatively important.

I aim in this thesis to explore some aspects of this qualitative dimension, and to do so through analysis of the television message, and, in particular, its narrative structure. I will be concerned with television as language and television as myth. I expect to show that television preserves forms of cultural experience that were previously thought of as being the peculiar prerogative of 'primitive' societies and that in so doing it anchors our experience, historical, changing, uncertain into another which is relatively unchanging and more certain. The way the television presents its texts is the key to the discussion.

The analysis of the television message and in particular its structural analysis is a relatively recent development. It is prompted by the inadequacy and inconsistency of many of the findings into the effects of television and correlativey the realisation that the study of effects cannot be undertaken in vacuo, that is in ignorance of the context, both social and cultural, of the supposed equation of message and action. And it is prompted by a recognition that television does not consist in a collection of isolated events to which individuals will react independently of what else is appearing on the screen. The significance
and meaning of its messages cannot simply be derived from a study of its content.  

Similarly, the production of the programmes, the relationship of the producing organisation to other institutions of society, while clearly being viable objects of study, do not reach the central questions surrounding the nature of television. These questions are, I suggest, those that seek culture's significance in what Clifford Geertz calls "the autonomous process of symbolic formulation"; in the recognition that at the heart of any social process of communication lies a symbolic system of cognitive, affective, and evaluative messages - rich, complex and resilient.

What is it that television is saying? How does it say it? These seem important and much neglected questions and they lead straight to an analysis of the message of television and to the ways in which its meanings are communicated. Other questions of course can and should be asked; for example, who is speaking, and to what effect? Both sets of questions are interdependent. Both are necessary. My choice is therefore premised on the perception both of a lack and an inadequacy. The lack consists in the relative paucity of any mature studies of the content of television and the inadequacy in the arguments, false as I hope to show, that television can only be understood in terms of the specificity of bourgeois culture and ideology, and as such is either distorting or transient or both.

In order to begin there is a need for a notion of culture, and then of myth and common sense. Each, of course, poses something of a problem and I can only sketch in this introduction what appear to be their most significant aspects.
In anthropology the claim for culture's autonomy as an object of study is itself dependent on the recognition of man's distinctiveness as opposed to animal. It is a distinctiveness grounded in man's consciousness, his language and in his attempts to make sense of his world. The core of man's cultural activity lies in his capacity to generate meaning, to communicate, to transmit and to order those meanings; it lies in the creation of a specifically symbolic level of existence. Anthropologists have also argued, though with differing degrees of emphasis, that the culture of primitive societies, both the product and the condition of the relatively simple social structure with which it is associated, manifests a coherence which is systemic. Further, they suggest, that one measure at least of increasing social complexity is to be found in the increasing differentiation in cultural and social structure.

The intellectual space occupied by culture in the analysis of primitive societies has been replaced by the concept of ideology in industrial societies. The boundaries are, of course, blurred. However the recognition of societies as historically conditioned, dynamic and changing has involved a rejection of the relatively autonomous, static and consensual notion of culture. This has been replaced by a stress on just those historical conditions, on social relations, on power and on the recognition that change and conflict are the new order of the day. Needless to say primitive societies are neither static nor conflict free; but equally industrial societies are neither constantly changing nor entirely conflict ridden. I would like to suggest that the notion of culture, so far only crudely drawn, has a place in the analysis of contemporary societies. I would also like to suggest that an important key to the understanding of culture can be found in the analysis of the mythic.
The mythic includes myth, folktale and ritual action and can be defined operationally; it mediates between a situation of pure nature, of no knowledge or understanding of the world and one in which, subsequently, that knowledge becomes more specialised, and becomes more scientific or more philosophical. Mythic space is defined by its competence to set and articulate the boundaries of what passes for conventional knowledge in primitive society and by its capacity to articulate differences and similarities in what amounts to a developing but always complete cultural map. I suggest that this relationship of pre-cultural (natural), mythic, and as it were post mythic, can be formally introduced into an analysis of contemporary culture and the resulting model allows the situation and function of television to be stated quite clearly.

To do so involves the recognition that contemporary culture is highly differentiated; much of it is inaccessible without mediation, to the majority of its members. In this situation the mythic does not define a particular stage in the transition from ignorance to knowledge, but a particular territory within which, simultaneously, the incompatibilities within contemporary culture are ameliorated. Within our society we are faced with different types of knowledge and experience which are both familiar and unfamiliar. The unfamiliar is of two kinds: the specialised and the nonsensical. The specialised consists in the particular forms of art, science and politics which we might call professional; they are complex and esoteric and they are produced and maintained by specialist and more or less exclusive groups. The nonsensical consists in what is rejected by a culture, the mythical of earlier societies, but also the mythical, the alien or the phoney, of other, contemporary societies, as well as the distortions, unacceptabilities and objects of fear that always bubble up beneath the crust of the safe and the acceptable.
Between these two forms of knowledge, the one super-cultural, the
other pre- (or anti- or even non-) cultural, lies the world of the
everyday and the modes of communication which articulate everyday
concerns; formally and functionally identically placed to the mythic
in primitive society. Here, then, is the domain of the mythic in
contemporary society, a domain in which for most of the time most of
us live, a domain where boundaries are constantly being defined and
redefined. These boundaries are being defined and redefined both in
relation to new developments in the particular forms of esoteric
knowledge whose language, concept or aesthetic is of such complexity
as to deny us access, and also in relation to the underworld of the
threatening and incomprehensible, of that which we understand (or
we think we do) but have rejected. In a technically advanced world
this is the nature against which our integrity needs to be upheld;
but this is the familiar, though often terrifying, nature and not the
unfamiliar nature discussed and explored by science.

Television like myth occupies the middle ground and in so doing defines
in its particular way the basic categories and content of the culture
of the everyday world. It is an important part of the argument of
this thesis that television, supremely among the other media of mass
communication, is coherently, systematically and centrally at work in
the articulation of culture and in the mediation of alien bodies of
knowledge and experience. To understand the nature of this activity
it is not enough to argue in terms of reflection or effects; one
must begin with a theory which seeks to encompass the complexity
of the cultural system, and a methodology which allows for the
analysis of its individual texts.
At the heart of such a theory must be the notion of the commonsense world. "The everyday life world is the province of reality in which man continuously participates in ways which are at once inevitable and patterned." This Schutzian vision of the daily world, a world dominated by the demands of practical rationality and by the recipes of taken for granted knowledge is a fruitful one. Albeit difficult to penetrate methodologically and perhaps theoretically impossible to justify, it is relatively easy to describe. Social life is characterised, and indeed is only possible because so much of what constitutes it can be taken for granted, can be unthought; we deal in typicalities, we make assumptions, predictions and choices in an 'all-things-being-equal' frame of mind. The everyday world is marked by its repetitiveness, its abstraction, its anonymity and the ever present possibility of transcendence. It is not a world of laws, nor even of probabilities, but of hopes and fears and of more or less adequately informed choices, both programmed and unprogrammed. Our choices, our unconsciously directed responses, are played against a backdrop of the typical and the unproblematic. By definition, as it were, commonsense is that to which no-one is excluded, nor is it transformed by an individual's practice of it. "It is perhaps the essential characteristic of our everyday lives that any problem which arises has as its tacit background the unproblematic status of the mundane reality which commonsense men share. However profound and far reaching the problem may be, it is a problem over and against that which is taken for granted; the validity of the world within which we come to inquire, no doubt to probe or to reflect." The unpredictable and the uncertain both surround and pervade the everyday world. They continually challenge the peace perhaps more devoutly to be wished than real. The world we know is encompassed
by that which we don't; the world we know and the security of that knowledge is constantly being pricked by the chance event, the encounter, the intrusion of the new and the unfamiliar. Our world, at least that portion of it which we can take for granted is a kernel; we step out of it at our peril, and because it is chaos (the unknown and the unthought) which we fear most, we are constantly at work revising the limits of what it is that we can take for granted, constantly incorporating more and more within our own stock of knowledge. This is both, of course, an individual and a social/cultural process, but the point is that our knowledge of the world, the knowledge which guides our everyday activities is bounded; there is an horizon to experience.

Horizons both define and limit, include and exclude; they are static in that they are always there, but dynamic in that their content is always changing. Things both come into view and then disappear, a disappearance the result of their incorporation into the familiar. As C.D. Burns notes: "On the horizon are facts or aspects of facts or events or situations - realities like any other in the fully experienced world, but different from those in that, as it were, we see them only from one side. Horizon facts are those whose connections with the fully experienced is clear enough, but not their connection with what may still be experienced and is not yet."

The everyday world of commonsense, then, has two horizons, the one of the particular sciences and arts (with their own horizons of the new and the unknown), the other of the general negations of what passes for the true and the acceptable. Where these three domains meet lie regions of ambiguity and uncertainty; of a lack of clarity about context and meaning, and a lack of clarity about the bases for choice, for decisions and for the consequences of future actions.
Our responses to the ambiguous and the uncertain will be many. As individuals we can be tolerant or intolerant, anarchic or staid. But we only know and recognise these various corrosions of meaning because we already know, consciously but more often unconsciously, the system of symbolic coherences which are the essence of our culture. On the one hand there are the events of the real world, intrusions of history as it were, the speech (parole) of the everyday; on the other the security of a structure, the guarantee of communication, the language (langue) of the everyday; actions and events, rules and structure, interdependent of course and constantly changing, but each of a different order. Indeed the commonsense world in its language and in its beliefs and actions is the privileged site where langue and parole meet. The everyday world is simultaneously a world of rule and transgression; but no knowledge of it is possible, just as it is itself impossible, without an understanding of those rules. Hence we are led to its structure, to the grounds of its possibility, and to the identification of the syntax and semantics of its meanings.

In this context, therefore, how are we to understand the cultural significance of television? It might be suggested that television is of the commonsense world but at the same time distinct from it. Of necessity involved in that world, it must equally of necessity manifest more clearly, though not necessarily directly, the structures underlying it. Then it might be suggested that television both speaks to and speaks of the modes of thought and feeling that orient our actions in the daily round. It is not so much a guide to action, or a guide for the perplexed, but rather a commentary, a more or less gentle mastication of the categories and boundaries of culture and an exploration of the ambiguities and uncertainties that are endemic to it. In order to understand how this might be it would seem essential to examine the
texts presented on television themselves, and to identify in what the
discourse of television consists. In so far as television communicates
something to each of us, and to all of us, notwithstanding the individual's
processes of selection and interpretation which cannot for one moment
be denied, the messages that television transmits are common. Whether
this commonness is genuine or whether it is an imposed structure, an
ideological form, is for the moment beside the point.

The examination of the messages that are transmitted by television begins
with their structure, understood in terms of the patterns of meaning
which can be shown to exist within a series of texts and upon which the
specific meaning of a specific text is seen to depend. The problems
are immense, for clearly even a superficial consideration of the nature
of the televisual texts would be able to identify any number of different
levels of coding, or of structuring: those both specific to the medium
and dependent on its technical make-up and those more generally at work
within many media including face-to-face interaction.

Television is not one language but many. It is however coordinated,
its various codes knitting together in a text which we, as viewers, can
read and to which we respond. There are therefore a number of prelim-
ninary observations which can be made about the nature of its communication.

The first refers to the relatively restricted nature of its codes.
No communication is without restriction; the freedom that we have to
construct always new sentences in speech is largely illusory; even
in the most open of social contexts there are required forms of speech,
just as there are different conventions and limitations of expression
whether one chooses to write or to talk. L.S. Vygotsky for example
notes some of these differences: "Communication in writing relies on
the formal meanings of words and requires a much greater number of words
than oral speech to convey the same idea. It is addressed to an absent person who rarely has in mind the same subject as the writer. Therefore it must be fully deployed; syntactic differentiation is at a maximum; and expressions are used that would seem unnatural in conversation."

In writing there are manifest differences between poetry and prose and as Roman Jakobson points out language itself is multifaceted and multifunctional; different emphases as between the emotive, the referential, the poetic, the phatic, the metalingual, and the conative dimensions of language generate different types of text, and conversely different types of text demand different forms of stress. In oral speech there seem to be differences between what Basil Bernstein calls restricted and elaborated codes.

Television will be host to all or any of these many varieties of expression, but television itself is a specific form of communication and imposes its own structure, rhetorically, on that which it transmits. We are familiar with what are popularly known as its formats; we recognise beginnings and endings and patterns of presentation. Television speaks, but it speaks anonymously and indiscriminately. Its messages are well defined and abbreviated but ephemeral. Programmes begin and end but broadcasting itself is endless. Communication is relatively compact and condensed. It is repetitive. Television indeed shares with film a metalinguistic situation somewhere between the oral and the written, but compared to film television is much closer to the oral form. It is nearer the everyday world, and its anonymity is ameliorated by the relative directness of its communication and by the familiarity which that engenders, a familiarity which video seems itself to engender. The video image seems closer, more real, than the equivalent on film.
Television is, I suggest, a mode of communication with particular characteristics. To be involved with it, as audience or as producer, is to be involved more or less passively in a communicative context which in its structuring alone limits what can be said and how. It has in this sense much in common with other forms of ritual communication, which in their denial or restriction of the right of free response, and by their distance from the context of normal face-to-face communication, exercise a subtle but nevertheless real form of cultural control. I wish to suggest that the primary mechanism for this restriction in television's communication is narrative, and that it is through a study of this code, the rules according to which stories are told, both fictional and non-fictional, that much will be learnt about the nature of television as a whole.

W.B. Gallie in his discussion of narration in history writes of stories in this way: "We follow a story across contingencies or accidents, coincidences, unpredictable events of all kinds, yet the story's general direction and continuous advance towards its final conclusion somehow succeed in rendering these contingencies acceptable." It is in making the unacceptable acceptable, in clarifying ambiguity and strengthening resistance to uncertainty that the television narrative gains its significance. Generally the stories, from drama to news and to documentary are told according to consistent not to say traditional rules. Rarely for television the bold experiments and advances of modernism which were in part a precise and self-conscious challenge to just those structures of story-telling which seemed so restrictive of true creativity. Television story-telling is a craft. The texts themselves, the programmes, are the result of collective and often anonymous activity: producers, directors, cameramen, props, make-up artists, scenery designers and builders, technicians of all kinds,
actors and writers, all together generate a coherent message. Within such an organisation pressures to conform, often interpreted in terms of giving the public what it wants, are rarely denied.

The telling of a story is a deceptively complex act. On the one hand it depends on the culture which provides it with its specific meaning through both content and context of performance. On the other it depends on a specific set of rules, the formal structure of narrative itself. This itself can be meaningful, not only because the abstract narrative code generates a statement of the kind "This is a story; understand it as such", but because the telling of a story - in a sense always once upon a time - is a social occasion of a particular sort.

But having said this we need to make a further distinction still, and that between the temporal and the non-temporal aspects of narrative structure, what I choose to call the chronologic and the logic. Opinion is divided as to the relative significance of each of these; Claude Bremond for example is quite adamant as to the primacy of the chronologic: "L'object du récit est le temps et non l'éternité; l'énoncé du devenir du choses épuise leur sens proprement narratif. Qu'après cela le récit puisse être asservi, par certains genres littéraires et par certaines idéologies, à exprimer un sense second, est que ce se sens second puisse à l'occasion se reduire à un jeu d'antinomies conceptuelles, ce n'est pas douteux, mais c'est un autre problème." This is a position with both Claude Lévi-Strauss and A.J. Greimas substantially, if not entirely, refuse. For them narrative consists in the systemic logic independent of the particular chronology of a given text. I shall have occasion to turn to this distinction many times.
In its temporality narrative rewrites, as it were, the world. The way of its expression is not dependent on conventional experience or perception; narrative does not reflect or imitate. Its relationship to that world is, though in a very narrow sense, contingent, or unmotivated. In the everyday world we may, indeed we do, account for ourselves and our own histories in narrative terms and in so doing we are creating a text which has meaning, a coherence, a significance in the same way as in a text which is publically communicated. The simple copula '... and then ...' is (like television) both of the everyday world and not of it, and in the telling of a story the ambiguity and uncertainty of the world which surrounds it is progressively reduced. A story begins with a more or less arbitrary delimitation of what will be of potential significance both in events and context. As it unfolds the narrative reduces, to borrow an expression from elsewhere, the level of 'potential surprise'. So when we are surprised or shocked by an event in, for example, a Hitchcock story, that surprise is in a sense expected.

But narrative is more than just a chronologic, its meanings are not just dependent on its formal temporal structuring. A significant part of the narrative, which I have already called the logic, consists in the patterned interrelationships according to which content is ordered, its synchronic arrangement.

Central to an understanding of this way of perceiving narrative is the work on myth of Claude Lévi-Strauss. He opens the first volume of his immense analysis of myth with the following often quoted words;
"The aim of this book is to show how empirical categories - such as the categories of the raw and the cooked, the fresh and the decayed, the moistened and the burned etc., which can only be accurately defined by ethnographic observation and, in each instance, by adopting the standpoint of a particular culture - can nonetheless be used as conceptual tools with which to elaborate abstract ideas and combine them in the form of propositions. I expect it to prove that there is a kind of logic in tangible qualities, and to demonstrate the operation of that logic and reveal its laws."^{39}

For Lévi-Strauss primitive culture is the product of the work of a mythical figure, a *bricoleur*, who, faced with nature that is apparently systematic (the diversity of species) and also a previous set of equally concrete concepts, constructs a new building with the bricks of the old. Connections and more connections are made between the elements that make up the world of the primitive's sensory experience and these connections are ordered within and by a logic which is in part dependent on their natural ordering and in part on the natural classifying capacity of the human mind. The result is culture. More particularly there results Lévi-Strauss's own analysis of myths which seeks to identify the structures according to which they are organised; this analysis, in all its multi-faceted complexity is of an intrinsic logic of frog and jaguar, of girls mad about honey and tapirs, and it depends for its understanding on an a priori (but at the same time concrete) pre-logic of simple oppositions, the raw and the cooked, inside and outside and so on.^{40} As the analysis proceeds the chronology of the narrative tends to disappear. Indeed there is very little respect given to the integrity of the myths which he analyses and for this he has been much criticised.^{41} But this lack, if such it be, can be mitigated if one recognises that different cultures will have different styles of storytelling (of course each culture will have many). While one style may stress the logic, the descriptive, another may well stress the
chronologic, it will be dense in the juxtaposition of events. Secondly Levi-Strauss's own concern is with his myths as carriers of information and as attempted solutions to the perennial dilemmas of man's existence; as such while this concern would lead him to recognize the chronology of the texts it does much more positively encourage him to seek their connections in the mythic system as a whole.

The model of the narrative text has therefore three basic levels, distinct but obviously interrelated: the chronologic, the logic and the content; the chronologic, which provides the narrative with its form, though as such it is not without semantic significance; the logic, the logic of sensible qualities, the logic of equivalence and transformation within whose mesh a specific set of cultural messages is generated and regurgitated, and finally the content itself dependent on a categorization of and in the lived in world, a categorization which may be similar to or different from that generated in the narrated text. For example, a journey from home to work in a particular story can act as illustration. It will advance the action, bringing perhaps the hero nearer to his ultimate test; it will, in its opposition present a category which in conjunction with others, such as country and city, life and death, generates a particular foundation of meaning which it will share with other stories of the culture (and indeed other cultures) and finally it betrays in this opposition the lived relation in the culture and society as a whole. Home and work, city and country, will be meaningful only if they have meaning outside the text, and indeed they come to the text redolent of meaning. Investigation of narrated texts, myths or television programmes, demands in the final analysis consideration of all these three levels of structuring and their interrelationship.
The juxtaposition once again of myth and television as examples of narrated texts is deliberate. I have already suggested that they are, in a certain sense, formally equivalent, both at work in culture in a similar way. The problem now is to determine in what ways the formal skeleton can be given flesh—in what ways the similarity of myth in primitive society and television in our own can be given substance.

The mythical in contemporary culture has often been, and is increasingly becoming, remarked upon and discussed. The disenchantment of the world, the arrival of new technologies, continuing manifestations of what for a better phrase might be called 'secular ecstasy' have alerted students of the social and the cultural to the way the gaps in our over-rational universe are being filled. Attitudes to the connections that have been drawn are varied; the following from Donald MacRae is both prescient and among the more enlightened; it deserves to be well quoted:

"Today the mass media of communication—press, film and television in ascending order of importance from this standpoint—are all introducing new ways of seeing the world and human relations. They play tricks with time and space; they bring the far near, and make the familiar mysterious; they make the famous and the great accessible, and at the same time make all personality equal and grey and evanescent; they make all causal relations simple and yet, because nothing can be fully explained and everything must be clear, they bring causality back to magic; above all, they make chance and fortune in affairs as vast, mysterious and important as ever the case was when Fortune was a goddess inhabiting her own shrine. We may deplore it, but we live in a world where myth and magic, aided by the off-beat poetry of advertising, resume some portion of their ancient state in the human heart."
Perhaps what unites myth and the mythical as it is presented in primitive society and television as it is transmitted in our own, is the prestige accorded to the communication by those receiving it. While the nature of the legitimation in one society compared to the other has manifestly changed, still the weight of tradition, the embodiment of received wisdom, the oracular explanations of past, present and future and the assumed potency - the assumed capacity to effect changes - all conspire to identify structural and functional similarities if not identities. Secularization reduces the sacred to the prestigious - but the difference may only be in the word.

Above all both television and myth act as mediators and although not just between the real and the cosmic, significantly so. Television technology extends our sensory perceptions in a way manifestly injurious to the linearity of the printed page; it introduces synesthesia, it creates the global village; we are, literally, in touch. But the technology itself is also part of the taken-for-granted world; at the touch of a switch and in ways mysterious and hence both distanced from our everyday experience but yet part of it, we can turn on to that other world which is at the same time our own. These two worlds juxtapose at the screen, both a domestic nodal point and a frame for the display of the limited, vicarious and often crucial experiences that television makes constantly available. The frame is significant; it both focuses on and defines a different reality; it is the locus of a continually practiced ritual. Mary Douglas writes:

"... ritual focuses attention by framing; it enlivens the memory and links the present with the relevant past. In all this it aids perception. Or rather, it changes perception because it changes the selective principles. So it is not enough to say that ritual helps us to experience more vividly what we would have experienced anyway. It is not merely like the visual aid which illustrates the verbal instructions for opening cans and cases.... It can come first in formulating
experience. It can permit knowledge of what would otherwise not be known at all. It does not merely externalise experience, bringing it out into the light of day, but it modifies experience in so expressing it.\textsuperscript{48}

In a different but parallel context Siegfried Kracauer illustrates how in the framing of the original script of \textit{The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari} by setting it within a narrative told by a madman, the original revolutionary intentions of the authors were entirely transformed. The frame, then, has physical, social, political and aesthetic dimensions and to be involved with experiences that are framed, above all visually, is to be involved in both the limited and the transcendent.\textsuperscript{49}

This framing is of course doubly confounded; narration acts also as a frame and as such translates the world that is lived via its contingent rules of transformation into a world that is told. And it is in the telling, even in the essential anonymity of the telling, disguised by those who speak it, that television and myth are close. The stories in television are told, as from a distance, and that distance which may be historical, geographical, social or cosmic, or all four, generates the magic and the mystery which in primitive societies are associated with myth.

Above all what myth does is to obliterate, only to redefine the conventional notions of time and space; in defining its own reality the linearity of time and the contiguity of space which are, at least in our own culture and linguistic tradition, taken for granted, are replaced by a time that is both reversible and ever present and a spatial ordering which has been called elsewhere, in the context of film, surrogate. Compare for example a discussion of film (in this case the arguments are equally applicable to television) and Mircea Eliade on myth:
"Far from being 'realistic' film suppresses ordinary reality as much as possible and replaces it with an artifact of space and time. The space and time of the viewer is all but erased and replaced by the film... But while one is viewing the film all places and moments are present when they are shown. Film has no past tense, no was.\(^{50}\)

"... by 'living' the myths one emerges from profane chronological time and enters a time that is of a different quality, a 'sacred' Time at once primordial and infinitely recoverable."\(^{51}\)

This juxtaposition is meant to be suggestive rather than conclusive; indeed there are as many disputes about the nature of film and television as there are about myth, but the comparison is an important one nevertheless, and I shall return to it.

However one or two problems have appeared. The first concerns the apparent contradiction between an analysis which stresses on the one hand the significance of the narrative, which is supremely a linear chronological form and on the other the destruction of that chronology in televisual and filmic texts. But this is more apparent than real. The televisual text consists both in immediacy on the one hand and in recollection and anticipation on the other; the immediacy is preeminently visual, the diachrony of recollection and anticipation is preeminently verbal. In addition any one narrated text loses its specificity as a narrative when it is placed alongside others. Once this is done the linear narrative chronologies with beginnings, middles and ends, which define the integrity of a particular story, become serialised; the ends herald a new beginning and ends and beginnings as such lose some of their significance.\(^{52}\) Indeed as both Mircea Eliade and Claude Lévi-Strauss\(^ {53}\) in their different ways recognise, mythic narratives are carriers of basically other more symbolic messages, which for Eliade relate specifically to the transcendence of time and the identification of origins, and for Lévi-Strauss centre on the
solutions which a particular culture offers to the universal dilemmas of human existence. There are, of course, elements of both in television.

The second problem follows from this but is less easily faced. It revolves around the question of what we are to make of a series of texts whose main effect, if not purpose, seems to be the obliteration of history; and correlatively, of what we are to make of texts which have as part of their functioning an ability to incorporate, bricoleur fashion, any and every item which may be of interest: "Myth", Ernst Cassirer writes, "seems to roll up everything it touches into unity without distinction...Things which come into contact with one another in a mythical sense - whether this contact is taken as a spatial or temporal contiguity or as a similarity, however remote, or as membership in the same class or species - have fundamentally ceased to be a multiplicity: they have acquired a substantial unity." 54

Cassirer is dismayed by the intrusion of such forms into historical and therefore rational societies. 55 Roland Barthes, from a different perspective, is equally dismayed. It is the naturalisation in myth, the mystification that such insensitivity to history generates which is at the centre of the polemics against the mythic in contemporary culture. For him also myth is a way of speaking, but it is parasitic, parasitic on and destructive of, the possibility of speaking the truth. 56 The openness of myth is a false openness and we are blind to its ideological activity. His analysis is dependent on a theory which guides him to the specificity of capitalist-bourgeois society and therefore of its culture. It is much quoted:

"Reluctance to display its codes is a mark of bourgeois society and the mass culture which has developed from it." 57
Its relevance and usefulness depends on whether the theory of culture, predominantly reflective, which it embodies, is an adequate one and equally on whether, in culture, there is something as unique and specific as its bourgeois form. It also depends on whether we like that culture or not.

Much of the argument must centre on an ability to demonstrate theoretically and empirically that the narrative structures which we have been discussing, the chronologic and the logic of cultural communication, are universal in the sense that they persist across cultures and through time, and also on the ability to demonstrate in what ways these structures integrate with the content of the specific cultures in which they are made manifest. The task is an enormous one and easily outruns the entirely modest attempt in this thesis. Indeed even the distinction between structure and content is an artificial one, though it does help to distinguish the permanent from the impermanent, the fixed from the ephemeral in culture, and at the very least it should allow us to decide whether these distinctions are in any way meaningful.

A recent study of advertising makes a similar point. Varda Langholtz Leymore suggests that the structure of advertisements is similar to that of the myths studied by Claude Lévi-Strauss, albeit for her in a degenerate way. Both myth and advertising she argues "strive to provide answers to the eternal polarities of the human condition. While the dichotomies, or the dilemmas, are universal, the specific answers are not.... The classificatory activity of the mind alone is both predetermined and universal. But the specific configurations of relationships between variables are culturally bound. The essential point is that the human mind is sensitive to certain problems which emanate from the human condition and are specific to the human species. These problems are
universally apprehended and as such constitute universal themes. The specific solutions offered to them are, nevertheless, varied." 58

We can take the reference to the human mind in whatever way we choose; the recognition that different cultures, or aspects of them, are organised according to the same rules is not by itself an invitation to search for and speculate about their origin, but an invitation merely to return to the cultural texts for further analysis. These texts are as real and as concrete as anything that human beings have created through their action, and should be investigated systematically, accordingly. 59

The universality of culture lies in its logic and in the demands for the generation and exchange of meanings without which we are not human. To talk of system, structure, logic, order, patterns, is not however to impose a static view or to reify what is forever changing, but it is to recognise that there is, simply, a consistency in the activity of man and that that consistency manifests itself in social and cultural relations. In this sense the cultural texts which are analysed, from myth to television, are of their very essence conservative; they speak coherence and generate security - and as Marshal Sahlins argues: "... the isomorphism between diverse codes - social, geographical, mythical, and economic - is neither fantastic nor the product of a pure speculative interest, it is a real condition of life." 60

Marshal Sahlins' discussion, which involves an overturning of the classical Marxian argument of the dependence of culture on material and practical interest, is itself of particular interest for in many ways it runs parallel to much that has been said here. Sahlins is concerned to develop a theory and a methodology adequate to identify both similarity and difference in culture and to argue that culture, the generation of
meanings, treated as a coherent and self-sufficient set of complex interrelationships, must precede the organisation of work and its attendant social relations. Culture cannot simply be derived from material relations, and cultural logic is not simply a practical utilitarian logic transformed into ideas. On the contrary, the very possibility of material existence is grounded in the coherence of the system of culture.

There are two aspects to his argument. Firstly that culture, both that of the primitive and of the modern, is concrete, the result of the confrontation in the symbolic of mind and matter.

"It is not merely species which are 'good to think'. Lévi-Strauss's famous dictum is applicable to all kinds of naturally occurring things and relations. The whole of nature is the potential object of the symbolic praxis, whose cunning, rather like Hegel's Reason, consists in this: that it puts to the service of its own intentions those relations among things existing by their own properties." We would expect to find, and we do, contemporary culture generating forever new sets of relations with what is to hand, but generating them according to a logic which transcends their particular ephemerality.

The second aspect of his argument is that these relations are lived; they comprise the warp and the weft of social activity; that whereas the primitive lived his life according to the categories defined by the totemic structure of his culture, we, perhaps more dominated by appearance, live our life according to the logics of fashion in clothing, food and other consumables - a language preeminently of consumption.

The fact that these relations are lived guarantees, for Sahlins, their materiality; the fact that our daily, social, productive lives are organised according to the structures and codes of culture transports these structures from a world of subjective perceptions, in a way perhaps more Durkheimian than Marxian, to objective facticity.
The analysis of television programmes follows from arguments like these and from those advanced elsewhere in this introductory chapter. With the tools provided by and developed from Vladimir Propp, Claude Lévi-Strauss, A.J. Greimas, Christian Metz and others, all of whom have been concerned with the intrinsic analysis of culture, and its codes, the social and cultural object, television, can be approached and its significance more firmly understood. A full consideration of their work in theory and in practice takes up the major part of this thesis. But to do it in this manner, in other words working from the text outwards, inevitably creates its own problems, and if pursued fully, as is my intention, has a number of far reaching implications. Central amongst these are the way in which we need to understand ideology in contemporary culture and the contribution to it which television makes. Central too, is the way in which television's culture (such a phrase itself is entirely question begging) is articulated into the everyday world and to the continuity and changes within our everyday experience. I will return to these considerations again, but most substantially in the final chapter.

Suffice it to say now that I see television as being part ideology, part culture; both inside history and outside it, manifestly open to and contributing to change, latently preserving forms of experience that are resistant to change. The analysis of the structure of the message immediately identifies a set of coherences beneath and within the manifestly diverse; the relation of these coherences to others in similar forms of communication within the same culture and within other cultures opens the way to the identification of what might be called a cultural rather than an ideological ground-base, upon which historical manifestations of culture are constructed, and whose operation makes these manifestations acceptable. The new and the unfamiliar are made
old and familiar while still maintaining their novelty, by their incorporation into pre-existing patterns of experience; the transformation is cultural, the motor is structural, and at the level of the everyday where these processes are most visible and most significant, change is, at root, very slow indeed.

The hypothesis with which I begin is therefore this: that our involvement with television, an involvement which affects almost every member of our society from infancy onwards, is an involvement with a type of communication which in its compression and redefinition of historical, geographical, social and cosmic experience identifies a coherence, a continuity and a commonness in culture, but to which, blinded by the glare of manifest historical and other changes, of conflict and of difference, we are unaware. Television, like myth is both structuring and structured; the former referring to its process the latter to its effect. When we watch television we are watching a series of messages that both order our experience and define its categories, but which do so in ways that transcend the historical conditions of that experience. We need to understand through the analysis of the texts themselves how this is achieved, but that, as they say, is another story.
Chapter I. Footnotes and References


On content analysis, see B. Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research. New York. 1952; Ithiel de Sola Pool (Ed.), Trends in Content Analysis. Urbana. 1959; and also Olivier Burgelain, Structural Analysis and Mass Communication, in Dennis McQuail, Sociology of Mass Communication, op. cit. 313-328. The difference, quite simply, between a structuralist approach and that of content analysis, is that between a method whicheschews quantification, takes into account the form of a communication, and deals substantively with its latent content. The number of studies in the structuralist analysis of the mass media are fast growing; on television, see John Fiske and John Hartley, Reading Television. London. 1978, and especially their bibliography, 207-209.


5. Influences here include the Frankfurt School, Antonio Gramsci, Roland Barthes and Louis Althusser. In Britain the spearhead of Marxist analysis has come from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham; see their Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1-10, and their occasional papers; see also many of the contributions to Screen, at least since 1974. More recently there has been something of a flood of critical study of the media, see for example: Glasgow Media Group, Bad News. London. 1977; the journal, Media, Culture and Society; the reader, James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, Janet Woollacott (Eds.), Mass Communication and Society. London. 1977; the papers in Michele Barrett et al. (Eds.), Ideology and Cultural Production, London 1979. Some of the implications of this literature will be discussed below, and also in Chapter 7.

7. In a sense this is essentially the story of sociology as a discipline. Its distinctiveness vis-à-vis anthropology is defined as much by its subject matter as by its methods.


9. At this stage my definition follows that of Claude Lévi-Strauss; see Chapter 3 for a further discussion and the presentation of a model of what I call in that chapter the mythic, and its relationship to commonsense.

10. A trivial observation, but one central to an understanding of contemporary society. Central of course is Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York. 1933.


12. The word 'mythical' here is deliberately ambiguous: while in the social sciences we would wish to be precise and use the term 'myth' to define a specific body of, or way of telling, stories of a particular kind, in common parlance the word 'mythical' is often used to identify the false, the phoney or the alien.


21. Structure can then be understood in terms of the patterns of meaning which can be shown to exist within a series of texts and upon which the specific meaning of a specific text is seen to depend. The different levels of structuring are often referred to as Codes. The series of individual items of communication comprising the Message, become - once they are treated as an object of analysis - the Text. The texts themselves partake of wider unity (or unities) that of the Discourse. See chapter 4 below.


33. A deliberate neologism, for which no apology is made. It identifies a particular level of narrative structure.

35. There is a very full discussion of both these approaches to narrative and to the mythic in Chapter 4 below.

36. Roland Barthes, *Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits*, Communications. 8. 26-27, where he writes this: 'Ainsi, dans tout récit, l'imitation n'est pas de 'représenter', elle est de constituer un spectacle qui nous reste encore très énigmatique, mais qui ne sourait être d'ordre mimétique; la 'réalité' d'une sequence n'est pas dans la suite 'naturelle' des actions qui la composent, mais dans la logique qui s'y expose, s'y risque et s'y satisfait....Le récit ne fait pas voir, il n'imite pas; la passion qui peut nous enflammer à la lecture d'un roman n'est pas celle d'une 'vision' (en fait nous ne 'voyons' rien), c'est celle du sens....'


40. Once again, Lévi-Straussian observations; see Chapters 3 and 4 below.


43. see footnote 1 Chapter 3.

44. This phrase is adapted from Bernice Martin, *Notes for a Dying Counter-Culture*. Mimeo. 1977.


59. Clifford Geertz, *Introduction to Clifford Geertz (Ed) Myth, Symbol and Culture*. New York. 1971, x-xi: "...African passage rites, nineteenth century novels, scientific theories, English landscape paintings, or the ways in which moral judgements are phrased, have as good a claim to public existence as houses, stones and trees, and are therefore as susceptible to objective investigation and systematic analysis as these apparently harder 'realities'."
61. ibid. p. 266: "...No cultural form can ever be read from a set of material forces as if the cultural were the dependent variable of an inescapable practical logic. The very form of social existence of material force is determined by its integration in the cultural system."
62. ibid. p. 196.

63. ibid. p. 148: "The bourgeois totemism is potentially more elaborate than any wild (sauvage) variety, not that it has been liberated from a natural-material basis, but precisely because nature has been domesticated."

64. See chapter 4, for an extensive discussion of theories of narrative.
If television communicates, it does so both through language and as a language itself. The distinction is an important one. Most obviously much of what is heard and seen on television is in language. The news is read; documentary films have commentaries; the characters in a drama speak. The language that they use, except perhaps in circumstances where a particular effect is desired, is that of a form of standard English which, rightly or wrongly, is assumed to be widely understood. The problems raised by its analysis are the problems at the heart of linguistics, the study of natural language.

But television, quite obviously, is more than just words. It contains images, music and natural sound, and for the purposes of this thesis, most importantly stories. As a form of communication it is both complex and direct. Its complexity lies in the density of its communication and its directness in the channelling of that density in patterns which are both expected and remarkably simple.

In the totality of its communication we can certainly ask whether television is like language and we can use - with care - the models and theories developed for the study of natural language to illuminate that totality. Such models and theories may only take us a short way, for as Edward Sapir remarks, "all grammars leak" and indeed when the "grammar" is no longer that of a natural language but that of an assumed semiotic system, then there may be more holes than wholes.
The movement from the study of language to the study of something that might be (or should be) like language is a movement speculated on by Ferdinand de Saussure and indeed by Emile Durkheim. It brings with it a concern with the full range of human communication and with that concern an assumption of its systematic nature. Within the system everything signifies and that signification consists in the play of difference. The sign gains its uniqueness and its value in its contrast with all other signs. Within this premise and within the premise also of the essential arbitrariness at the heart of signification the basic thrust of semiotics and structuralism gains its momentum. If culture is like language then it is so in its structuring. It is in the patterning of its constraints that the connection will be found. Hence the search is for a grammar, for the identification of codes, for the determination of levels within the act and the system of communication which contains the act. The question here is not so much how communication actually is effected, a question that would demand consideration of language in use, but a question of how it is possible and as such it is a question which leads to a search for an answer beneath the manifestations of speech and to an abstraction away from the speech act itself. The distinction between langue and parole in Saussurian terminology is a basic one therefore, however inadequate or incomplete its formulation, for within it we can begin to understand both the constraint and freedom of language.

Similarly for television; an understanding of its communication also demands a consideration of what it is that constrains it, and correlative on what the creative freedom and ability to generate endlessly unique texts rests. One of these constraints, perhaps the most obvious, perhaps only the most accessible to analysis, is that of narrative, by which is meant the set of rules necessary and sufficient to the definition and the
telling of a story. Other constraints, for example, which have their source in the image or in music are also of great importance, though they will be very little considered here.

In this chapter I shall consider the relevance of the linguistic metaphor for the study of television and I shall do so in four different but, I hope, compatible ways; firstly by a brief consideration of the contrasting assumptions underlying any study of language; secondly by considering the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and its influence; thirdly by a more detailed analysis of the semiotic work of Christian Metz; and finally by a consideration of the relationship between language and aspects of culture.

II

"For man was not created twice, once without language and once with language. The emergence of Homo in the animal series may have been helped by his bodily structure or his nervous organisation, but it is due above all to his faculty of symbolic representation, the common source of thought, language and society."  

Man's uniqueness in the world is the consequence of his capacity to produce symbols, and language, the preeminent symbolic form, is the symbol of that capacity. This much said and not seriously disputable, it is nevertheless the case that the study of language is by no means unproblematic.

We can accept, for example, language's universality without necessarily accepting any value in the search for linguistic universals. We can accept that language depends on a community of speakers and also sustains that community without necessarily accepting the validity of that community in any given situation. And we can accept that language constructs and creates the world for man without necessarily accepting that in so doing its capacity to do so is not otherwise determined by more "material" factors and circumstances. These are abiding problems in the study of language and they spill over as we shall see into the study of language systems, semiotics and narrative.
And indeed there are further distinctions to be made. Much of contemporary linguistics is synchronic; it consists in the study of language's systemic nature, in its characteristics at any one time. But it was not always so. Changes in language are, seemingly, no longer of great concern. More vital, perhaps, is the dispute between those who see language in terms of a relationship between langue and parole, in terms of a set of permanently relevant codes and rules appropriate to the various levels of linguistic experience, phonetics, semantics, syntactics, and to the transformations between them; and those who see language as speech, indexical, personal, above all active. On the one hand the study of language lays claims to objectivity and to science, on the other to subjectivity and to philosophy. The source of this schism, of course, lies deep in the disciplines that study man.

And finally there is in the study of language the distinction to be made between its different modes, both in terms of the medium of its expression, whether written or oral and also in terms of the different forms within which a different language might appear.

These distinctions which otherwise bear so centrally on any consideration of natural language must also be relevant to any discussion of other forms of communication supposedly like language. Of course, not only is the language of television one of sight and sound, but it is also, and as a consequence, one which is hardly amenable to the sort of reduction to the minimal units that, for example, in phonetics, grounds the study of natural language.
Nor is it possible, nor reasonable, to consider televisual language as a context independent communication. If one is to look for rules within it then these rules, however abstractly represented, need much that is beyond them and beyond the specific communication to be fully comprehended. Many would say the same, of course, of the study of natural language and in particular of the attempt to reduce semantics to a play of abstract logic.\textsuperscript{15}

If one is to argue therefore that television is like language, and if such an argument is to allow one to approach more closely to what television is, then these questions are central.

But if television's communication can, reasonably, be considered like a natural language it is both more and less than such a language. It is less because we cannot identify two distinct levels of articulation,\textsuperscript{16} nor can we unambiguously define the minimal unit of its communication (what is the equivalent to the word or lexeme in a television programme?). But it is more, not only because of its visual component but because by virtue of this inability to identify such units, we are forced to consider television as a discourse; the analysis of television and film in terms of language involves a profound change of scale. The study of natural language, with one or two rare and hesitant exceptions, stops with the sentence.\textsuperscript{17} Problems of syntax, semantics and phonology never outreach this basic unit of expression; they never need to. So questions of language beyond the sentence involve a transformation in the nature of these questions. As Emile Benveniste points out: "The sentence, an undefined creation of limitless variety, is the very life of human speech in action. We conclude from this that with the sentence we leave the domain of language as a system of signs and enter into another universe, that of language as an instrument of communication,
whose expression is discourse."\(^\)\(^1\)\(^8\)

An examination of what, if Benveniste is to be followed, must now be television's communication rather than its language involves, \textit{ipso facto} a concern with constraints operative beyond the sentence. Such a movement into the study of narrative undertaken in this thesis is justified simply by such considerations. It is supported, though not unproblematically, by those who have made in poetics and in the study of folklore a similar movement.\(^\)\(^1\)\(^9\) The model of the sentence, and in particular its simple structure of subject, verb, predicate becomes a model of action which finds its representation in narration: the hero, his action, the object of his action.\(^\)\(^2\)\(^0\) Beyond the sentence, narrative exists as an essential constraint. And indeed language, story and as Ernst Cassirer suggests, play, are essentially interrelated:

"L'activité verbale n'est pas seulement une circonstance concomitante de toute activité de jeu: elle en est le stimulant continu. Le goût du jeu est lié dans une large mesure un goût de la fabulation et ne peut en être séparé."\(^\)\(^2\)\(^1\).

Narration, the act of constructing or speaking a narrative, is part of the communication process grounded in language. Narrative both depends on and extends language. Its forms, albeit of their very nature less tangible, seem to work in the same way as the forms of natural language and the distinction between \textit{langue} and \textit{parole} can and is made by those who study narrative and poetics.\(^\)\(^2\)\(^2\)

Narrative constrains. To recognise this is to recognise a further dimension of the way in which language both limits what can be said and also through those limits both constructs and destroys the world;
"Un éternale anathème semble jeter sur le langage; tout ce qu’il nous montre: il nous le cache aussi, et fatalement; dans son effort pas rendre consciente et manifeste la nature des choses, pour la saisir dans son essence, il la déforme et la défigure nécessairement." 23

It is in the nature of language to misrepresent, although to suggest that this misrepresentation is revocable is of course, by definition, absurd. What falsehood we may detect in the language of others is only detected through the falsehood of our own language. The creation of the world in language is a creation of the world which is both independent because in language we create it and dependent because the world precedes that act of creation. The disentangling of this lies at the heart of any consideration of language’s truthfulness and by extension, to its contribution to ideological manifestations. However these issues are resolved two things are clear; one is that language is not neutral in its reflection of a given reality and secondly that that lack of neutrality is the product of an activity in which, through language, and only through it, we come to know and to control the world. I will of course return to these considerations in the final section of this chapter.

III

To begin at the beginning - or at least with Ferdinand de Saussure. His Course in General Linguistics has been recently much discussed and much studied. His arguments are, therefore, well known. They take as their point of departure the attempt to establish the science of linguistics sui generis,24 and to do so therefore in a way which makes language autonomous and irreducible. Language is neither mind nor society, though it is of course both psychological and social. 25
In practice, and guided by this recognition, the study of language becomes the study of a system and of that system's structure. Language is seen in terms of an interrelation of diverse units through whose articulation in word and sentence, meaning is created. In order to make this approach viable three things are minimally required and much of Saussure's central effort is directed towards establishing them. The first is the nature of the system, the second is its basic unit, and the third is the interrelationship of these basic units.

Language is both rules and the application of these rules; it is both langue and parole. The rules are both essential and social, they create in language the possibility of what is in speech both accidental and individual. It is language (langue) which is the object of study and language is for Saussure, "a well-defined object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts"; it is something that can be studied independently of its manifestation in speech; it is homogeneous in that it consists only in the union of meaning and sound images; and finally it is concrete: "linguistic signs, though basically psychological, are not abstractions; associations which bear the stamp of collective approval - and which added together constitute language - are realities that have their seat in the brain".

Speech on the other hand, the specific complexity of the actual act of communication, becomes peripheral. Saussure is not concerned with the construction of meaning in a sentence or of the grammar of a sentence, but with the potential of meaning prior to the sentence, and to a grammar reduced to basic essentials prior to the specific grammar of the spoken or the written sentence. Thus he defines a different object for linguistics than that subsequently defined for it by Noam Chomsky.
The system is *langue*, therefore, and its basic units are signs.

"The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image." The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image. Sounds relate to, but are independent of, the world of material objects, a point made more clear by Louis Hjelmslev who sees beyond the sign an undifferentiated purport or matter/which the sign in its totality gives expression. The sign is constituted therefore from within, and that doubly so. On the one hand what is important is its intrinsic structure, the concept and the sound image, the signified and the signifier respectively, and on the other its inter-relationship with other signs, a relationship which is intrinsic to the system of *langue*.

In the sign, the unity of signifier and signified, sound image and concept, is arbitrary. Nothing naturally or necessarily connects the sound *cat* with the concept of *cat*; it is only by convention, a convention which differs from one language to another, that the two are, albeit rigidly, linked together. Arbitrariness is not synonymous therefore with a fluid randomness but on the contrary with a socially defined and accepted immutability. The relationship of signifier and signified in this sign is not natural, in the sense that it is given in the nature of things, but it is historical (in the Marxian sense) in that it is a social production. It is nevertheless fixed.

A second dimension of the sign, stressed but not given as much consideration as the first by Saussure, is its linearity. Signs unfold in time and while this may be obvious it is however also ambiguous, for as we shall see what constitutes the system of signs in *langue* is, for Saussure, both time and space (syntagmatic and associational), and it is therefore only in speech that the exclusive linearity of the sign relation is made manifest.
If the essential bond within the sign is not fixed naturally its permanence can only be guaranteed in its relationship with the other signs of the system—by its difference. Its value consists in its unique place in a system of other unique signs. Such a value is functional; it is constituted in the play of the interdependence of distinct units. "In language there are only differences"; consequently the analysis of language is principally the constituting system of these differences, it is principally synchronic. "In language, as in any semiological system, whatever distinguishes one sign from the others constitutes it." 

In general, therefore, within the system of langue signs are to be distinguished from each other in two ways. Of these two ways the syntagmatic and paradigmatic (associational) identify that system as dissociated; each sign is defined by a grid, one dimension of which, the syntagmatic, relates to the place of a sign in a consecutive series. Its value is the product of its opposition to all the signs that precede or follow it, a temporal relation based on the linear nature of language. In a discourse words are, in Saussure's metaphor, "chained" together.

Outside discourse, and in a sense preceding it, signs are related in their difference in another way. In this, the paradigmatic (associational), signs are both linked together and distinguished from each other simply in the recognition that they are mutually replaceable. To replace something by another that works equally well but differently implies the mutual identity of the terms, but this identity is formal. The paradigmatic dimension of langue defines the potentially infinite range of alternative terms. The selection of one is by definition significant. "We see that the coordinations formed outside discourse differ strikingly from those formed inside discourse. Those formed outside discourse are not supported by linearity. Their seat is in the brain; they are a part of the inner storehouse that makes up the
language of each speaker. They are associative relations.

The syntagmatic relation is in presentia. It is based on two or more terms that occur in an effective series. Against this, the associative relation unites terms in absentia in a potential mnemonic series.\(^4\)

Saussure's contribution to the study of language and, as he anticipated, to the study of signs in whatever form, for semiotics, is of course seminal. But like so many seminal statements it is incomplete. It is by virtue of his work that European structural linguistics, via Prague and in Paris and Denmark is as it is, particularly in the study of phonology.\(^4\) But it would not be too far fetched to suggest that it is by virtue of his work that the linguistics of Noam Chomsky is as it is - radically different in all but the distinction between competence and performance (langue and parole).\(^4\) Chomsky seeks in opposition to Saussure to produce a grammar of language, centrally concerned with syntax which, as it were, provides the operational bridge between an abstract capacity for language and its implementation in practice. The rules are grammatical, if one excuses the tautology, because they relate to the underlying complexity of speech. And the rules are syntactic because they are presumed to be independent of meaning though this independence is not a real one. Chomsky's rules are entirely dependent on his judgement about the meaning of the terms and their grammaticality. Similarly the attempts to generate the intrinsic semantics within the Chomskian mould fail precisely because knowledge of the meaning of the terms and often arbitrary decisions about those meanings are a necessary point of departure.\(^4\)

Saussure however is centrally concerned with meaning though he never quite says so. The value of a sign is its meaning. But there is more to meaning than system specific value, and the meanings which language creates quickly outrun that language. The problem has generated in general two
responses, the first principally offered by Louis Hjelmslev has involved digging deeper into the core of language and into the structure of the sign and in its constraining system. The object of Hjelmslev’s linguistics is pure abstraction, neither semantics nor even phonetics "but an algebra of language, operating with unnamed entities, i.e. arbitrarily named entities without natural designation, which would receive motivated designation only on being confronted with the substance."

At the same time, however, Hjelmslev makes an important distinction, that between denotation and connotation, which actually opens out the study of meaning in a way that seems inclined to leave the study of languages intrinsic form far behind. Denotation is that aspect of meaning in which the relationship between signifier and signified is both direct and closed. I utter the word 'cat' and it is to cat that I refer. However the reference to cat may in turn suggest all manner of other references depending on the way that I say it, the context of the utterance, the values of the encompassing culture. Connotation takes meaning beyond one system and into another. Its study both defines the central task of semiotics and also defines that task’s impossibility.

Formally connotation or connotative semiotics refers to "a semiotics whose expression plane is another semiotics", or "a system whose plane of expression is itself constituted by a signifying system". Whether connotation is just another and subsidiary coding as it is for Umberto Eco, or whether it opens up "the general, the global and the diffuse", it is this, its extensiveness, which is the point at issue. The identification of such a dimension of meaning demands a consideration of language’s full range of references; both of its context and of its use. For Roland Barthes, it leads to the constitution of ideology
and metalanguage and for Louis Hjelmslev also, despite his intention to found an algebraic linguistics, the study of language persistently and essentially outruns itself: "Linguistic theory is lead by an inner necessity to recognise not merely the linguistic system, in its scheme and its usage, in its totality and its individuality, but also man and human society behind language, and all man's sphere of knowledge through language." 52

Connotation therefore provides a link between language and other semiotic or signifying systems and of course also a link between signifying systems seemingly far removed from language, but it also specifies in its very existence the reason why the pursuit of meaning must be endless. This perception of the connotative dimension of language exceeds what Saussure has given us, but at the same time provides the basic means whereby semiotics, as a discipline can be undertaken. It provides, as it were, the bridge from the specificity of natural language on the one hand, the system par excellence, to the further specificities of other forms of language and other ways of communication. Some of these depend on natural language, others do not, but all of them it is presumed, can be understood in their capacity to generate meaning through the principles of analysis generated from the study of natural language and undertaken initially by Saussure.

IV

Television is one such signifying system and as such it is both complex and so far little studied. 53 Its complexity lies both in its specific nature, that it is a unique medium, but also in its use of other signifying systems, say for example narrative, which are themselves complex. In this it is like cinema, and of course the comparison goes a long way. Both
media are similarly constituted in their use of image, sound, dialogue, music, noise and titles. So close indeed are they that one student of the cinema and film, Christian Metz, finds it hard to make a clear cut distinction at the level of signification between them.

It is therefore worth turning to the work of Christian Metz and this for a number of reasons. Firstly he does in the full range of his work provide a very precise methodological account of how a film can be understood semiotically. This involves most centrally consideration of the cinema as a language or more precisely as a language system. He illustrates, in this, the nature of the move from the study of natural language to that of other forms of communication. Secondly his attempt is oriented towards establishing the specific nature of the cinema and the cinematic, and here the concern is to establish what it is that marks the uniqueness of the cinema, and what correlative the cinema actually uses which might be considered as more general. Thirdly, and paradoxically, such a search raises questions as to the non-specificity of cinema, in other words questions about what it has in common with other forms of communication. And this leads me, at least, to a consideration of narrative as such.

As a preface let me refer in a little more detail to Christian Metz's comments on the relationship between cinema and television without which any argument purporting to be about television but cast exclusively in terms of cinema might seem like a sleight of hand.

In his discussion in *Cinema and Language*, Metz acknowledges the technological, the socio-political and the socio-psychological and effective differences between the two media. The first are obvious, the second involve the different relationship with the state and the different processes of
decision making involved in administration and production, and the third
pre-eminently involve differences in the conditions of reception. However,
intrinsically cinema and television are nothing more than two neighbouring
language systems, but ones which push this relationship much further than
is ordinarily done". Cinema and television are two technologically
and socially distinct versions of a single language system. This is
defined in terms of its five dimensions, the auditory of which appear in
their full phenomenal and perceptual richness, and the visual (iconic)
manifesting "a partial and incomplete perceptual analogy in relation to
the reproduced object." 58

What distinguishes television and cinema, for Metz, paradoxically from
the point of view of this analysis, is their use of narrative - narrative
being considered more important to the cinema than to television. 59
This may well be true, though it depends on assumptions about the nature
of narrative which may not be correct, and in particular on the assumption
that narrative forms are only manifest in the dramatic, as opposed to the
documentary. This remains to be established.

Christian Metz however does recognize what it is important for my argument
(alia) to establish and that is that the proper codes of narration
(and the very fact of narrativity) are neither cinematic nor televisual
but much more broadly anthropological and cultural. 60

His work grows out of a tradition which begins with the work of Sergei
Eisenstein, whose attempts in theory and in practice to generate a
proletarian art of the cinema lead him to examine the visual structure
of the film. Eisenstein was concerned with its particular nature, and
with the means whereby, in the juxtaposition of image, meaning would be
created in it. Metz is similarly concerned. Both he and Eisenstein
seek the language of cinema.
Following Metz, then, in an analysis of this relationship, we can begin by making a series of distinctions whose origin is in the work of Louis Hjelmslev's dissection of the nature of the sign. Saussure's primary distinction within the unit of signification, the sign, was between, as we have seen, the signifier (signifiant) and the signified (signifié), the latter referring to the conceptual image, the former to its materialization in word or morpheme. Hjelmslev argued that in fact each of the two dimensions of the sign, he called them expression and content respectively, can be further analyzed. To do this involves making a threefold distinction applied identically to each of the terms. Both expression and content consist in a relation of form, substance and purport (or matter). The substance is what results from the imposition of form, the product of a particular language, on purport, the unformed material outside language. Purport in a sense both precedes language but at the same time has no existence outside language. A particular language, with its particular construction generates substance, which can be conceived of as purport formalized. As Hjelmslev writes:

"Just as the same sound can be put into different moulds, and the same cloud takes on every new shapes, so also the same purport is formed or structured differently in different languages. What determines its form is solely the functions of the language, the sign function and the functions deducible therefrom. Purport remains, each time substance for a new form, and has no possible existence except through being substance for one form or another."
Schematically this can be represented as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The purport} & \quad \text{The substance of the expression} \\
\text{The form} & \quad \text{Saussure's Signifier}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The purport} & \quad \text{The substance of the content} \\
\text{The form} & \quad \text{Saussure's Signified}
\end{align*}
\]

In Metz's analysis of the cinematic this classification reappears, though not unproblematically. Purport seems to refer to the pre-semiotic, to matter. We might wish to ask, for example, whether recorded music, recorded noise or recorded phonetic sound are the same when they appear on a film as opposed to on a record. The notion of purport allows us to formulate the existence of that which is common to, but perhaps differently given substance by, these two media of expression. This is a refinement which finds little place in Metz's own considerations, for his principal concern is with the relationship between expression and content, and it is to this that I will now turn.

With regard to the content the substance refers to the data or information derived from the world at large, and the form to its moulding. For example, I might tell a story (form) about Red Riding Hood (substance) and my telling will draw on all manner of information from the world at large (purport). This will be incorporated into the tale and thereby given substance. The story in its content is complete.

The same stories (contents) however can be presented in different media; they can be told in different modes of expression. At this level of expression the distinction between form and substance holds. In the cinema the substance refers to the five dimensions which together give it its specificity; as I have already mentioned, they are moving photographic images, recorded noise, phonetic sound, recorded musical sound, and written titles. The form of the expression then refers to "the set of perceptual configurations recognizable in these (five)
substances; for example the regular recurrence of a syntagmatic association between a particular phase of dialogue and some visual motif etc". Montage, in Eisenstein's theory, exists at this level - that of the form of the expression or signifier.

Metz, principally concerned with the specificity of cinema, is in turn almost entirely involved with the analysis of its expression and with its form. He is concerned to identify what constitutes the cinema as such, with questions of how it is constructed and above all - with its capacity to generate meaning. His analysis of narrative, of the syntagmatics of cinematic language, is thus an analysis in terms of its technical specificity. Narrative for Metz is the narrative of expression and its significance lies in the particular way cinema in its films constructs its texts. But, as I have already remarked, narrative exists also at the level of content, and here the problems transcend the particularity of the cinema, and are located in the realm of narrative as such. Metz acknowledges the difference of course. "The narrated event, which is a significate in the semiotics of narrative vehicles (and notably of the cinema), becomes a signifier in the semiotics of narrativity."

Metz is concerned principally, then, with the form of the expression, with that part of the filmic experience which is particular to that medium, and with the possible exception of television, to no other. He is concerned, therefore, with the definition of the cinematic, with an understanding of the cinema. The distinction, that between film and cinema, occupies a great part of his terminological and methodological treatise, Cinema and Language, and it represents the key to Metz's own exploration of the nature of the language of the medium.
I shall in this discussion attempt to be brief. The basic distinction is that between cinema and film. The film is what we see and hear. It has a materiality. It has a beginning and an end. It is produced. It conveys meaning and we can analyse it. We can consider it as a text, self-contained, coherent, articulate, multi-faceted and multi-levelled.

When we watch a film we receive messages or even a dominant message. We identify themes. We follow a plot. We are moved or informed, or both; our experience is aesthetic and cognitive. But our understanding of a film is not based just on what we see and hear, but also on what we bring to it from our non-filmic cultural experience, an experience which the film itself embodies and perhaps transforms.69

The content of the film is therefore not exclusively the property of film. It is however presented systematically and if we are to understand it, or theorize about it, we have to deconstruct what is given - the text of the film in all its many dimensions. That deconstruction involves a reconstruction too, and it involves simultaneously the distinction between film and cinema.70

Metz writes:

"The goal toward which all descriptive work strives is not the film as a real discourse,..., for the latter is already an achieved object before the analysis even begins. What a description hopes to establish is, rather, the system which organizes this realization: the structure of this text, and not the text itself. The system is nowhere clearly visible in the actual unwinding of the film: a system, as such, is never directly attested." 71

Cinema, in Metz's terminology, is both what is specific to film and to filmic discourse and is, at the same time, a construction of analysis. The cinema is defined by what is present in films. "The sum of traits which in the films themselves are taken to be characteristic of what is sensed to be a certain 'language system'." 72 The analogy of the difference between film and cinema is to be found in the difference between a book and literature.
The phrase 'language system' is an important one, and it marks a point at which the model of natural language reaches its limits when faced with a signifying system of another order. Metz is increasingly concerned to define the linguistic nature of the cinema not in terms of the tight coherence of the langue-parole model of natural language, but in terms of a relationship of parole, the speech/texts of film, and a language system. The difference is clear. The notion of langue suggests a singularity of structure, of one code, from which the events of speech are constructed. Cinema, unlike natural language, has not one code, but many, and a film, unlike an act of natural speech is constructed according to many codes, some of which are exclusively cinematic, others of which are not and will appear, like narrative, in other media of communication. "Thus just as a single code may be manifested in several language systems, a single language system may manifest several codes, some of which may not be specific to it." 73

Codes, then, are specific levels of structuring; we can identify camera movements, juxtapositions of image and sound, size and scale of shot as specifically cinematic codes; narrative, music, images of fashion in clothes or other consumables as filmic but not exclusively cinematic codes. The language system of cinema then comprises all the codes which can be theoretically and practically interwoven in the construction of a particular filmic or televisual text. Metz again; "... to speak of language systems as specific combinations of codes is to say that each language system is the site of a work of structuration, of a specific dynamic which ends up by conferring on the diverse 'regrouped' codes positions which they did not have anywhere except in this system, which thus characterizes the language system and not its codes." 74
Metz is then able to make distinctions as between general and particular codes, between the *cinématographie* and the non-*cinématographie*, between code and sub-code, between codes of expression and codes of substance. The multiplicity of codes present in the cinema destroys the coherence and homogeneity of *langue*. The cinema is multiform, and as a result there are no easily identified or dominant basic units; one can break up the text in many ways according to the different levels of structuring which can be identified as at work within it. The notion of the cinematic sign is therefore of little worth.

The formulation of the language of cinema as a language system is a product of Metz's more mature thinking. In his earlier work, and in particular in his *Essais* the existence of a system as such is not clearly articulated. Nevertheless that early work is worthy of consideration, not only because in it he attempts to make a number of clear distinctions between cinema and natural language, but also and as a result of these attempts, he undertakes an explanation of what he calls "la grande syntagmatique", the formalization of the basic chronological (syntagmatic) structuring of the cinema. Such a formulation, which essentially consists in an attempt to establish the basic units of filmic expression, grows out of his exploration of the difference between natural language and cinematic communication. I have already mentioned some of them.

The cinema has no *langue*. It is also, for Metz, a one way communication. The image (le plan filmique) does not manifest much that makes it equivalent to the sign in natural language. In Metz's mercurial style "Le signification cinématographique est toujours motivée, jamais arbitraire." The key to the relationship of signifier and signified in cinema is not arbitrariness but motivation, and that motivation is predominantly analogical. Both image and sound in film resemble their object.
Questions however remain. There are considerable problems, for example, in defining the basic unit of the cinema. Is it comparable to the word of natural language, or to the sentence? Can the basic unit be broken down like the word into its own constituent units; does it in other words manifest two levels of articulation? Metz's conclusion is that the cinema does not manifest a first level of articulation parallel to the phonemic in natural language, and that the basic units must indeed be considered more like sentences than words. But even here there is a qualification. "Since the shot is not made of words, it can "correspond" only externally to the sentence, i.e. in relation to discourse. As long as one seeks internal equivalence, one will be lead into an impasse."

This limited equivalence is justified in his paper *Denotation dans le film de fiction* by five considerations. Firstly there are an infinite number of images, while the number of words in a natural language is limited. Secondly these images are the creation of the film maker, again as such more like sentences than words. Thirdly the information they provide the viewer of the film is indefinite. No amount of verbal description could exhaust what an image contains. Fourthly the image is an assertion. It speaks about something. "L'image d'une maison ne signifie pas 'maison', mais voici une maison'; l'image intègre en elle-même ses embrayeurs verbaux, de seul fait qu'elle figure dans un film". And finally, and perhaps most importantly, signification in the cinema depends very little on paradigmatic opposition or comparison. Because each image is virtually unique, its meaning is not derived from its juxtaposition with other potential images, whose number is infinite, but with its juxtaposition with other images previously or about to be present in the film. "Le grand phénomène linguistique de l'éclairement des unités présentes par les unités absentes ne joue pas au cinéma."
The cinema is an art of presence. "Everything is present in film; hence the obviousness of film, and hence also its opacity. The clarification of present by absent units occurs much less than in verbal language. The relationships in praesentia are so rich that they render the strict organisation of in absentia relationships superfluous and difficult. A film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand. The image impresses itself on us, blocking everything that is not itself."  

The significance of this paradigmatic poverty is clear. It leads Metz at once to a recognition of the syntagmatic as the heart of cinematic signification, and to narrative as its manifestation; "... it was precisely to the extent that the cinema confronted the problem of narration that, in the course of successive gropings, it came to produce a body of specific signifying procedures."  

It is the ways in which cinema constructs itself in the film, and to the questions of "successivity, procession, temporal breaks, causality, adversative relationships, consequence, spatial proximity, and distance," which define what is essential... "Cinematographic language" is first of all the literalness of a plot".  

Before considering in more detail Metz's analysis of cinematic narrativity, a summary of what has been said so far is in order. The starting point is the distinction between film and cinema, between the text and its codes and between the activity of communication and the analytically determined conditions for the possibility of that communication. The language of cinema is not governed by a unitary langue, but by a language system, multiply coded, and these codes are of two kinds; those that are restricted to the cinema, and those that are not. Each will be presented in any given film, and because each film is a unique text, the films themselves are included among the codes of the language system as a whole. Furthermore each film is an act of creation, not just using or being constrained by, the various codes available,
but actually extending and modifying them. The relationship, then, between the parole and the langue of the cinema is more open and more fluid than that in natural language.

Significance in the cinema is predominantly dependent on units, difficult to define or to isolate, which are both larger than the equivalent basic units of natural language (words, morphemes, phonemes), less precise and are motivated. Both in terms of denotation, the specific anological reference of image to object, and connotation, the essentially symbolic reference of image and its range of potential meanings, the relations of signifier and signified are not arbitrary. In addition these two dimensions of signification relate to the two contexts in which meaning is generated in a film: within it, denotative, and beyond it, connotative. The former is essentially the domain of the cinematic, the latter that of the culture as a whole. A film obviously is involved with both. However Metz is principally concerned with what is specifically cinematic and this concern leads, precisely because it recognizes the poverty of the paradigmatic dimension in film language, to a discussion of narrative.

Narrative, for Metz, is the pivotal structure in the generation of cinematic signification - in syntagmatics, in presence and in the juxtaposition of the images throughout the length of the film. It is to the study of narrative that Metz, initially, at least, brings his attention. He recognizes that while the images of cinema differ from each other enormously, the structures of films resemble each other quite closely. "While no image ever entirely resembles another image, the great majority of narrative films resemble each other in their principal syntagmatic figures. Filmic narrativity..., by becoming stable through convention and repetition over innumerable films, has gradually shaped itself into forms that are more or less fixed, but certainly not immutable."
The 'grande syntagmatique', Metz's formalisation of the basic modes of cinematic denotation, is essentially a schema for the analysis of narrative. In this analysis Metz is concerned to isolate the units through which the stories, themes and actions in films can be and are told. He is concerned, for example, with the way that juxtaposition of images chronologically can in a certain formation generate the image of simultaneity. He is concerned, then, with the specific way in which the cinema constructs its tales.

The emphasis is on construction. It is in narration as opposed to description that the discourse of film is generated. Every narrative is a closed sequence, a temporal sequence in which the time of the telling is different from the time of what is told (diegesis). In Film Language Metz defines narrative as "A closed sequence that proceeds by unrealizing a temporal sequence of events", and as one of the great anthropological forms of perception. The analysis of narrative in specifically cinematic terms is at once the analysis of the primary processes and units of denotation available to the film-maker and to the film audience. It is, always, an analysis of the form of the expression, of the way in which cinema tells its tales, and not the form of the content, of the way in which tales are told in any, or perhaps every medium.

The final, though still provisional, formulation of the 'la grande syntagmatique' has eight basic categories. It is a classification which has occasioned much comment, not least by Metz himself. Both the clarity and the relevance of the analysis remains open to question. The categories seem more applicable to film of 'classic' narrative structure, for example the films of Hollywood or Ealing, than to those like Tout va Bien, which have sought to revolutionize traditional forms of film making. They are also not always easy to apply, even to
those filmic or televisual texts which fit the classic model. Metz's analysis of Adieu Philippine suggests that much interpretive work is necessary before attaching the correct label to the sequence. Nevertheless as I have found in my own analysis of the television play, the categories and the form of the analysis offered by Metz both fit well and allow me, as preliminary to the work I subsequently undertake, to break up the continuity of the text into manageable, classifiable units of expression.

The eight units of Metz's 'grande syntagmatique' in increasing order of temporal and spatial complexity are as follows:

The simplest unit is that of the shot. It is an autonomous segment defined by a unity of space, of an image unbroken by a cut in the film or in video, by a change of camera. One can distinguish the shot-sequence in which within this basic unity a continuing or developing descriptive or narrative action can be seen, and the insert, of various forms, which act as visual interjections in a sequence of greater complexity.

Beyond the simplicity of the shot we are faced with a distinction between those syntagmatic units which have a temporal function, and those which do not, between the chronological and the a-chronological. There are two kinds of a-chronological syntagms; the parallel or alternating syntagm in which alternate images are presented which indicate without reference to time or to action, a symbolic coherence. The other, the bracketing or embracing syntagm, brings together a succession of images, again without any temporal reference, and again the purpose is to indicate a symbolic coherence.
In practice this version/a-chronological syntagm is often difficult to
distinguish from the most primitive of the chronological syntagms,
Metz calls it descriptive, which while manifesting a temporal dimension,
refers to simultaneity rather than to sequentiaiity. Successful images are
linked together spatially but at the same time there is a suggestion of a tempo-
connection between them, for example in a description of the countryside
one might see first a tree, then a branch of a tree, then perhaps a
stream, and then a hillside.

Narrative syntagms proper, those presenting sequential time, can also have
two forms: those that refer to more than one piece of time, as it were,
within the unit as a whole and those that refer to a single linear time.
The former is the alternating syntagm, for example in a chase, where two
separate events, separate in space, time and action, are juxtaposed in an
alternation which signifies simultaneity. They are happening at the same
time.

The simplest of the linear syntagms, and one much used in the television plays
used to illustrate the arguments of this thesis, 98 is the scene. The
scene manifests a temporal and spatial unity and also a unit of action.
The image and the diegesis are one. The scene, like the scene in the
theatre, is played in real time; the action is limited to one piece of
continuous space.

Contrasting with this simple unity of space and time, Metz places two
types of sequence, strictly speaking. The first, the ordinary sequence,
presents an image of continuous space and action but one in which temporal
continuity is broken. A scene is broken, reduced or pointed by the
elimination of items which are of no interest. The second, the episodic
sequence, brings together interdependent acts different in time and
place, whose juxtaposition generates a symbolic message. The breaks in
time are often of importance and signify, in their absence, development. A number of brief comments are in order at this stage. Metz is aware, as we have seen, of the limitations of this formulation. He points out the range of its application, to its deductive status and to the possibility and the necessity of refining it inductively. He also draws attention to its mutability, the result of the continuous activity of film constantly affecting the code, constantly creating new modes of expression.

Above all in his comments on the nature of the Grandesyntaxmatique Metz raises the question of the nature of the narrative, and in doing so brings face to face its two dimensions. On the one hand, we have seen, there is the narrativity of cinema, on the other narrativity as such, the generalised, perhaps universal capacity to tell stories; the cultural rather than the cinematic fact of narration. Within this juxtaposition lies a recognition of the dependence of film on its host culture and a recognition too that within these relatively large minimal units there can be identified countless smaller entities whose source and justification lie beyond the film, beyond the cinematic. Metz writes:

"Thus when it reaches the level of the 'small' elements, the semiotics of the cinema encounters its limits, and its competence is no longer certain. Whether one has desired it or not, one suddenly finds oneself referred to the myriad winds of culture, the confused murmurings of a thousand other utterances: the symbolism of the human body, the language of objects, the system of colours..... In each of these cases..... the study (indispensable by the way) of the properly filmic creations of the appropriate significations will provide us with no essential paradigm: for those great creative tropes of meaning and of humanity will remain embedded in culture where only a very general semantics can illuminate them - even if their deep scattered appearance in films contributes, in return, to their partial reformulation."
Paramount among these diverse semiotics is the code of narration, le récit, and my task is the disentangling of it from that which is specifically cinematic or specifically televisual. Their interdependence is clear, but so is their independence. Metz in recognising the distinction takes one path, that towards the cinema, and he makes the point in this way: "Il existe donc deux entreprises distinctes et qui ne sauraient se remplacer l'une l'autre: d'une part la sémiologie du film narratif (comme celle que nous tentons); d'autre part l'analyse structurale de la narrativité elle-même (Vladimir Propp, Claude Bremond etc.), c'est-à-dire du récit considéré indépendamment des véhicules informatifs qui le prennent en charge (film, livre etc.).

L'événement narré, qui est un signifié par la sémiologie des véhicules, devient un signifiant pour la sémiologie de la narrativité."  

I, in this thesis, will now take the other path; in other words towards the discussion of narrative in its non-specificity, its cultural generality. However, discussion of his work has been well worthwhile. Firstly because in it the relation between language and another semiotic system is made clear. Cinema is both more and less than natural language; in its multiplicity, its motivation, in the pre-eminence of the syntagmatic. Secondly the analysis of the way in which film, as a medium, structures its expression, and particularly its syntagmatic forms of expression, establishes the context for a similar analysis of television. Television as a medium may therefore also be more or less than cinema in this respect; though in what precise ways remains to be established. Finally Metz defines the centrality of narrative for an analysis of cinema and also by implication, of television.

From the point of view of its expression, television is like film; as the film or video unwinds we are presented with a succession of sounds and images, a succession governed by rules we know and which make the
But clearly television is not expression alone.

I would like in this final section to turn to its content, though still in terms of its form in order both to draw out some of the wider implications of the discussion so far and to act as a prolegomenon to the considerations of myth and narrative which follow.

Substantively what will be asserted is this: that television is a public form of communication whose language is restricted in the sense of the term used by Basil Bernstein\(^\text{102}\); it is moreover by virtue of its form - in expression the result of its particular technology, in content the result of its narrative structures - an oral rather than a literate medium.

And it is by virtue of both, the restriction of its language and its orality, generative of a folk culture, ritually preserved and to a degree ritually controlled. Inevitably the issues raised will outrun what it possible to discuss here, but I will return to them in subsequent chapters. Equally the essentially central role of narrative to the language of television's content will be presumed. The demonstration of that centrality will be the substance of Chapters 5 and 6, though even then much further work will need to be done.

The work of Basil Bernstein on the nature of language and in particular on its distinctive manifestations provides an excellent starting point. It is however important to realise that this work itself has its heritage in previous study of language although it differs from it in significant degrees. In particular, from the point of view of the arguments here, it differs from the theories of language suggested by Benjamin Lee Whorf. What unites both Whorf and Bernstein is a recognition of language's central importance in defining perceptual limits and thereby creating distinct thought worlds particular to each language community. What distinguishes them, of course, is the part ascribed in this linguistic determination to the social structure\(^\text{103}\). Indeed the nature of that
determination, both between language and thought on the one hand, and language and society on the other, is a fundamentally unsolved problem for sociology.

For Benjamin Whorf language is a law unto itself; its rules covert and overt, define both what it is possible to say and what it is possible to perceive. At the heart of a distinct culture, lies a distinct language and each language and each culture is unable to express, to understand or to know what may be perfectly accessible to its neighbour. For Basil Bernstein on the other hand language is crucially related to social structure and in particular, though to a degree contentiously, to class relations. Language for Bernstein, is more of a mediator than a creator, though a particular social group speaks distinctly and that distinction of speech limits as for Whorf what can be said and understood within it.

The arguments for and against both the linguistic relativity thesis, as Whorf's case is labelled and Bernstein's correlation of class code and educability are well-known and they need not be of central concern now. Suffice it to say that there is no need to insist on the impossibility of mutual translation for some important aspects of either thesis to be maintained. While it may be empirically impossible to demonstrate in what precise way language limits and controls cognition it is perfectly demonstrable that different cultures express themselves differently and that in so doing many other significant differences including their particular view of the world will be affected. Individuals or groups may become bilingual or be able, at the drop of an experimental hat, to discard that with which they are most familiar and most comfortable. It is however just this effortless familiarity with one's own natural language which is the
source of the plausibility of the relativity thesis. It is indeed precisely as to the weight given to the language as an autonomously determinant facet of human experience or alternatively to its dependence on other determinants, to the structured interests expressed in social relations, that the arguments continue.

We can therefore and following Whorf and Bernstein enquire into the nature of television's language and do so now in terms of its content rather than its expression. The concern is still with its form however; to what is common and underlies the many diverse ways of presenting material in this particular medium.

Television's communication is both indiscriminate and precise. It is indiscriminate because there is no choice, no control over who is to receive it, no direct communication between speaker and listener. It is continuous and total; it can be turned on or off at will. It can be watched or listened to (or both) by those who agree or disagree or may not even understand with what it is they are faced. But it is precise, in the sense that it is a singular communication, inflexible to the normal demands of social interaction and oriented therefore to a unitary receiver; the audience, who have perhaps nothing more in common than their television set. Whatever the interpretation offered as to the social, economic or political structure where this is the case, the presumed unity of the television audience is a central phenomenon and must be the starting point for any analysis of the nature of television's communication. The massness of television has been the subject of much discussion and the concept of mass society much decried. However in the sense just implied an inevitable facet of any consideration of television. Television is a medium of mass
Much then is assumed in the communication, and for this reason if for no other it is public in the sense of the term suggested by Basil Bernstein. It is public in the enforced denial of individuality and the correlative assertion of the generality of the context in which the communication is undertaken. The communication is public therefore in terms of what is assumed and what the effects of that assumption have on its form. Public language in the context of mother-child interaction, for example, has for Bernstein the following characteristics. It "contains few personal qualifications, for it is essentially a language where the stress is on emotive terms employing concrete, descriptive, tangible and visual symbolism. The nature of the language tends to limit the verbal expression of feeling." The stress is on expressive symbolism and on the present. No elaborate logic or ability to qualify allows for the deferral of gratification or indeed for much more than a simple description of a sequence of events. The world of public language is a world of the here and now.

From the point of view of television's language and its public character it is important to stress the significance of the non-verbal; for what might be in face-to-face interaction the glance, the movement of the hand, becomes in television the whole central panoply of the image. Important too is the stress on the immediate, and many writers have noted the demand in television and filmic communication of the here and of the present. There is no past in television, neither that of the society nor of the individual. The image like the glance exists only once. R.P.Kolker and J. Douglas Ousley write of film in this way: "Far from being 'realistic'
film suppresses ordinary reality as much as possible and replaces it with an artefact of space and time. The space and time of the viewer is all but erased and replaced by the film. But while one is viewing the film all places and movements are present when they are shown. Film has no past tense, no was." This is how it was; this is how it will be. Television in this regard is identical to film.

The immediate, the visual, the expressive symbolism — all lead to a view of public language as essentially social: dependent on and defining a common set of experiences which make communication relatively simple and uncluttered. It is, as Bernstein suggests, a language of implicit meaning.

Once Bernstein's analysis is pushed further, it is the restricted nature of public language on which he settles; the restricted and elaborated code is the very familiar dichotomy which results. The distinction rests at the level of lexicon and syntax on difference of predictability and choice. What changes in any move from the restricted to the elaborated code is the amount that is taken for granted in and around a particular act of communication; a language of restricted code will be deeply embedded in the common familiarity of context shared by the interlocuters; that of the elaborated code will be relatively free of this indexicality, little can be assumed and much needs to be spelled out precisely and made verbal. Much of the language on television is of this latter type; much of it is personal, individual and able to express subtle differences. However it is the argument now that the language of television and in particular the language expressed in narrative and of narrative, is predominantly restricted.
Bernstein writes of the relationship between the restricted code and the social circumstances that both produce it and are created by it in the following way. It is a rich passage and it deserves to be quoted in full:

"A restricted code will arise where the form of the social relation is based upon closely shared identifications, upon an extensive range of shared expectations, upon a range of common assumptions. Thus a restricted code emerges where the culture or sub-culture raises the "we" above "I". Such codes will emerge as both controls and transmitters of the culture in such diverse groups as prisons, the age group of adolescents, army, friends of long standing, between husband and wife. The use of a restricted code creates social solidarity at the cost of the verbal elaboration of individual experience. The type of social solidarity realised through a restricted code points towards mechanical solidarity, whereas the type of solidarity realised through elaborated codes points towards organic solidarity. The form of communication reinforces the form of the social relation rather than creating a need to create speech which uniquely fits the intentions of the speakers". 115

What then is the social basis for the restriction of television's language? In natural language, Bernstein argues, this is fundamentally parochial. The paradigm is the primary group: the interaction crucially face-to-face. Yet the social context of television as I have already suggested is potentially at least, the complete society. If this is so then it may be possible to suggest that the restriction of television's code could be based on and at the same time generate what we could call national parochiality - or indeed in many ways an international parochiality. The notion of the global village generated by the electronic media of communication as postulated by Marshall McLuhan is a similar one, though whereas he stresses the totally synaesthetic experience generated by television and its instantaneity, I am suggesting that it is on the nature of the language that the argument can be based. Bernstein too, though in a different context, speculates on the presence of a common culture shared by all members of a society and determined by the specific nature of the general codes or language at its syntactic or morphological levels. 117
Let me summarize. For Basil Bernstein the restricted code is generated in social circumstances in which interaction is dependent on familiarity and within which a great deal is shared. His example is the long-married husband and wife, where the intensity of communication is dependent as much upon gesture, facial expression, the unsaid, as upon the specifically verbal. The notion of the restricted code therefore implies not just restriction at this level of syntax and lexical choice, but also in the nature of society, and to the fact that the society is restricted in its extent. It is the latter, in a consideration of television which needs qualification. For it is precisely in the generality of restriction that television operates. Its codes, restricted when compared with other forms of communication, assume and are assumed by members of the society who do in fact participate in a culture a significant part of which, if only by virtue of television, is indeed common.

Television cannot appeal to difference and to social and cultural specificity because it has no or very little control over who will be party to its communication. It must therefore appeal, in both senses, to what is shared albeit minimally by the widest possible group in society - in other words by and to everyone.

What then is restricted about television’s language? It is necessary to say first of all that it is the discourse of television that is the object of consideration. Television, as I have said, plays host to all manner of speech both restricted and elaborated in Bernstein’s sense. To talk now of television’s language - more precisely of its communication - is not to talk of the words and sentences that one hears but of the units of discourse, pre-eminently of a narrative order, which are much larger than the sentence and more full in the sense of comprising and being dependent on the image as well
as the spoken word. It is in the arrangement, the predictability of these discursive units, that the restricted nature of television is grounded.

The purpose of subsequent chapters is to illustrate in what way this is so. It will be enough to say now that it is on what has been called the narrative structure of television, and by that I mean not just the chronological but also the logical or non-linear structures of the texts, not that the argument rests. Television's programmes are predictable in terms of the words or the events, details of content, but in the ways of their display or ordering. They share this of course with other forms of contemporary communication: some but not all films, comic-strips, popular novels, novelettes, and so on. What makes television so particular in this regard is the intensity and consistency of this structuring, an intensity dependent on the presence of the image and a consistency dependent on the totality of its communication. Story telling is an archetypal form of restricted communication and television/very little more than a medium for the telling of stories. Indeed it tells its stories in ways that are not new. The communication generated through the medium of television is fundamentally an oral one. Although borrowing from and to a degree still depending upon the tradition of literate communication, it nevertheless opposes them. In television the individuality of the written word is transcended by the communality of the visual and/or oral image.

This thesis is not a new one but it has I believe been insufficiently understood and explored. Marshall McLuhan in the brilliant haze of his writing makes the point often and forcefully. His work is studded with references to and significantly depends upon this transformation which is the product of the electronic as opposed to the mechanical. For example, in Understanding Media he writes this:
"Our old industrialised areas, having eroded their oral traditions automatically are in a position of having to rediscover them, in order to cope with the electronic age." 121

Television is central to this process:

"Television completes the cycle of the human sensorium. With the omni-present ear and the moving eye, we have abolished writing, the specialised acoustic and visual metaphor that established the dynamics of Western civilisation" 122,

a quotation continued in Counterblast in the following grandiloquent way:

"We begin again to structure the primordial feelings and emotions from which 3,000 years of literacy divorced us. We begin again to live a myth"123

McLuhan's thesis, derived from the works of Harold Innes, and developed variously in words and pictures, is that of a technological determinism in which the nature of communication changes fundamentally with changes in the technology of the transmission; the message is dependent on the medium. 124

Accordingly such fundamental aspects of our perception, our notions of time and space pre-eminently, are vulnerable to these changes. The languages that each medium constructs for itself creates, in its idiosyncrasy, a particular world. The written and then the printed word mark the first transformation, from an oral, communal, familiar and formulaic world into a literate, individual, particular and linear one. The electronic media, by virtue of their juxtaposition of sound and image, the speed and directness of their communication, and the range of their reference have recreated the oral world on a grand scale. We are in the midst, McLuhan would have us believe, of a new perceptual revolution.

The argument distorted by fashion and blurred by excess is nevertheless a cogent one. It has its echoes in recent work and in particular in that of Jack Goody who refuses reasonably enough the monocausality of McLuhan's efforts, indeed stressing literacy rather than printing as the primum mobile. But nevertheless Goody remains quite firmly attached to the technological and the technical. 125
The distinction between the oral and the written is therefore an important one and the role of different media in creating and sustaining one or the other of these dominant forms of communication is central.

Two preliminary points ought to be made. Firstly it is by no means the case that there is unanimity amongst students of language that there is any difference between written and spoken language. Ferdinand de Saussure and Edward Sapir for example both deny any significance to such differences; writing to them is no more than an extension of speech and does not alter it in any major way. Secondly there is no homology between the restricted and the oral, as Bernstein in a footnote acknowledges. Yet clearly as will be seen, the characteristics which identify the distinctiveness of restricted communication are broadly those belonging to oral communication; it is unrecorded speech which depends most on context, the gesture and the glance.

Television is not written. The script of a play, a documentary or a news-cast may be, but the performances is/audio-visual experience which is immediate, ephemeral and in a certain sense direct. Until very recently television was un-recordable; it is still and will always be, impossible to fully transcribe.

What then are the formal characteristics which identify it/a predominantly oral medium and what are the implications of such identification?

L. S. Vygotsky, in considering the development of language skills as children grow up, makes the following basic distinction:

"Written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning. Even its minimal development requires a high level abstraction. It is speech in thought and image only, lacking the musical, expressive, intonational qualities of oral speech. In learning to write, the child must disengage himself from the sensory aspect of speech and replace words by images of words."
He goes on to stress that written speech requires deliberate analytical action on the part of the child, that it is speech without an interlocutor addressed to an absent or imaginary person, and that it represents therefore the monologue; "oral speech, in most cases (represents), the dialogue." Following Vygotsky we might wish to suggest that television in terms of the situation in which the communication is undertaken, is something of a hybrid. It consists in a dialogue with an absent friend; on the one hand oral and on the other written. Indeed there is no sense in which we need to insist on the exclusively oral nature of television, for it is quite clear that any text that television generates will borrow, at least for the time being, from written texts and written culture. On the other hand even in terms of the relative absence of the addressee the point has already been made that though imaginary or unthinkable in his individuality the audience of television is very real collectively. Television even here is more oral than literate and significantly so.

Perhaps more central to the argument is the acknowledged capacity of written speech and thought guided by writing to indulge in abstraction. Jack Goody, both in his early paper with Ian Watt and later makes much of this distinction.

"The specific proposition is that writing, and more especially alphabetic literacy, made it possible to scrutinize discourse in a different kind of way by giving oral communication a semi-permanent form; this scrutiny favoured the increase in scope of critical activity, and hence rationality, scepticism and logic to resurrect memories of those questionable dichotomies." Writing is open to inspection, it can be analysed word for word, it can be reviewed, re-read, skipped, examined out of context or in it.
"Speech is no longer tied to an 'occasion'; it becomes timeless. Nor is it attached to a person; on paper it becomes more abstract, more de-personalised.

Writing makes speech 'objective' by turning it into an object of visual as well as oral inspection; it is the shift of the receptor from ear to eye, of the producer from voice to hand."

Writing brings with it, corollatively with its encouragement to abstract and to analyse, a reduction of any dependence on memory. The permanent replaces the impermanent, the list replaces the formula and history and geography become possible. The ability to write is an ability to place once and for all events in their time and place and to establish chronology and geography. Writing generates its own time, non-reversible and linear, both in the form of its text and in the expression of its message. In oral culture history is replaced by myth and linear temporality by mythic harmony. Context is everything, memory fundamental and time might become, as Edmund Leach suggests for the Greeks, more of a pendulum than either a line or a circle. Jack Goody and Ian Watt make the point, and it is echoed, though transposed to a more relevant dimension for television by Marshall McLuhan. They write this:

"As long as the legendary and doctrinal aspects of the cultural tradition are mediated orally, they are kept in relative harmony with each other and with the present needs of society in two ways: through the unconscious operations of memory and through the adjustments of the reciter's terms and attitudes to those in the audience before him."

Marshall McLuhan on the other hand, or perhaps on the same hand, writes this:

"Just as history begins with writing so it ends with TV. Just as there was no living history when there was no linear time sense, so there is post history now when everything that ever was in the world becomes simultaneously present in our consciousness."

What television denies therefore, ipso facto, is writing. If we are to accept something of these arguments, then we can also accept that television represents, in that denial, the unselfconscious orality of a preliterate age. It does so not of course, in its content; the content is contemporaneous and is different from that of the primitive and the preliterate as chalk from cheese, but in its form; and here the key notion is the formula.
The notion of the formula both literally and metaphorically implies a number of things. It is, first of all, to be opposed to the list as a way of recording, classifying, and memorising. The transition from oral to written culture is marked by the construction of lists and tables; objects are recognised, recorded and arranged - hierarchy, difference, identity become principles of classification. Writing brings with it in Michel Foucault's words a "universal mathesis", though for Foucault the former's relationship to the latter goes unrecorded. But if the list brings with it abstraction and analysis then the formula brings with it immersion and synthesis. Above all the formula, in the context of the song, "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea", allows the preliterate to communicate extendedly, poetically, dramatically, without help or hindrance of a written text. The performer, be he the teacher or the rhetorician, cannot learn by rote all that he has to communicate, nor does he by virtue of the demands of the performance accept or need the constraint of the static and fixed. Its creativity and the novelty that emanates from that creativity is the product of his working through and with established units, metrical or narratively functional, which he can arrange or rearrange, to embroider or leave naked according to rules or even at will. The oral text is therefore fluid: it consists both of the familiar and the new: the familiar will in turn consist of motifs, formulae, accepted conventions, the new will be in the occasional but legitimate twist of plot or metre and also in the content.

In order for an oral text to work it must do so within the constraints of memory and of concentration both of singer or performer and his audience. Performances for all their immediacy depend on a priori acceptance by all concerned of the rules of construction and context. These rules in the
broadest sense are the rules of narrative, and of demonstration. As A.B. Lord points out for the Macedonian singer of tales: "Formulas and groups of formulas both large and small serve only one purpose. They provide a means for telling a story in song and verse. The tale's the thing".

A. B. Lord's central concern is the demonstration of the role of the formulaic in the enormously extended songs of the folk tradition in Macedonia. The singers learn not whole songs, for some of them can be sung for an entire day or even longer, but units and rules for their construction. Singers, therefore, have the freedom to construct each time they are called upon to sing a new tale, but yet that tale is sufficiently familiar for them to be able to construct it satisfactorily and for the audience to follow it. "The (singer) builds his performance or song in our sense, on the stable skeleton of narrative, which is the song in his sense...... We must distinguish, then, two concepts of song in oral poetry. One is the general idea of the story, which we use when we speak in large terms, for example of the song of the wedding of the Smailagic Meho, which actually includes all singings of it. The other concept of song is that of a particular performance or text..."  

Narrative, therefore, the rules for the construction of tales, is central to the consideration of the oral tradition, and what it is for a text to be considered an oral one. This is not to say that written texts are not rule governed. But the strength of the rules governing a literary text are those principally of natural grammar, and in a different way, of genre and style. It is perfectly possible, and of course often the case, that a written text creates its own rules. But however "traditional", a written text is not dominated by the formula to the same degree or in the same way as an oral one. Those texts that do, a serial romance for example, preserve the oral forms albeit in a weakened way rather than articulating those peculiar to a written tradition.
There are now two points to be made. The first one is that much of our
contemporary culture is oral. Much if not most of our communication is
face-to-face. As Jack Goody and Ian Watt point out "For even within a
literate culture, the oral tradition - the transmission of values and
attitudes in face-to-face contact - nevertheless remains the primary mode
of cultural orientation, and, to varying degrees, it is out of step with
the various literate traditions." Proverbs, catch phrases, ritual
greetings and gestures, jokes, stories, slang are all part of our everyday
conversation. They depend for their effectiveness on the acceptance of a
ton tradition and appropriate context, albeit improverished when compared to
the supposed richness of pre-literate culture, by all those involved; and they
depend also on the full range of communication - visual, oral, even that of
touch and smell. Television is no more than a magnification and a revital-
ization of this, the everyday culture of oral communication. It is so
primarily because it is no longer written, and it does not communicate
fixed and infinitely recoverable texts. Its communication, potentially
endless, like the songs of the Macedonians, consists in the eternal play
of the formula. In drama, news and documentary success consists in the
grafting of the novel onto the familiar, and it is through the familiar
- the formula - that the experience of television is grounded in the
experience of the everyday.

The second point is the centrality of narrative in all of this. The telling
of stories seems to be as centrally human as the speaking of language. It
is not confined to an elite group of literati. It is further and more funda-
mentally an oral expertise. As Lord writes of the sung folktales of his
study: "The art of narrative song was perfected, and I use the word
advisedly, long before the advent of writing. It had no need of stylus
or brush to become a complete artistic and literary medium." From the
simplicity of the "and then" copula which links in the telling two events
chronologically, to the elaborate forms of folktale and myth, tales are told according to conventions and rules. Like the rules of language, these rules seem to differ less than one might expect. Roman Jakobson makes the point well: "According to the experience of modern linguistics, language patterns exhibit a consistent regularity. The languages of the whole world manifest a paucity and relative simplicity of structural type, and at the base of all these types lie universal laws. This schematic and recurrent character of linguistic patterns finds its explanation first of all in the fact that language is a typical collective property. Similar phenomena of schematism and recurrence in the structure of folktale throughout the world have long astonished and challenged investigators." \(^{147}\)

Television is supremely a story-telling medium; the structures that generate its texts, as I hope to illustrate in the following chapters, are significantly those of narrative. These narrative patterns are not the product of print technology, but pre-date it, and television in reaffirming them re-establishes the centrality of oral culture in our experience. Through the form of its communication it challenges and subverts the literacy of the last five hundred years.

There are two further aspects to this argument that I want, briefly, to consider now. The first is the collective nature of the oral tradition, and the second is its constraining nature.

The weakening of the oral tradition in the face of literacy and of printing involved a weakening of communality and of sub-culture. \(^{148}\) The coming of literacy brought with it, paradoxically, both specialism and the breakdown of inter-cultural boundaries. It also, it has been suggested, brought with it nationalism. \(^{149}\) The folk traditions expressed in symbolic or material culture were either incorporated and transformed or destroyed. What vitality they had, dependent as it was on the intensity of face to face interaction and immediate communication was increasingly denied by the
distance and delay of the written text.

By virtue of the form and the extent of television’s communication these traditions are being reasserted. Television’s restricted codes, grounded in narrativity, and in the juxtaposition of sight and sound, as Bernstein argues for natural language raises the 'we above the I'. The paradox, as many commentators on the mass media have noted, is that the communality is generated at two removes: not only is the line of communication attenuated - Donald Horton and Richard Wohl called it para-social - but the community is symbolically rather than physically expressed - it is the community of the independent and often otherwise socially isolated household. It is however nonetheless real for that.

This community is a folk community, a gemeinschaft, and it is both product and precondition of the restricted nature of televisual communication. This is, I admit, a fairly hazardous assertion, especially in view of much if not most of the thought on the nature of contemporary society which seeks to establish on the one hand its anonymity and its alienation or on the other the essentially ideological nature of just such pretensions to community. These claims, it is suggested, mask the true reality of conflict, contradiction and structural imbalance in capitalist society. However, social and cultural experience is not monolithic and measures of culture’s falsehood are risky to say the least. Arguments for cultural coherence are therefore not by definition spurious, though they must be carefully advanced. The precise nature of the community which television both proposes and supposes in its communication is still open to question, of course, but it is a question worthy of exploration and not to be dismissed out of hand.

There is one final dimension of this discussion of television as language to be considered. And that is its significance for constraint or control. Maurice Bloch in his consideration of ritual language and song asks the
question: "How is it that formalization can become a form of power or coercion?". In essence this is the question asked now, though any more complete answer, depending as it does on consideration of the relation between language and social structure, must await the final chapter. A number of considerations are therefore of relevance. Firstly we can acknowledge that language is itself powerful, in the sense underlying, for example, J.L. Austin's notion of its illocutionary force. Austin distinguishes between locution, illocution and perlocution as dimensions of communication through speech, both oral and written. Locution refers to what is said, illocution to what is done, and perlocution to what is achieved. As Austin himself notes, the distinction between illocution and perlocution is likely to become troublesome. The distinction rests on their relative conventionality. Illocutionary acts are conventional acts; perlocutionary acts are not conventional. However, it is important to establish that language, acts of language use, do things as well as say things. In speaking we condemn, condone, inform, amuse and so on. Perhaps this is obvious. It is however, in the context of this argument, important. Communication is, among other things, a bid for control, and indeed some sociologists have taken this so much to heart that it has become the central issue of their work.

But if language is, potentially at least, powerful, then it is also the case that some types of language are likely to be more powerful than others. It is here that questions of the form of language are of relevance, and it is here that the distinction between restricted and elaborated codes as formulated by Basil Bernstein is also relevant. Restricted forms of language, and by now we can include, I hope, among these, television's communication, constrain by virtue of their formalization what can be crudely called the right of reply. This needs to be made more precise. Formal
language significantly restricts what can be said; communication through formal language, in its predictability, disqualifies the freedom that individuals have in language to create and to communicate idiosyncratically, originally or even, in a certain sense, genuinely. As Maurice Bloch notes: "The formalization of speech therefore drastically restricts what can be said and the speech acts are neither all alike or all of a kind and thus if this mode of communication is adopted there is hardly any choice of what can be said.... (Formalization) leads to a specially stylized form of communication: polite, respectful, holy, but from the point of view of the creativity potential of language, impoverished." Through formalization the response of a colloquent can be restricted or coerced. For Bloch the song is the extreme case of formalization and correspondingly of restriction. In the performance of a song, even the participants become an audience. They accept a pregiven form of communication, or perhaps non-communication, where significance is not in its detail or honesty but in its generality. Ritual communication, in its detachment from the specificity of vital interaction - both from intention or motives of the individual speakers (it is the role that speaks) and from its concrete location in a unique time and space - suffers from increasing ambiguity. This ambiguity is the ambiguity of the impossibility of logical response, rather than the result of deliberate incorporation of tropes to convey the complexity of implicit meaning. As Bloch argues, "You cannot argue with a song".

You can no more argue with a play or any closed narrative structure. Any demonstration therefore of this structure in television, myth or folktale involves as a necessary corollary the demonstration of the way in which that communication functions as a constraining force within the act of communication and the culture in general, and that this constraint is the product of the formal characteristics of language used or more broadly of the communication as a whole.
But we need to be careful. Formal language might well be considered, as I have suggested, as a variety of restricted code. But it is, as it were, a limited variety, for in many essentials its social significance appears to be very different and is indeed contrary to what Bernstein argues is central to the language of restriction.

Formal language is the product and guarantee of social hierarchy; it constrains, certainly, but that constraint is positive for the communicator, negative for his audience. It creates distance and perhaps masks that distance by the play of the familiar in form, tone and content. Restricted codes, on the other hand, are the producer and guarantee of social familiarity - not the audience, but the family, not the ritualised, but the everyday, seem to be its context. What constraint there is, is equally enforced on both interlocutors and is equally enabling from the point of view of their capacity to communicate with each other. In conflating both formal and restricted as I have done in my description of the language of television, I have run the risk of bringing together two apparent opposites in the guise of identity. There is, however, method in the madness. It would appear that something is left out of each of the accounts; forBloch ignores or chooses to underrate the community which even formal communication needs in order to be effective and which it actually sustains - perhaps despite itself - in its communication, and Bernstein, equally, ignores or chooses to underrate, while stressing the community, the fact that restricted codes would tend to reify the inevitable hierarchy within social relationships, however close. Bernstein and Bloch have chosen each to identify or stress one necessary corollary of limited modes of expression - the former community, the latter control. What I would want to suggest is that television's language in its restriction generates both. Its formulae and in particular its narrative structures generate both distance and familiarity; the society that sustains its communication is similarly both out of reach and close at hand; unequal structurally but more equal culturally. Television
in its language, articulates this tension and preserves it; the tension however is real, the product of the reality of both community and control.

In sum what I hope to have achieved in this chapter, both in theoretical discussion and demonstration, is that television's communication can be profitably considered from the point of view of language; and that the full range of questions asked about that language are relevant to television. I am not suggesting that television is a language, nor that narrative is its only dimension. Nor indeed am I suggesting that it is language's structure which should be the exclusive concern of any analysis of television. I am, however, suggesting that a consideration of the structure of the television message, as undertaken in chapters 5 and 6, will prove profitable, above all in pointing a way towards a more mature understanding of the role television plays in our contemporary culture.
Chapter 2. Footnotes and References


2. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics. New York. 1959. p. 16: "A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion, 'sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, noone can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological data." c.f. Emile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method. New York and London. 1964. p. 50.; and W. Doroszewski, Quelque Rémarques sur les Rapports de la Sociologie et de la Linguistique: Durkheim et F. de Saussure, Journale de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique. 1933. Vol. 30. 82-91; and for an account of the history of structuralism see Jan M. Broekman, Structuralism. Moscow-Prague-Paris. The Hague. 1974.

3. On language's systematic nature see Emile Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics. Coral Gables, Florida. 1971. p. 83: "The fundamental principle is that a language constitutes a system whose parts are all united in a relationship of solidarity and dependence. This system organises units which are the articulated signs, mutually differentiating and delimiting themselves. The structuralist doctrine teaches the predominance of the system over the elements and aims to define the structure of the system through the relationship among the elements, in the spoken chain as well as in formal paradigms and shows the organic character of the changes to which language is subject."

4. The arbitrariness of the sign is a central facet of Saussurean linguistics: op. cit. 65-70.

5. Consideration of such matters has been very largely the preserve of film studies up until now. Within the context of a semiotic study the work of Christian Metz (see below) has been seminal; see especially Screen. Spring/Summer Vol. 15 1/2. 1973, and subsequent issues. On the complexity of the codes of the television image, see Umberto Eco, Towards a Semiotic Inquiry into the Television Message. Working Papers in Cultural Studies. 3. 1972. 103-121.


11. The notion of Language system is borrowed from Christian Metz, see below pp. 57


13. For a discussion of de Saussure, see this chapter, below.


16. Andre Martinet. Elements of General Linguistics. London. 1964. (2nd ed. 1969) p. 28: "A language is an instrument of communication in virtue of which human experience is analysed differently in each given community into units, the monemes, each endowed with a semantic content and a phonic expression. The phonic expression is articulated in its turn into distinctive and successive units. These are the phonemes, of limited number, in each language; their nature and mutual relations differing from one language to another."

18. Emile Benveniste. op. cit. p. 110


20. Grammaire du Décameron. op. cit. p. 15: "La grammaire universelle est alors la source de tous les universaux et elle nous donne la définition même à l'homme. Non seulement toute les langues mais aussi toutes les systèmes signifiants obéissant à la même grammaire. Elle est universelle non seulement parce qu'elle est répondu dans toutes les langues de l'univers, mais parce qu'elle concide avec la structure de l'univers lui-même."


23. Ernst Cassirer. op. cit. p. 44


25. Ferdinand de Saussure. op. cit. p.11.

26. ibid. 101 ff.

27. ibid. 111 ff.

28. ibid. 9-11.

29. ibid. 14.

30. ibid. 15.

31. ibid. 135-7.


33. Ferdinand de Saussure. op. cit. 66.

34. ibid. 52.

35. ibid. 66 ff.

36. ibid. 98.
37. cf. Joseph Vachek, *The Linguistic School of Prague*. Bloomington. 1966, where he makes the point (26/7) that this fixity is, by virtue of the 'ever present structural weakness' of language, not in any sense final or complete.

38. de Saussure. *op. cit.* 70.

39. *ibid.* 120.

40. *ibid.* 121

41. *ibid.* 123.


44. Chomsky refers to questions of semantics in *Syntactic Structures*. *op. cit.* Ch. 9., *Language and Mind* *op. cit.* 59-60., *Reflections on Language*. *op. cit.* 94 ff. There are clearly problems, even at the level of syntax, in the assumption that a particular form is grammatical, and such judgements are necessarily the results of unstated assumptions about the 'sense' of a particular utterance and its preconditions. The literature following and developing Jerrold Fodor and Jerry A. Katz's early paper, *The Structure of a Semantic Theory*. *Language*. XXXIX No. 2. 1963. 170-210, is voluminous and complex.


52. Louis Hjelmslev. *op. cit.* 127.

55. see below pp. 57.
56. ibid. p. 235.
57. ibid. p. 239.
61. Sergei Eisenstein, _Film Form_. London. 1951.; _The Film Sense_. London. 1968 (first published 1943); _Film Essays_. London. 1968.
62. _op. cit_. 75 ff.; see also Andrew Tudor, _Image and Influence_. London. 1974. esp. Ch. 5. for a discussion of the work of Christian Metz and the notion of film language.
63. _op. cit._ p. 48-58.
64. ibid. p. 50.
71. Language and Cinema. op. cit. p. 73.

72. ibid. p. 22. The present discussion of television and certainly the analysis presented in chapters 5 and 6, is not informed so clearly by this distinction, precisely because I am not concerned directly with identifying the specificity of television.

73. Language and Cinema. op. cit. p. 35.

74. ibid. p. 242.


76. ibid. p. 207.: "A system of signification is not only a system of signs; units larger or smaller than the sign play a considerable role in it; the 'level of the sign' should not be isolated from the others. This is one more reason...for not linking the study of the distinctive units of the film to the exclusive search for the cinematic sign."


79. Stephen Heath. op. cit. notes that Metz subsequently acknowledges (Semioogie/Linguistique/Cinema. Cinethique. 6. Jan/Feb. 1970) that this analogical relationship is not a simple one, and obscures the various ways in which analogy itself is structured, the various ways in which significance and perception are themselves coded. However the main point is clear. Signification in the cinema, spoken words apart, is linked to perceptions of the world in a way which the signification of natural language is not. It is in this sense that signification in the cinema is motivated and not arbitrary.

80. Film Language. op. cit. 61.

81. ibid. 66.

82. op. cit.

83. op. cit. p. 405

84. ibid.

85. Film Language. op. cit. 69. my italics.

86. ibid. p. 95.

87. ibid. 98-99.

88. ibid. 101. It is of course the question of the specificity of filmic narrativity that this thesis, if only by implication, would seek to challenge; filmic narrativity, like televisual narrativity is not a sui generis phenomenon.
89. Film Language. ibid. Ch. 5. 108-146.

90. Note that this is a longer version of Problèmes de Dénomination dans le Film de Fiction. op cit. and contains the diagram of the grande syntagmatique; the shorter version contains an important qualification which the longer does not; p. 410. "Ce tableau s'applique au cinéma de l'époque 'classique' (1935-50 environ). Pour le cinéma 'moderne', il avait besoin d'être revis ("travail en cours, non encore terminé)."

91. Film Language. op. cit. 18/19.

92. ibid. 26.

93. ibid. 145. "The fact that must be understood is that films are understood. Iconic analogy alone cannot account for the intelligibility of the co-occurrences in filmic discourse. That is the function of the large syntagmatic category."

94. ibid. 146., but see his qualification in Problèmes de Dénomination op. cit. 411. "La grande syntagmatique du cinéma n'est pas immuable; elle a sa diachronie. Elle évolue nettement plus vite que les langues, circonstances qui est due à ce que l'ART et le LANGAGE s'interpenèrent beaucoup plus au cinéma que dans le domaine du verbal...La grande syntagmatique du cinéma n'en constitue pas moins une codification que est cohérente dans chaque état synchronique." I have, indeed, found it necessary to extend the grande syntagmatique in the analysis of the programmes of Intimate Strangers. See Appendix 1.

95. see fn. 89 above. and Film Language. 185-227. and see also Manuel Alvarado and John Caughie, Metz' Grande Syntagmatique and Tout va Bien. Notes and Findings. S.E.F.T. Mimeo. Undated.

96. Film Language. op. cit. 149-182.

97. see Appendix, where an analysis of one episode of Intimate Strangers, following the Metzian classification, is presented. The significance of this, potentially at least, is to demonstrate the relation between the structure of the expression of a contemporary play and that of the film of the classic type. It also allows a way of illustrating difference of genre identifiable in the relative complexity of construction of a text, or the relative dominance of one or more of the particular type of units within the framework as a whole.

98. See Appendix 1. and fn. 94 above.

99. see fn. 94 above. and Problèmes de Dénomination. op. cit. 411 ff.

100. Film Language. op. cit. p. 142.

101. Problèmes de Dénotations dans le Film de Fiction. op. cit. 413.

102. Basil Bernstein, Class, Codes and Control. Vol. 1. London. 1971. Basil Bernstein begins with a notion of public communication and then subsequently redefines it to take into account notions of lexical and syntactic predictability, and differential relationship to social structure. The original term public, is useful here because it relates to the relative indiscriminate nature of the communication and what Bernstein calls its 'we'-ness. See below pp. 71.

104. *ibid.* 173-4: "...I shall take the view that the code which the linguist invents to explain the formal properties of the grammar is capable of generating any number of speech codes, and there is no reason for believing that any one language code is better than another in this respect. On this argument, language is a set of rules to which all speech codes must comply, but which speech codes are realised is a function of the culture acting through social relationships in specialised contexts. Different speech forms or codes symbolise the form of the social relationship, regulate the nature of the speech encounter and create for the speakers different orders of relevance and relation."


106. Bernstein. *op. cit.* p. 43. In an early paper he writes: "Language is considered one of the most important means of initiating, synthesizing and reinforcing ways of thinking, feeling and behaviour which are functionally related to the social group. It does not, of itself, prevent the expression of specific ideas or confine the individual to a given level of conceptualisation, but certain ideas and generalisations are facilitated rather than others. That is the language use facilitates development in a particular direction rather than inhibiting all other possible directions."


108. see fn. 2 Chapter 1.


111. *ibid.* p. 32.


115. *ibid.* 146/7.

117. Bernstein, op. cit. 123; cf. Dennis McQuail, Towards a Sociology of Mass Communication. op. cit. p. 76: "It seems now possible to conclude that in the 'age of television', industrial society does have something like a common culture which is that provided by the entertainment media. Thus the problem posed by the existence of mass culture may not be one of the rejection of education and literacy by the masses, or their exploitation by the few, but may arise from the existence of needs common to most members of industrial society and catered for in many ways made possible by the technology of mass communications."


119. Bernstein. op. cit. 126 and below.

120. see below pp. 75; the transition from preliterate to literate, and from manuscript to printing is becoming an increasing topic for consideration; see Jack Goody, En.125below, and also the work of Elizabeth Eisenstein, Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought. Journal of Modern History. 1968. Vol. 40. 1-56 and her recent, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. 2 Vols. Cambridge. 1979.

121. Understanding Media. op. cit., p. 27.

122. The Medium is the Message. op. cit. 125-6.

123. Counterblast. op. cit. 17.


130. *ibid.* p. 142

131. see footnote 125 above.


136. *The Consequences of Literacy*. op. cit. 84.

137. *Counterblast*. op. cit. 84.


142. There is a discussion, of course, especially in folklore studies about the significance of the performance in understanding, making sense of, the oral communication, see especially: Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth Goldstein, *Folklore, Performance and Communication*. The Hague. 1975.

143. *The Singer of Tales*. op. cit. 68.

144. *ibid.* 99-100.


148. The Domestication of the Savage Mind. op. cit. 142.


155. ibid. p. 121.


157. There is of course no equation here between restricted codes and formal language; restricted codes are not necessarily formal, though formal language is necessarily restricted.


161. op. cit. 71.
CHAPTER III

The Mythic and Television

There is very little that is novel in the suggestion that television and other aspects of contemporary culture are like myths. Most often the argument that they are is a functional one; myths and television fulfil the same purpose or satisfy the same needs, be they individual or social. Often too it is argued that myths and the products of contemporary culture are similar in their form and their content; they convey similar messages in similar ways.

What most of these considerations obscure is the very real difficulty in identifying what myths are. The supposed comparison of like with like ignores the fact that it is not just, for example, television, which is partially understood, but that the supposed key to the puzzle is itself amorphous. Myth, ritual, magic, folktales, indeed the whole panoply of a supposedly different and distinct way of thinking, acting and communicating - the assumed preserve of 'primitive' pre-literate societies and cultures - have so far denied us their essence. This denial is the product both of the manifestly enormous range of words and acts that we might wish to include under a common rubric, but it is also the product of the problems associated with any cross-cultural comparison, particularly those concerned with the transferability of our own categories of thought beyond their normal range of relevance.

I would like in this chapter to attempt a draft of the equation of television and the mythic, and to do so in a way which would avoid, hopefully, the worst excesses of either claims for a general theory or of a refusal to be clear about the nature of the terms of the comparison. Such a comparison, I would suggest, is a fruitful one. Indeed more than that, I would maintain that
unless the mythical dimension of contemporary culture is recognized and understood then perceptions of that culture will remain - if such a thing is possible - both equivocal and banal.

This chapter, therefore, will consist of three parts: firstly and inevitably a consideration of some of the most influential theories of myth and ritual - a consideration which, for reasons of space and competence - will be relatively synoptic; secondly an identification of in what, minimally a definition of the mythic should consist; and thirdly a consideration of the role mythic thought might have in contemporary culture.

But first, and as in the preceding chapter, a simple but important distinction needs to be made. Television, as indeed all other forms of mass communication, uses specific items of folklore, myth and representations of ritual within its discourse. This has been noted and it is noteworthy. Advertisements, questions in quiz shows, the retelling of the familiar tales and the broadcasting of a state opening of parliament or a coronation, all illustrate the various ways in which aspects of traditional culture are preserved in our own. However, just as we can consider television as a language or language system in the acknowledgement of the obvious point that a significant part of its communication is in spoken language, so too can we at least suggest that the television message as a whole can be considered as mythic, irrespective of any specific item of content.

Theories of myth are amenable to no simple classification. Indeed as for example G.S. Kirk points out respect for the great differences between cultures in the form, content and context of mythical communication demands that no one theory will be adequate, though each may have something of value to say. Percy Cohen, equally, eschews synthesis, though he does produce a definition, and ends by listing seven types of theory.
despite this situation, which is after all an endemic one in the human and social sciences, the attempt must be made, if only as a means of presenting a great deal of conflicting and contradictory theory in a short space.

We can therefore begin by making an initial distinction between those theories which seek to establish a distinct form of thought whose central and seminal expression is in myth, and those theories which wish to relate the particular activity of the narration of myth to other aspects of individual or social existence, for example, magic or ritual. Among the former we can make a further distinction, between those who see myth as an expression of feeling and those who see it as an expression of thought. For the first, above all for Ernst Cassirer, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Mircea Eliade, myth is unashamedly primitive, and its primitiveness is grounded in the proximity of man to nature and to the supernatural, and in the recognition of, and response to, the power of this otherwise unmediated reality. Myths are essentially sacred. They are believed and they accurately reflect the ways in which the primitive perceives his world. Opposing this view with a theory that stresses the intellectual coherence within myth is, of course, Claude Lévi-Strauss. For him myth has nothing to do with emotions, and its relationship to the sacred is incidental. Concerned to establish a mode of thought through the analysis of myth, that mode of thought gains its coherence not in the uniqueness of primitive experience, but in the capacity of all men to think equally well; in other words ultimately in the structure of the human mind. Myth for Lévi-Strauss is as close as one can get to pure thought, and though the argument is not without its difficulties, the difference between the primitive and his myth and ourselves without it is more a matter of content and of history than anything as fundamental as the denial of emotion.
For Cassirer, Levy-Bruhl and Eliade, though again not without qualification as I shall argue, it is man at a particular stage of his evolutionary development which is the centre of concern; for Levi-Strauss it is man tout court.

Let me briefly consider each of these theories in turn.

Ernst Cassirer sees myth as the expression of the life-force of the human spirit at a particular stage of its development; it is its power, its urgency and its emotional charge which give it its distinctiveness. Mythical thought is not logical; the connections it makes between things, indeed its very categories, reflect and perpetuate the coherence of a felt unity in and of the world. As Suzanne Langer succinctly puts it:

"All mythic constructions are symbols of value - of life and power, or of violence, evil and death. They are charged with feeling, and have a way of absorbing into themselves more and more intense meanings, sometimes even logically conflicting imports. Therefore mythic symbols do not give rise to discursive understanding; they do beget a kind of understanding, but not by sorting out concepts and relating them in a distinct pattern; they tend, on the contrary, merely to bring together great complexes of cognate ideas, in which all distinctive features are merged and swallowed." 12

Myth rolls up everything it touches, "Things which come into contact with one another in a mythical sense - whether this contact is taken as a spatial or temporal contiguity or as a similarity, however remote, or a membership in the same class or species - have fundamentally ceased to be a multiplicity; they have acquired a substantial unity." 13 This vision of the childhood of man is incidentally give some empirical support by Peter Worsley when he, following L.S. Vygotsky's work on the childhood of men, opposes Levi-Straussian structuralism with evidence of alternative forms of classification in the totemism of the Groote Eylandters. 14
Cassirer's vision, for as G.S. Kirk points out, Cassirer knew no more than anyone else about how myths actually are or were created, stems from a philosophical position, derived from Emanuel Kant which seeks to establish the construction of symbols as the central activity of man. The symbolic world, of which myth together with language, is both a part but also the source, mediates between object and mind. Myths grow out of man's experience of the world, and that experience is both concrete and undifferentiated, above all because both object and its signification are bonded together. There is no difference between the thing and its image. There is no consciousness in mythical thought of thought as such, no abstraction nor conceptual manipulation. In a curious way myth is pre-symbolic. The world is believed in and it gains its sacredness in that belief and in the recognition of its power.

The categories through which the mythic world is ordered grow out of this emotional bonding with the world. Space and time, number and causality are grounded in the profound separation of the sacred and the profane and in the emotional response to that separation. Indeed spatial differentiation is basic to mythical thought: "The barriers which man sets himself in his basic feeling of the sacred are the starting point from which begins his setting of boundaries of space and from which by a progressive process of organization and articulation, the process spreads over the whole physical cosmos." Absolute and unchanging mythic time, and magical and powerful number derive from the same essential dichotomy.

In a sense Cassirer wants, despite this stress on the spirit, on emotion and on the sacred, to have it both ways, for he is insisting at the same time on an underlying structural form which gives unity to what otherwise might be thought as potentially entirely arbitrary emotional responses and fantasies.

"The mythical fantasy drives towards animation, towards a complete spiritualization of the cosmos, but the mythical form of thought
which attaches all qualities and activities, all states and relations to a solid foundation, leads to the opposite extreme, a kind of materialization of spiritual contents."  

And this contradiction is re-emphasised when he faces Levy-Bruhl's theory of the prelogical, and towards what Cassirer wrongly assumes to be the former's absolute dichotomy of primitive and modern. For here Cassirer is arguing for a continuity in some, the profane, aspects of human existence, a continuity which in fact is nowhere provided for in his theory.

It is tempting to deny Cassirer's mythical speculations in their entirety, either on empirical grounds: not all myths seem to depend on emotion for their creation and maintenance; or on logical and philosophical grounds: that he is both contradictory and as M.F. Ashley-Montague points out that he never faces his true object: "he is not interested in mythology as such but in the processes of consciousness which lead to the creation of myth." It is tempting too, to reject his crude evolutionism wherein myth is always negatively valued when faced with its developments, religion and science.

Three things can be plausibly extracted however. The first is the recognition of the emotional content of myth. This need not be interpreted as simply an irrational response, but can be understood as Suzanne Langer persuasively argues, in terms of aesthetic experience and presentational symbolism. Secondly the mere fact of myth as a symbolic structure to be interpreted and understood in another than a literal way seems also to be important. Thirdly, and by extension, the unity of mythical thought which Cassirer postulates but never really explores is also significant. The structure which he finds in myth is the structure of feeling; its disentanglement is by definition impossible, but despite that we can recognize, at least, the problems of understanding such complex phenomena.
Ernst Cassirer is therefore offering a theory of myth which demands, despite itself, a clear dichotomy between ancient and modern, between one world view, the mythical, and another, the modern, religious or scientific. It is self-consciousness, consciousness of the sign, freedom from the concrete ties of emotion, which marks the boundary. And this freedom brings with it the freedom of the individual, the rejection of the bonds of taboo and mythical thought.

David Bidney is correct therefore, to draw a parallel between Cassirer's work on myth and that of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. For the latter too, at least until his very last and fragmentary work, also insisted on a clear separation, a non-comparability between the primitive — he called it pre-logical — and modern thought.

Much influenced by Émile Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl offers a perspective of primitive mentality which demands the primacy of the social. At the root of all thought are the collective representations, themselves the product and mirror of a social structure, which Émile Durkheim insists on calling elementary. Here the lack of social differentiation generates in the collective mind the impression of solidarity and above all of participation; an impression which is centrally mystical. In such a world dreams become real, objects and images become fused.

"I should be inclined to say that in the collective representation of primitive mentality, objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves. In a fashion which is no less incomprehensible, they give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain where they are.

In other words the opposition between the one and the many, the same and another, and so forth, does not impose upon this mentality the necessity of affirming one of the terms, if the other be denied, or vice versa."
Primitive mentality therefore has two facets. It is both mystic and prelogical. Its prelogicality consists in its non-recognition of the law of contradiction: things can be what they are and other than what they are simultaneously. Its mystic qualities reside in the non-recognition of secondary causes; the unusual, which the primitive like ourselves wishes to explain, is explained non-empirically, or as Lévy-Bruhl suggests non-objectively. While being technologically perfectly efficient, explanations of what is perceived are offered in terms of what is felt or believed. "The actual world and the world beyond are blended". And as Lévy-Bruhl notes, "their world is more complex than our universe, but on the other hand it is complete, and it is closed."

At one important level, the level which Cassirer for example does not see beyond, Lévy-Bruhl is postulating a clearly defined, and different form of thought for the primitive in his collective existence. It is the description of a belief system which does not preclude the individual from being empirically sensible but which demands that explanation be other than, in our terms, logical. But at the same time this unilateral vision of man's mental history is more complex and more uncertain.

First of all there is the question of myth itself. So far, and for good reason, there has been no mention of it. The reason is that the primitive in his full participation with nature and with other men needs no mediation, no rationalisation, which myth would offer:

"Where the participation of the individual in the social group is still directly felt, where the participation of the group with the surrounding groups is actually lived - that is, as long as the period of mystic symbiosis lasts - myths are meagre in number and of poor quality."

Myths then are the product of a first stage of development, beyond the pure solidarity of social existence. They take the place of feeling, and of direct communion. As Lévy-Bruhl puts it, "participation tends to become ideological." Communion is no longer lived, it is to be
spoken, to be explained. But the myths are still tied to the mystery and the emotion of the primitive's perception of things. Indeed it is the mystic element which gives myth its force and social importance. 39 Myths, for Lévy-Bruhl, and as we shall see also for Mircea Eliade are sacred histories, and as such they function to express and to maintain the solidarity of the social group. 40 But once again, and in a way similar to that of Cassirer, Lévy-Bruhl believes that to understand myths one needs first to understand the mentality which has produced them. 41

The second of the complicating factors lies in Lévy-Bruhls's recognition of, and increasing insistence on, not the difference between primitive and modern but on their similarity. This first of all manifests itself in the suggestion that the native is empirically competent, then in the suggestion that mythical, participatory forms of thought persevere, and indeed they are to be valued;

"Il n'est pas probable que jamais il disparaisse, ou s'affaiblisse au-delà d'un certain point, et sans doute n'est ce pas non plus souhaitable. Car avec lui disparaît peut-être la poésie, l'art la métaphysique, l'invention dans les sciences - bref presque tout ce qui dont la beauté et la grandeur de la vie humaine." 42

and finally in the disquiet about the notion of prelogicality, which in the Carnets is abandoned. 43 It is abandoned not because Levy-Bruhl relinquishes his argument about the difference between two forms of thought but because that difference no longer appears supportable by such a category. The problem is falsely posed, and Lévy-Bruhl, while insisting still on the significance of participation, and on a mystical mentality, nevertheless refuses to equate such a way of thought exclusively with the primitive. What this amounts to is a denial of the diachronic dichotomy, of the evolution of one form to another, and its replacement by a synchronic
It is in the nature of man that both forms, emotion and rationality, myth and science will co-exist. These relative proportions will vary and are not contradictory, but only different. Indeed Lévy-Bruhl acknowledges that the capacity of modern science to make the world intelligible is itself, as Albert Einstein notes, unintelligible and he asks "Might there not be here simply a difference of degree? A transference of the unintelligibility of the detail to the world given in its totality?"

It is this final equivocation, an equivocation which was perhaps always present, which makes Lévy-Bruhl's work so interesting. Once again we need not, as he finally does not, accept an evolutionary model which demands a clear distinction and a clear measure of inferiority. Nor need we accept that the primitive was a permanent prisoner of his emotions or that myths are exclusively the product of emotion. But we can acknowledge, with him, that a significant part of man's inheritance involves the mysterious and that myth in expressing that, effects a transformation from the profane to the sacred, a transformation of history into mythical time and space.

The explanation of in what mythical time and space consists, is the peculiar preserve of the endlessly recursive theorizing of Mircea Eliade. Eliade, unlike Cassirer and Lévy-Bruhl, is concerned exclusively with myths - and myths are sacred histories. As he, synoptically, puts it:

"Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial time, the fabled time of the "beginnings". In other words, myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos, or only a fragment of reality - an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, an institution. Myth then, is always an account of a "creation"; it relates how something was produced, how it began to be. Myth tells only of that which really happened....myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the 'supernatural') into the world. It is this
sudden breakthrough of the sacred that really establishes the World and makes it what it is today. Furthermore, it is a result of the intervention of Supernatural Beings that man himself is what he is today, a mental, sexed and cultural being." 46

This generalization is palpably absurd. Clearly countless myths have nothing whatever to do with origins and even many that do, seem to be adding only an aetiological footnote to an otherwise entirely differently oriented tale. 47 Indeed the unequivocal equation of myth with the sacred is also open to dispute, for many tales which we would expect to call myths have nothing or very little of the sacred about them, either in their content or the context of their telling. 48 Nevertheless if we water down the argument, and reduce its content of yeast, a number of important perceptions remain.

Mircea Eliade is concerned to identify both a number of themes within, and a number of functions served by, myth. Myth, as for Cassirer and Lévy-Bruhl, is participatory; it is prompted by and part of a deep spiritualization of the environment, natural, and human. The world that myth presents is supremely sacred and as such it is real, more real in a certain sense than empirical reality. To enter the mythic world involves a transformation, both in space and time. In space one moves from the periphery to the centre, the hub, and that movement is simultaneously one from the illusory to the real, 49 the profane to the sacred. Ritual action creates that space. This ritually defined and sacred space, in its centrality redefines profane geography. If all roads lead to the centre, as they do in Eliade's view of archaic and mythic thought, then social and empirical distance is abolished.

In a similar way empirical, historical time is abolished by its transformation into the sacred world of myth. Now the concern is with origins, with illo tempore, and all ritual action, and mythical thought,
seeks to recreate and return to that time when both things began and when they were perfect. Historical, real time, is abolished either in rites of regeneration or eschatological visions. The linearity of profane time gives way to the endlessly circular and the repetitive. And in this denial of progress or of movement of any sort, and in the creation of cosmogony which this involves, myth provides an exemplary model for all human action.

One might think that this mode of expression is oppressive, but Eliade argues the reverse. Archaic man is freed the weight of dead Time, of history. He can abolish his past, begin his life anew, re-create his World. "Myth assures man that what he is about to do has already been done; in other words it helps him to overcome doubts as to the result of his undertaking...

There is no reason to fear settling in an unknown, wild territory, because one knows what one has to do. One has merely to repeat the cosmogonic ritual, whereupon the unknown territory (= Chaos) is transformed into "Cosmos", becomes an imago mundi and hence a ritually legitimized "habitation".... The World is no longer an opaque mass of objects arbitrarily thrown together, it is a living Cosmos, articulated and meaningful. In the last analysis, the World reveals itself as language. It speaks to man through its own mode of being, through its structure and its rhythms."

And we might add too that, as Eliade conceives of it, in myth nothing remains unexplained. Suffering was bearable in its explanation - we might say in its being explained away. It was never absurd. "Suffering is regarded as the consequence of a deviation in respect of the norm" and its critical moment" lies in its appearance; suffering is perturbing only insofar as its cause remains undiscovered."
Mircea Eliade's theories, it would appear, explain too much. In the face of much empirical evidence his generalizations are unwarranted, as indeed is the extension of his analysis from the content of myth to belief and action. Nevertheless there are a number of important insights in what he has to say, not least because he refuses to limit the mythical imagination and the mythical world to archaic man. He insists many times that both in the content (for example, Superman), in the form (in narrative transformation) and in belief (the suspension of disbelief and the escape from real time in the act of reading a novel) that we in the twentieth century are as involved in and as enamoured of myth as any of our ancestors. And indeed this denial of historical, linear time which is so central to his view of myth reappears, only to be condemned, in Marx's and Engels' analysis of bourgeois ideology; a theme which is revived in the mythology of Roland Barthes.

He has also identified certain preoccupations within human culture, not perhaps universal or persistent, but general and resistant to change, and he has shown in what ways these preoccupations are incorporated into and spoken by myth. Furthermore his view of myth has one other attraction, though it is not one on which he dwells or develops; it finds its justification both in the individual and the social. The former is relieved of his fear of chaos and the latter, society, whose institutions might be conceived of as serving a similar purpose, are supported and buttressed by it.

What unites the first three theories of myth which have been considered, apart from their inadequacy when treated on their own terms, is their stress on the world view that myth generates and in which it participates. Whatever else they might be, myths and the thought which they are supposed to express, are different from the world of science, and from the world of commonsense - the sacred as opposed to the profane. However that difference, particularly with regard to the profane world of commonsense, is not a difference of distance but an intimate one. Each world stresses the same emotions and
the mythic intrudes into all manner of everyday acts and thoughts. But at the same time this world of mystery and imagination, of feeling, participation and transformation is involved in the creation of order and of a secure reality out of the darkness of the unknown. This order is not a logical one, nor is it essentially cognitive. To understand myth in this sense and to explore in what ways that order is created and maintained coldly and unemotionally, one needs to turn to the theories of myth of Claude Lévi-Strauss.

"Myths and rites are far from being, as has often been held, the product of men's 'myth-making faculty', turning its back on reality. Their principal value is indeed to preserve until the present time the remains of methods of observation and reflection which were (and no doubt still are) precisely adapted to discoveries of a certain type: those which nature authorised from the starting point of a speculative organization and exploitation of the sensible world in sensible terms." 59

In this quotation Claude Lévi-Strauss is clearly opposing the kind of mythopoeic view which underlies the arguments I have just been discussing, but as I have suggested elsewhere, especially with regard to Cassirer, Lévi-Strauss's own work is not as far removed from the neo-Kantianism of those he opposes as he is inclined to think. Be that as it may, however, what clearly distinguishes them is the different and central stress that is laid upon the role of reason and emotion. While Lévi-Strauss recognizes that myth and magic have affectivity as their source, he insists that myth is essentially intellectual. Impulses and emotions are never causes, but only results. Causes "can be sought only in the organism, which is the exclusive concern of biology, or in the intellectual which is the sole way offered to psychology, and to anthropology as well". 62. The demands of what he takes to be his object, the need, as he sees it, for a material grounding for anthropology, and the failure of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss in Primitive Classification 63 to transcend the implications of their own theory, all conspire to produce the following axiom:
"As affectivity is the most obscure side of man, there has been the constant temptation to resort to it, forgetting that what is refractory to explanation is ipso facto unsuitable for use in explanation. A datum is not primary because it is incomprehensible."

I will reserve a detailed discussion of the method of Levi-Strauss's analysis until the next chapter and will do nothing more now than outline the major elements in his view of myth.

Myth is a language, which in its own particular order both reflects the ordered activity of man's mind and derives or attempts to resolve the natural disorder of precultural experience. Myth is functionless, or at least it serves no practical function. Its purpose, rather, is to present to the minds of the men who create it and who hear it evidence of their own mastery of the world, a mastery which is both intellectual and cognitive. Myths are anonymous, "from the moment they are seen as myths, and whatever their real origins, they exist only as elements embodied in a tradition. When the myth is repeated, the individual listeners are receiving a message that, properly speaking, is coming from nowhere; this is why it is credited with a supernatural origin." The truth of myth is therefore in its structure, not in its manifestation; the truth is not available directly to the native who hears it. Partly that truth is emotional, visceral, partly that truth is diffused through the system of myth, so that each single text reveals a portion of it only. It is in the redundance of the system as a whole that the message gains its coherence. And it is only the mythologist, privileged by distance, theory and method, who can define in what the truth of myth consists.
This privilege has not gone unchallenged, of course. The accounts that Levi-Strauss produces are neither simply verifiable nor falsifiable in their own terms - they are both complex and selective of empirical support - nor are they entirely supportive of the structure, the theory of mind and culture, which he erects above them. But in this failing, as we have seen, he is not alone. The failure can be acknowledged, condoned even, but nevertheless recognized as being productive. In what way?

Firstly, myth is seen as a language. The meanings that it generates, combining and dependent on both langue (the structured rules, defining the possibility of language) and parole (the product of that possibility, the infinity of speech), are at the same time beyond language. "Myth is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically, taking off from the linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling." The units of the mythical text are superior to the units of natural language but gain their significance by their place in a synchronic and diachronic system in precisely the same way as, according to Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson, the units of natural language do. Not words, but bundles of words are the primary units - the mythemes - of the mythical system. And it is within the mytheme that the coincidence of langue and parole and also of reversible and non-reversible time takes place; ....... "myth uses a third referent which combines the properties of the first two. On the one hand a myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place long ago. But what gives the myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future."  

Myth, and it is always the mythic system, not the individual myth, presents essentially a synchronic, a static structure of meaning.
While a single myth develops chronologically and deals with historical events, the system as a whole imposes a logic of its own which simultaneously denies that history and transforms it. What then we are left with, as a result of this operation, is a coherent account presented in terms of the concrete categories of empirical experience, of the primitive—essentially preliterate—culture. The myths are basically answers to questions, and the questions and to a degree the answers also, are the universal ones of human existence. Centred on and around the dichotomy of nature and culture, and of the problems associated both with understanding and defending that boundary, the myths deal with problems of cooking, of table manners, of sexual relationships, of economic survival and so on.

There is inevitably some ambiguity here, for much of this apparent meaningfulness in the myths is available in their content, and not in their structure. It is clear, for example, that Asdiwal's marriages, on the one hand, and the dribbling frog on the other, have quite manifestly to do with what Lévi-Strauss only reaches structurally, problems of kinship relations and problems of table manners respectively. Such an observation as this, which is also made by G.S. Kirk, would suggest that contrary to what Lévi-Strauss insists, not all details of the myth are equally important or indeed structured, and much of the myth's meaning is available without the detailed analysis of which he is so fond. Nevertheless what he insists on being able to show, and this only through the myth's structure, are the various levels at which mythic communication takes place.
"So complicated a journey through the mythic field, along roads which sometimes proceed in the same direction, but follow courses which are far apart while remaining parallel, or intersect or even turn back upon themselves, would be incomprehensible if we did not realize that it has allowed us to carry out several tasks simultaneously. This volume presents the development of an argument in three dimensions—ethnographical, logical and semantic; and, if it has any claim to originality, this will be because, at every stage, it has shown how each dimension remains inseparable from the others."

This is important, for Lévi-Strauss's question of myth is not so much the what of it, but the how of it. And it is for this reason that his definition of myth is an operational one, not linked to content or particular texts, but to a way of communication, peculiar, as he would argue, to preliterature cultures and to societies, he calls them cold, without history. Once again we meet the dichotomy and once again we can, in part, ignore it. For, indeed Lévi-Strauss does also. On the one hand he stresses the boundary between societies with and without history, cultures with and without writing, and those who have science and philosophy rather than myth. But then, as he continually insists, the intellectual capacity of the mind of man is unchanging: "The difference lies not in the quality of the intellectual process, but in the nature of things to which it is applied; man has always been thinking equally well."

I have presented, albeit briefly, an account of what for want of a better phrase, we might call the visionary theories of myth. Each of them is in its own way suggestive; each of them, or so it seems to me, is saying something important about the mythical imagination and the functional significance of that particular form of communication. We can accept that myth, precisely in its combination of emotion and reason articulates a particular view of the world which is distant from, though not opposed to, the profane
world of everyday experience. That the relationship between the
two is complex and often blurred goes without saying, as equally
complex and blurred is the boundary between myth and science.
Nevertheless the distinction holds, as it must; for without it a
most significant tension in human existence would go unrecorded.

But if the concern is to identify a specific form of communication,
then clearly that communication is not exclusively a verbal one,
nor is it without its effects, social or individual. We might
then enquire, as has been done consistently in the study of myth,
into its connection with magic and ritual. Such enquiry will
inevitably be a limited one here. There is as much dispute as to
the nature of ritual and magic as there is of myth. Indeed the
literature and the controversy which it articulates is extensive.
As Edmund Leach notes at the end of his Encyclopedia article:
"...it has been stressed that even among those who have specialised
in the field, there is the widest possible disagreement as to how the
word ritual should be used and how the performance of ritual should
be understood." 79 The differences between such an expression of
what might pass for either honesty or insecurity and the confidence
of Ruth Benedict's equivalent attempt at definition some thirty years
earlier is both marked and symptomatic of much that has happened within
the social sciences. 80

However central to any consideration of this sacred triad is the work
of Bronislaw Malinowski and in particular his collection of essays
Magic, Science and Religion. 81 Malinowski is much influenced by
Sir James Frazer who saw an intimate connection between myth and
ritual and between magic and religion. Ritual precedes myth and
magic religion. 82 Magic itself, in a view of it which in turn
depends on that of Sir Edward Tyler is pseudo-science. For Tyler myth and magic depends on the twin pillars of animism, "the doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general", and analogy in which objects are thought to feel and act in ways analogous to human feelings and actions." Sir James Frazer's consideration of magic and ritual is as firmly grounded in the security of Victorian England, in which the primitive magician, is seen as acting scientist manqué through the childhood of man's intellectual development. But that mistake itself rests on a correct perception of the two forms of analogy, metaphor and metonymy, which become in the practice of the magician, homeopathic and contagious magic. Magic, based on these principles, correctly denies the intervention of a spiritual being between intention and effect, but incorrectly understands that connection in its misunderstanding of the laws of nature.

Malinowski's Trobrianders inhabit the same world of practical responses to basic needs. Magic fills the gap between the demand and the ability to effectively control nature. It is akin to science, but it is pseudo-science. "It always has a definite aim intimately associated with human instinct, needs and pursuits. The magic art is directed towards the attainment of practical ends; like any other art or craft it is also governed by theory and by a system of principles which dictate the manner in which the act has to be performed in order to be effective." It consists in formula, rite and reasonably enough, the presence of a magician. Magic, the rite and the spells in which it consists, are traditional activities, indeed they need to be in order to be effective; which is as much to say in order for them to be believed in. And it is in the justification, guarantee and indeed legitimation of magic which it is myth's function to fulfil.
"It can be said without exaggeration that the most typical, most highly developed mythology in primitive societies is that of magic, and the function of myth is not to explain but to vouch for, not to satisfy curiosity but to give confidence in power, not to spin out yarns, but to establish the flowing freely from present-day occurrences, frequently similar validity of belief." 87

I will reserve comment as to the usefulness of such an observation for the moment and remark only, but significantly, that for Malinowski myth is preeminently to be understood sociologically, and functionally. Myths, and not just those intimately connected with magic exist for the telling of origins, for the maintenance of the traditions and in order to provide a charter for present action. 88 Myth is not idle speculation, nor a symbolic communication; it neither explains nor illustrates. It is firmly grounded in the practical demands of everyday life, and in particular in a life in which rational and empirical control is sorely limited. It "fulfils in primitive culture an indispensible function; it expresses, enhances and codifies beliefs; it safeguards and enforces morality, it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of men". 89 Myths themselves are in no need of explanation; their meaning is clear enough and their function is just as clear. In Malinowski's ringing prose; "Myth is a constant by-product of living faith, which is in need of miracles; of sociological status, which demands precedent; of moral rule, which requires satisfaction." 90

Clearly Malinowski overstates his case. Myths may very well serve to legitimise action, ritual, magical or otherwise and justify the institutions of a society but they need not do so exclusively nor indeed directly. Myths can offer explanation as well as justification and the way they do either can be the subject of an interpretation which accepts their symbolic nature rather than their manifest and directly observable content.
Furthermore as G. S. Kirk points out myths and ritual are not necessarily co-existent nor is myth by virtue of that supposed co-existence necessarily sacred 91.

However, there a number of threads to be extracted from such a position. Assuming, for the time being, that we have some understanding of what myth consists in, either despite or because of Malinowski, we need to enquire both into the nature of ritual and into the connection between ritual and myth. Ritual, for Ruth Benedict, is a form "of prescribed and elaborated behaviour"; it is both individual, in the neurotic, and cultural. Ritual is "extra necessitous for the technological point of view" and it is a "prescribed form of behaviour for the occasions not given over to technological routine" 92. While this definition suggests one of the dichotomies apparently so essential in the definition of ritual, that of the rational and the irrational and in that it follows Malinowski, it avoids or assumes the second, that between the sacred and the profane.

Emile Durkheim's argument for the division of the world made by religious thought is a familiar and highly influential one: "all known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred. This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought" 93.

This dichotomy, like the one between rational and irrational, is much insisted upon, but in a way similar to the first it is charged with being ethnocentric and likely to be inadequate as a viable classification of the native's own thought - as much is shown by E.E. Evans-Pritchard in his study of the Azande 94. Arguing as such and at the same time denying its universal applicability, Jack Goody nevertheless insists/the observer's right to
observe and therefore on the analytical servicesability of such a dichotomy and similarly Edmund Leach prefers to argue in an early work that such a dichotomy expresses a continuum rather than an absolute. "From this point of view technique and ritual, profane and sacred, do not denote types but aspects of almost any kind of action." But to blur this category while at the same time observing it extends the range of actions that might be included within ritual. On the one hand it is a form of consecrated behaviour, but on the other hand we can and do extend the notion of ritual to include non-religious ceremonials and even non-public ceremonials, the rituals of family and inter-personal relations. The classification of different forms and functions of ritual can then be endless.

What can be disentangled from all this? We can insist on the preservation of the distinction between the sacred and the profane worlds even in the acknowledgement that in certain cultures and society that distinction may be relatively meaningless. For us it signifies the ability to accord special significance to a certain set of actions and to a certain set of beliefs. To employ a linguistic analogy the sacred is an equivalent of the marked term and minimally this itself suggests distinction and difference. Secondly we can make a distinction between the function and the form of ritual action and acknowledge that it is predominantly with regard to the form its function, that controversy centres. A ritual is social. While it need not as Jack Goody argues, depend on the physical presence of a community, it becomes meaningful only through its collective acknowledgement. And ritual in the peculiar clarity and consistency of its forms is clearly both opposed and responsive to the ambiguity endemic in social life. Max Gluckman for example sees ritual as the particular product of tribal societies, he
calls them "multiplex" in which social role and status is diffuse.  

Ritual is essentially to do with the disentangling of status and role and in the establishment of authority within the social structure. He suggests therefore two interdependent hypotheses; the first proposes that the greater the secular differentiation of role the less ritual there will be and the less mystery in the ceremonial of etiquette; the second proposes that the greater the multiplicity of undifferentiated and overlapping roles, the more ritual there is to separate them. The presence or absence of ritual therefore grows out of the social structure; an argument which leads him to suggest that the reason for relative absence of ritual in our own society is due both to the segregation of roles and to the segregation of conflict between roles. This is, I think once again, too narrow a view. Clearly there is more to status than role differentiation; and contemporary preoccupations with status, both individual and collective, grow out of a society whose ambiguity consists not so much on fusion of role but on the contrary, on its elaboration.

The relation nevertheless between ritual and status is a central one, though it can be extended beyond the strict sense of social status. Ritual expresses and attempts to resolve not just the uncertainties of social status but the uncertainties attached to the status of any and perhaps every aspect of culture. Myth also, as I have argued, seems to function in this way. And it is probably this equivalence of response to, as it were, structural demands of society, that underlies all attempts to make myths and ritual mutually supportive.

For Clyde Kluckhohn in the context of his attempt at a general theory of myth, this is expressed not in terms of society but in terms of the individual: "...the only uniformity which can be positive is that there is a strong tendency for some sort of interrelationship between myth and ceremony and
that this relationship is dependent upon what appears, so far as present information goes, to be an invariant function of both myth and ritual; the gratification (most often in the negative form of anxiety reduction) of a large proportion of the individuals in a society. This formulation involves the introduction of insights derived from psychoanalysis, specifically Anna Freud's characterisation of the ego's defence mechanisms and Malinowski's theory of myth as a charter. But as I have already pointed out, myths occur without rituals and vice versa, and myths have characteristics rituals have not, "their fantasy, their freedom to develop and their complex structure."  

There is, therefore, no clear agreement on what might pass as the function either of ritual or myth. Like so many arguments of a similar cast, the problem is the non-falsifiability of the theory even were it to be coherent. The presentation of "myths" which were clearly non-functional or at least not functioning in the prescribed way could easily be, by definition, an excluded from the theory. So in the absence of an alternative definition of myth, one which G. S. Kirk, for example, refuses to provide, his so-called aberrant myths are not myths at all. In any case the perception of myth as preeminently a response to, and an attempted resolution of stress and strain within culture and society is one that dies hard. Terence Turner in recasting Lévi-Strauss's Oedipus myth is a powerful advocate of such a perspective, and even Clifford Geertz's comments on it, telling though they may be, still leave the functionalist beast alive. 

We can avoid, in part, the functionalist tautology on the one hand, and G. S. Kirk's, albeit highly intelligent and persuasive eclecticism on the other, if we follow another route; the route prescribed by considering both myth and ritual as languages - indeed as a language. As Marcel Mauss writes: "all ritual is a kind of language, it therefore translates ideas."
And Edmund Leach following Claude Lévi-Strauss, and taking also
a cue from J.L. Austin argues similarly: "We engage in rituals
in order to transmit collective messages to ourselves." Ritual becomes a form of expressive communication involving no clear
distinction between audience and performers. The source or origin
of the ritual is neither clear nor important, and what is of
immediate and consummate interest is the patterning of acts, words,
images and music which make up a collectively legitimised, though
still individually perceived, message.

Myth is also language, and the relation between it and ritual no
longer becomes necessarily dependent on reference to the society
in which they are found or which produces them. Nor is there any
reason to suggest that the response will be homologous. Indeed
Claude Lévi-Strauss has made just this point in considering the
similar ritual but different myth of the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians. What now becomes the issue is the form, or structure, that myths and
rituals present and which guarantees their communication. As I
have already noted myths and rituals will vary enormously in their
complexity; and we can expect mythic language to be more developed
and more subtle. But we can also expect that the basic logical
principles will be similar; they will consist in the transformation
of sign and symbol, metonymy and metaphor, and in such a way that the
basic categories of spatial, temporal and causal differentiation are
given concrete expression. Together and separately, myth and
ritual comprise a system and it is only within this system that any
one item gains its meaning. The interpretation of myth and ritual,
therefore, while not undertaken independently of any consideration
of its social and cultural context, is nevertheless not determined
by it.
Arnold Van Gennep, while not offering a linguistic theory of ritual in any precise sense, nevertheless sees ritual in systematic terms, identifying the basic elements of ritual, whose significance is gained in the relationship to each other. He sees ritual, not in terms of "the particular rites" but in the essential significance and their relative positions within ceremonial wholes, that is, their order.... the underlying arrangements is always the same. Beneath a multiplicity of forms, either consciously expressed or merely implied, a typical pattern always recurs; the pattern of the rites of passage."\(^{112}\) Like so many seminal ideas this one is remarkably simple. It consists firstly in the Durkheimian hypostatisation of the sacred and the profane which, in Van Gennep's view is given above in ritual all, spatial and territorial expression, but which is also manifested in time, in the seasonal and life-cycle patterns of human existence. The movement from profane to sacred and back again is a movement fraught with social implications, and in order to effect such a movement a transitional stage is necessary. The movement, in any case, is marked by ritual whose dynamics consist in three phases; those of separation, transition and incorporation.\(^{113}\) A man, on coming of age, will be taken away from his family and friends, a separation involving ceremony, and placed beyond that circle, physically and socially, before being allowed to return. His return, however, equally marked by ceremonial, will see him with a new status: sacred from the perspective of his previous state, but now profane by virtue of his involvement in it.\(^{114}\)

This pattern is the basic one which Van Gennep asserts underlies all ritual, those of life cycle, birth and death, marriage and initiation, and those of any ceremony which involves an even temporary acknowledgement of the sacred. Indeed any such movement, even for example meeting and
leave taking is marked by a transitional period, albeit brief, which in his views serves to "make the break gradual rather than abrupt."  

All boundaries which are given ritual expression, which are ritually marked, are marked in such a way as to make movement through them both visible, that is they are given symbolic expression, and relatively painless. Some societies are clearly more conscious of these thresholds than others, and different societies will give different aspects of their culture ritual expression. With a metaphor that we shall have cause to remember Van Gennep makes this point quite clearly: "A society is similar to a house divided into rooms and corridors. The more the society resembles ours in its form of civilization, the thinner are its internal partitions and the wider and more open are its doors of communication. In a semi-civilized society, on the other hand, sections are carefully isolated, and passage from one to another must be made through formalities and ceremonies which show extensive parallels to the rites of territorial passage...."  

It is clear that in our own society the scale of ritual in interpersonal relations and at points of transition in our life cycle is not great, as Van Gennep notes, though those passages in and out of the sacred which are marked, are done so in ways perfectly in tune with Van Gennep's characterizations of them. Edmund Leach, for example, draws attention to the role of formality, masquerade, and role reversal as marking in all forms of society, including our own, the aspects of separation, incorporation (interchangeably) and transition respectively. And he, like Van Gennep, wishes to establish the coincidence and validity of the logic across and between cultures, irrespective of, though not irrelevant to, the particular beliefs and practices which are associated with it.
I hope to argue, that in our society and culture this ritualisation is given expression not so much in the details of social relations but in the forms of its culture, that it is not so much in terms of the 'lived' relations of social status, but in the 'thought' relation of the status of knowledge and ideas. It is in this sense that such a transition marking and ameliorating institution as television gains its significance. The source of our social and cultural anxiety has been, to a degree, displaced. We are much less concerned by the facts of birth, marriage or death, for example, in contemporary culture, because it might appear, we have forms of knowledge which have allowed us to deny or minimize the dangers associated with them. We are, however, much more concerned with that knowledge itself, and with the dangers that it poses to our security. Culture is itself, in its cognitive or aesthetic aspects, in need of mediation, and television, in both its content and its form, is a central instrument of that mediation. It marks the site of the most important rite de passage in our contemporary society.

I shall return to these issues shortly and to an attempt to characterize the way in which television can be understood mythically and ritually, but before I do there is one further dimension of the problem to be considered. This too, like the equation of myth and ritual, has a semantic quality about it, but equally it has operational significance. It is the question of the difference between myth and folktale.

IV

The dispute is endless. Its resolution is not helped by the failure, as we have seen, to agree on what myth is. On the one hand there are those who argue that the material of myth and folktale is interchangeable, and that it is only the sacred quality of the former which marks it as distinct; and there are those who suggest that
myth is the general category of which folktales are a species or even that folktales are, in a number of significant ways, a degeneration of myth. Let me explore some of these aspects in a little more detail.

Stith Thompson, the folklorist, identifies the coincidence of plot structure underlying the different forms of tale: "Fairytales become myths, or animal tales, or local legends. As stories transcend differences of age or of place and move from the ancient world to ours, or from ours to a primitive society, they often undergo protean transformations in style and narrative purpose. For the plot structure of the tale is much more stable and persistent than its form." It is the mutual convertability of myth to folktale and vice versa, which he, and Franz Boas, equally stress. Each, for Boas is the product "of the play of imagination with the events of human life; an imagination and a play which is rather limited....People much rather operate with the old stock of imaginative happenings than invent new ones." Ruth Benedict also finds little with which to distinguish folktale and myth: "Myths like folk tales are primarily novelistic tales, the two are to be distinguished only by the fact that myths are tales of the supernatural world and share also therefore the characteristics of the religious complex."

But this diffuseness is not general, and those who are cognisant of the narrative structure and its variation seem prepared to hazard more than this - though inevitably not without some backsliding. For example, Thompson quotes A. Olrik on the definition of the folktale, only to suggest that it is, rather, the difference between oral and literary narrative that is being distinguished. G.S. Kirk also offers a definition of a folktale; "traditional tales, of no firmly established form, in which supernatural elements are subsidiary;
they are not primarily concerned with serious subjects or the reflexion of deep problems and preoccupations; and their first appeal lies in their narrative interest."; which stresses little that is unequivocal even including the seriousness of the content of myth, a seriousness which suggests a difference in the intensity with which they are believed. For Kirk the folktale is a derivative, logical if not chronological, from the unbounded category of myth; and what links them is the presence of folktale motifs or narrative devices often visible in an elaborated myth. It might even be that the folktale is a discovery of the early nineteenth century, a figment of the imagination of those who discovered peasant culture in all its illiterate glory.

Nevertheless it does seem reasonable to suggest that folktales involve the weakening and the transformation of myth. That much at least is agreed by Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss, and by someone who might be called their mediator, Eleazor Meletinsky. I will reserve a discussion of the methodological dispute until the next chapter and concentrate, albeit briefly, on the substantial arguments.

Vladimir Propp has little to say beyond recognizing that "the fairytale in its morphological basis represents a myth," but he is taken well to task for failing to incorporate that insight into his analyses of the narrative of the folktale by Claude Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss, in offering his own version of the relationship, begins by making a questionable assumption - that "almost all societies perceive the two genera as distinct" - then makes two more substantive suggestions: "In the first instance, the tales are constructed on weaker oppositions than those found in myths. The latter are not cosmological, metaphysical,
or natural, but, more frequently, local, social and moral. In the second place - and precisely because the tale is a weakened transposition of the myth - the former is less strictly subjected than the latter to the triple considerations of logical coherence, religious orthodoxy, and collective pressure. The tale offers more possibilities of play, its permutations are comparatively freer, and they progressively acquire a certain arbitrary character."

For Lévi-Strauss, as I hope to argue in the next chapter, Proppian analysis is basically misconceived because he attaches himself to the derivative and incomplete text of the folktale, but clearly this is simply a case of one man's meat. The issue, methodologically, has to do with the relative stress one places on the chronology of the story as compared with the structural logic of a mythic system. The choice itself is in part determined, and this would be the point, by the relative strength of one form of ordering over the other in a mythical or non-mythical text. The shift, in a sense, involves a shift from, in myth, a deep structure of logical categories given concrete expression synchronically, to in a folktale, a less deep (though still not manifest) structure of chronologic and function. In an extreme way, the meaning of a myth lies in the mythic system, while that of a folktale can be divined from the single text, at least in conjunction with ethnographic and sociological evidence.

Despite having defended Propp against Lévi-Strauss, Eleazor Meletinsky's recent return, in English, to the subject of myth and folktale, involves an acceptance of the primacy of myth, and the argument that the transformation from myth to folktale involves a movement away from the cosmic to the social and the individual. But this is a transformation and not a denial of the basically mythic structures of categorial opposition
and presumably does not involve any change in the myth's basic function which is to explain "the existing social and cosmic order in such a way as to support it, by excluding inexplicable events and hopeless contradictions." 133

We need no longer accept such an inclusive and totalitarian formulation entirely, but it has some, inevitable foundation. So too does Meletinsky's characterisation of the elements of the transition from myth to folktale. I can briefly list them without detailed comment: the elimination of ritual and sacred elements, the weakening of strict belief in the truth of the mythological happenings, the development of conscious invention, the loss of ethnographic concreteness, the substitution of ordinary people for mythical heroes, of indeterminate fairytale time for the age of myth, the weakening or loss of aetiology, the shift of attention from collective destinies to individual ones, and from cosmic destiny to social destiny. 134 What is involved, essentially, is a change of scale.

"In the fairytale, the objects that are acquired and the goods that are achieved are not elements of nature and culture, but food, women, magical articles etc., which bring about the hero's good fortune; instead of a first beginning of things, we find here a redistribution of goods which the hero acquires for himself, or for his immediate circle." 135 One might be tempted to characterize this as the consumerization of myth, and indeed this is not as entirely unfanciful as it might appear. 136

Not only does the folktale therefore offer a weakening of much which in myth gives it its power, whether that is interpreted logically or aesthetically, but it brings the telling of tales, in a sense, much closer to home. The content of the folktale is less transcendent;
it is told for enjoyment and as I have noted in the last chapter, the teller of folktales and songs is given a certain licence in his narration. This might also be true, of course in the telling of myth, but insofar as myths are linked to particular rituals and actually do recount an origin or explain a practice, then this must be less likely and less extreme.

Let me now discuss, by way of summary, not myth and folktales or even ritual as separate phenomena, but the mythic which contains them all. In view of the disputes and differences on matters of substance this seems both reasonable and likely to be more profitable. It does not involve an argument for mythopoeia, a mythic form of thought, but more in the way of Levy-Bruhl, a mythic dimension to thought. Such a dimension will gain greater or less expression, depending on the culture and on its development; it will be expressed differently and through different forms likewise. It is the present argument, of course, that our society is no more exempt from this than any other, claims for the disenchantment of the world notwithstanding. And it is the present argument that television, supremely among the mass media, which articulates the mythic in contemporary society.

A definition is in order. The mythic dimension of culture contains traditional stories and actions whose source is the persistent need to deny chaos and create order. It contributes to the security of social and cultural existence. The mythic is a world apart, but it is also close at hand. It acts as a bridge between the everyday and the transcendent, the known and the unknown, the sacred and the profane.

Such a definition contains the following elements:

1. narration.
2. tradition.
3. motivation.
4. function
5. framing.
6. mediation.

I will consider each in turn.

1. **Narration** Much of the remainder of this thesis will be concerned with narrative and I will postpone its substantive discussion. Suffice it to say that the telling, singing or acting of myth and folktale, within or apart from ritual, involves the communication of an ordered and rule governed text. The rules are both constraining and enabling. They guarantee the viability of the performance; they generate in the disciplined mixing of the novel and the familiar and of risk and certainty, the pleasure of the tale. Narrative itself is, in a certain sense, a transcendence.

Conversation, of course, is rule governed, and includes quite naturally the telling of stories; indeed jokes, fables, proverbs constitute a logical residue of the minimally performed and they mark, along with the unselfconscious products of informal narration, the hither end of the mythic.

Similarly for Claude Lévi-Strauss the deterioration of myth begins with the folktale and ends with the serial romance. Beyond that it is no longer worthy of the name. Clearly not all stories belong to the mythic, though perhaps they all have something of the magical about them. But clearly too, what makes a story a myth, is the social recognition that it is such; and mythic narratives are essentially collective properties, both anonymous and secure.
Television's narratives are mythic in this sense, as I hope subsequently to show. They preserve in their structure the relatively simple logic of event and meaning, of more obviously mythic tales. Everything in television is told, though it remains to be established conclusively, of course, that everything which television tells is mythic.

2. Tradition "If then myths are traditional tales, then their telling is subject to the rules of all traditional tales: they will be varied in some degree on virtually every occasion of telling, and the variations will be determined by the whim, the ambition or the particular thematic repertoire of the individual teller, as well as by the receptivity and special requirements of the particular audience." It is the structure of the tale which preserves its authority, as well as the structure of the performance within which it is narrated. The conservatism of which the mythic is an embodiment and which it expresses is dynamic and complex. So to be effective conservative thought needs to be able to maintain harmony with the new, and the mythic does this by processes of adjustment and cooperation wherein its structures are preserved. Innovation in culture is itself constrained by, and dependent on, not so much the weight or the content of tradition, but on the presence within that tradition of the forms of expression and orientation which have developed generally, if not universally, as the response of man's fundamental confrontation with his world.

It seems hard to assert that television is traditional; it is certainly compelling in its repetitions, but equally certain and equally obvious in its contempt for anything which is not new and not unique. Even history becomes de-reified in the dramatization of the moment. However once again, not much beneath the surface, television is traditional; not only does it establish its own traditions, in programmes and more significantly in the sheer act of watching, but it depends crucially
on the restraints of storytelling. At this level we already know—and I hope to demonstrate—that television is the preserver of tradition and that novelty is a thin disguise.

The culture which sustains and is sustained by it is a folk culture—the little tradition perhaps, though not exclusively rural nor in any way immune from the influence of the elite. A folk culture is, almost by definition, a traditional culture, though once again it needs to be stressed that the 'folk' are not those of the backwater, but a national folk with whom we all identify, to a greater or lesser degree, at some time or another.

3. Motivation "Man can adapt somehow to anything his imagination can cope with, but he cannot deal with chaos... Therefore our most important assets are always the symbols of our general orientation in nature, on the earth, in society and in whatever we are doing." The mythic grows out of man's fear of chaos. On the one hand it is expressive of the solidarity gained in communion, though not as Durkheim would have it, its exclusive product. On the other hand it grows out of a desire to make enough sense of the world in order to stem the panic engendered by the unknown. "Every human order", argues Peter Berger, "is a community in the face of death."

The mythic, in a certain sense, is a literal response to such feelings. It may well use, and depend on, as C.G.Jung and Sigmund Freud argue, the particular structure and contents of the unconscious. For Jung the purpose of rite and dogma was clear; they were dams and walls to keep back the dangers of the unconscious. And for Freud the common symbolism of myth and dreams was evidence of the workings of this, perhaps even mythic level of the psyche. Geza Roheim uses his Freudianism also to see in myth and folktale a response to archaic feelings of guilt and anxiety; "In the folktale we relate how we overcome the anxiety connected with the 'bad parents' and grew up; in myth we confess that only death can end the tragic ambivalence of
human nature. Eros triumphs in the folktale. Thanatos in the myth."

Indeed all those theories of the mythic which have emotion as their base perceive it as a response to some dark layer of man's existence, be it internalized, in the psyche, or externalized, in the natural world. For Mircea Eliade, as we have seen, myth is a response to the terror of history and to pain and suffering. Aspects of the world, beyond control, are made bearable and hence controllable through accounts which can only succeed in their consistency and persistence. The mythic is motivated by a desire to reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty of the raw world and to replace it in consciousness and in lived relations, by a structure of minimum viability which guarantees the integrity and reality of human existence. The fact that this was a symbolic structure, a mediation, an idealization, did not mean that it was false, as for example Jurgen Habermas seems to think. "In primitive stages of social development, the problems of survival - and thus man's experiences of contingency in dealing with outer nature - were so drastic that they had to be counterbalanced by the narrative production of an illusion of order, as can be clearly seen in the content of myth." That illusion is such only because these creations cannot eradicate the uncertainty or contingency of the world which prompted them; but insofar as they generate the conditions for a more or less ordered and secure world then they are as close to the real as human beings will ever reach.

So the perception of the mythic as being logical, in a concrete, non-Aristotelian sense, is one which itself is persuasive. Myth is, in part, a response to and a necessary resolution of the arbitrary; it cannot just produce it. It must combine, therefore, the emotional and the rational, and both are needed to explain it, just as both are needed to explain man. The logic is concrete, it uses the natural
world, because as Lévy-Bruhl argues, the mythic imagination is at
one with the world. Economic and social contiguity with nature
is both reproduced and supported by narrative contiguity.

We meet arguments which are ultimately to do with motivation in the
context of television research, both in the notion of escape and in
the concept of uses and gratifications; perjorative/anti-perjorative
functions respectively. As Elihu Katz and David Foulkes suggest
this research follows the question "what do people do with the media",
and the answer is something like this: "...everyday roles in modern
society give rise to tension or drives (stemming from alienation or
felt deprivation) which lead one to high exposure to mass media with
its characteristic context... and its characteristic content (e.g.
fantasy) from which via psychological processes such as identification
one can obtain compensatory gratification and, perhaps, an unanticipated
consequence, "narcotization" of other role obligations." Here media
of mass communication, though not granted exclusively dysfunctional
roles, nevertheless are studied in terms of the drives which make
fantasy both necessary and appropriate.

4. Function "The function of myth, in short, is to stabilize the
existing regime, to afford infallible precedents for practice and
procedure, and to place on an unassailable foundation the general rule
of conduct, traditional institutions and the sentiments controlling social
behaviour and religious belief... myth is not aetiological but fidejussive.
Its business is not to satisfy curiosity but to confirm the faith. It
is here to cater, not for the speculative man with his 'why', but for
the practical man with his 'how' if not then?"
Arguments about function, which are or should be social, inevitably grow out of assumptions about motivation. The mythic therefore is seen as a containment of the irrational, a justification of what passes for the rational, a protection against the unknown and the different. The mythic connection with violence has often been noted. Its continual restatement of origin; its denial of empirical time and the reinstatement of real time is perceived as an aspect of its function as a legitimator of the present social order, as well as a guarantee of its future.

The mythic reinforces status. It is a guide to action. It is none of these things. The problem of function centres on the tendency for those who consider it, Malinowski perhaps apart, to make the mythic coextensive with society, and to assume that the accounts it gives of the world are faithful to the work of lived relations and directly bear upon them. The great joy of the notion of latent function is that even when this homology is not apparent, the argument can still stand.

Equally absurd, of course, is the totalitarian theory of falsehood, equally functional, but premised on the assumption that the mythic not only holds back the natural threat but also the social threat to the existing social structure. In this sense myth is an uncritical response to a critical situation; "Myth originates whenever thought and imagination are employed uncritically or deliberately used to promote social delusion."¹⁶¹

This is, of course, an increasingly common theme, particularly in much criticism of contemporary culture. But just as much as myth cannot be treated as the be all and end all of social existence, no more can it be perceived as a permanent aberration. The Mythic, of course, is functional, but not because it is ubiquitous. On the
other hand, of course, it is often out of accord with the interests of sections of society who would have most to gain by the transformation of that society and a replacement of one myth by another.

Indeed mythic forms can be used precisely and paradoxically to aid this transformation as James L. Peacock has pointed out in his discussion of the **Ludruk**, the classic drama of Indonesia. The incorporation of new values and content into the old forms serves, in this case, a number of purposes: first of all it helps both actors and spectators to understand modernization in terms of vivid and meaningful symbolic classifications; secondly it seduces the participants into empathy with modes of **social action** involved in the modernization process; and finally it involves the participants aesthetically, but equally in favour of the changes being undertaken in their society.

Here the mythic is much more than just a 'symbolic statement about the social order', but involves the more or less selfconscious manipulation of traditional forms to involve those who have accepted those forms to accept, in turn, social change. Whether this is functional or not will depend on how one values those changes and indeed how one measures the success of such cultural events in contributing towards them. One cannot, easily or at all, move from descriptions about what a myth contains to assumptions about action; nor can we posit a one to one correlation between action and communication. Theories of reflection, as much as theories of function, mask the very real difficulty and complexity of such relations.

Nevertheless of all aspects of culture, the mythic will be the closest to a heartland of belief, thought and action. Prompted, as I have argued by a desire for order and control, it attempts, in thought
and deed, to generate just that. But it may be, and increasingly is, only one solution to that need and to the problems associated with it.

Once again arguments about the function of television parrot those about myth; often critical, though not always so, they stress the role television, cap in hand, plays to the institutions of the state and of society as a whole. This seems at least as far as a centralised medium of mass communication is concerned, unremarkable, though we may not like the way of it. But it is, I think, in the final analysis, also misconceived. The relationship between television and society, just as the relationship between myth and society, is not simply functional, if by that we mean essentially and necessarily preservative of existing institutions. Indeed, whatever notion of function we use, substantial questions about the nature of television remain. This is an issue to which I shall return in the final section of the thesis.

5. Framing The response which the mythic offers to these cultural problems is therefore particular. I have already suggested that although myths are not necessarily or exclusively sacred tales, they nevertheless constitute the marked element in culture. By that I mean that the mythic is a form of expression that is both different from and at the same time similar to, as well as distant from and close to, the world of every day experience. The move from that world to the world of the mythic involves a transformation, the crossing of a boundary, the entering of, in Victor Turner's terminology, a liminal dimension. Its sacred nature is not therefore objectively given by the presence of gods or the exclusive preoccupation with things cosmic, but solely in that movement from one clearly defined domain to another.

The passage is both illuminating and modifying of normal experience. And this is so because in the mythic, both in myth and in ritual, it is the patterning of experience that is made manifest; the coherence of experience becomes explicit. As I pointed out in the first, introductory, chapter, the mythic consists in a framed reality. The notion of a frame surrounding the work of art and marking it off from an otherwise undifferentiated background, is
relatively modern. As Meyer Schapiro writes: "Apparently it was
late in the second millennium B.C. (if even then) before one thought of a
continuous isolating frame around an image: a homogenous enclosure like
a city wall.... The frame belongs to...the space of the observer rather
than of the illusory, three dimensional world disclosed within and behind.
It is a finding and focussing device placed between the observer and the
image." The frame, in its metaphorical sense - in television of course
it is both - is just this finding and focussing device, and there are
at least three dimensions to the frame of the mythic.

First of all we can identify the social aspect. The frame here is a spatial
and temporal boundary which separates the mundane from the sacred. Those
who enter this sacred time and space are entering an emotionally toxic
world of familiarity and risk, in which they are expected to suspend disbelief
and accept for the time being a heightened set of categorical imperatives.

On entering they are faced with a form of communication with displaces their
own, which denies or alters their normal perceptions of space and time. The
narrative of a myth or drama contracts or expands temporal sequences at will.
As Mircea Eliade among others notes, mythic time is forever present. Space
too is transformed; it is always here. In the metaphor and metonymy of
sympathetic magic distances are transcended. In the mythic, cause too is
transcendent. Motivation, empirical connection - both are relegated to the
search for perfection and equilibrium of an ordered play. "To be perfect an
ending must be perfectly prepared for." And 'play', here, is play in both
its senses, that of drama and that of voluntary, superfluous, enjoyment in
Jan Huizinga's sense. Play is distinct from ordinary life - and like ritual
that distinction is marked by time and by place and by a distinct order.
"Inside the playground an absolute and peculiar order reigns. Here we come
across another, very positive feature of play: it creates order, is order.
Into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life it brings a
temporary, a limited perfection. Play demands order absolute and
supreme." We are to be reminded also that the word stage has a
temporal, spatial and active reference.

The third sense of frame refers to the content of the mythic; Suzanne Langer's "strongest light and deepest darkness".\(^{173}\)

The content itself is marked off and distinct, though not entirely, for the simultaneity of distance and proximity must be maintained and articulated. The content is the product on the one hand of a synesthesia; the mythic is a communication in which differences of perspective, of emotion, of sensibility are united into a plurivocal text.\(^{174}\) And on the other it speaks of balance between its elements and between their referents beyond the myth; in this sense the content of the myth speaks of the particular ambition... "to reach the threshold, undoubtedly the most profitable to human societies, of a just equilibrium between their unity and their diversity; and to maintain an equal balance between communication, favouring reciprocal illuminations - and absence of communication, also beneficial - since the fragile flowers of difference need half-light in order to exist."\(^{175}\)

Television is the frame par excellence of our culture; it shares with ritual as Mary Douglas points out\(^{176}\) the capacity to redirect and to redraft perception and experience; not for ever certainly, but for the duration. Within and through the frame, perhaps, Henri Bergson's famous notion of 'growing old together' (La durée) is for the time being annulled.\(^{177}\)

6. Mediation I prefer the notion of mediation to that of transformation, because while it makes obvious sense to recognize the mythic is often a world of topsy-turvydom,\(^{178}\) it need not be, and I want to stress now, and in the next section that the mythic is essentially a bridge between man in his everyday existence and both the natural and supernatural world which bounds that existence. "Mythological thought operates within the continuity between the human world and the world
of the gods. Theological thought serves to mediate between the two worlds, precisely because their original continuity now appears broken." Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann echo Levy-Bruhl's recognition that myths themselves are secondary, the product of a self-consciousness which is absent in mythical thought itself. The mythic, of which I have been talking, is much closer to the theological of Berger and Luckmann.

In a definition of the mythic which looks to Mircea Eliade and to Arnold Van Gennep, Victor Turner stresses its mediatory position and function. The mythic is the domain of the liminal, which paradoxically from our point of view stresses the ambiguous and the fluid, rather than their resolution. "The attributes of liminality and of liminal personae (threshold people) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and those persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, concentration, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions." Myths are liminal phenomena: "...they are felt to be high or deep mysteries which put the initiand temporarily into close rapport with the primary or primordial generative powers of the cosmos, threats of which transcend rather than transgress the norms of human secular society. In myth is a limitless freedom, and symbolic freedom of action which is denied to the norm bound incumbent of a status in a social structure. Liminality is pure potency."
Mediation is the dynamic within the mythic. We need not accept entirely Turner's characterisation for it denies, though his work often seems to incorporate, the angular logic of an intellectualist perception of myth; and this seems necessary both in terms of a definition of the myth and also in order for us to understand the mythology of others. With the notion of mediation, however, this discussion of myth and the mythic comes full circle. Whether conceived in terms of symbolic function or totemic operator, or in terms of the liminality of Mircea Eliade and Victor Turner, the mythic is the site where chaos and order, past, future and present, reason and emotion meet, if only momentarily. It is the nature of this meeting, one which unites television with the mythic as I have presented it, which I want to consider in the next and final section of this chapter.

VI

In order to do this effectively I want to return to some considerations which I presented in the first chapter, and in particular to the notion of commonsense. "Commonsense knowledge is the knowledge I share with others in the normal, self-evident matrices of everyday life." And for Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and indeed for Alfred Schutz, the commonsense world is the taken for granted, typical world of you or I in our daily existence. We are wide awake in it, It is ordered and objective. It is the domain of the 'here' of my body and the 'now' of my present. "What is 'here and now' presented to us in everyday life is the realismum of my consciousness." It is intersubjective; I share it with others. It is unproblematic until further notice, that is until, quite tautologically, it becomes problematic. Commonsense is bounded by finite worlds of meaning.
I am excluded from these by my involvement in the everyday world and in order to make them accessible to me as a member, I have to translate their particularities into my own. Everyday language does this for me. "Typically, therefore, I distort the reality of the latter as soon as I begin to use the common language in interpreting them, that is I 'translate' the non-everyday experience back into the paramount reality of everyday life." Commonsense is sedimentary; it contains within it the accumulated experiences of man faced with similar problems at different times.

Perhaps, as hard as it is for a member of the everyday world to understand the reality of finite worlds surrounding him the reverse is also true. Specialized, and by that I mean in this context at least, sociological, conceptions of the commonsense world are both infrequent and apparently ill-informed. Berger and Luckmann, for all their sensitivity, produce an unevenly eclectic account of an abstract social process. Elsewhere considerations of commonsense have been judgemental. And clearly within any self-conscious Marxism the view of the unselfconscious man in the street is likely to be condemnatory.

Among these, perhaps the most interesting is the account given of commonsense by Antonio Gramsci in The Prison Notebooks. Gramsci makes a distinction between commonsense and good sense, the former is "not rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life." The latter, 'good sense', is the particularly philosophical element of commonsense, practical, empirical, and which deserves to be 'made more unitary and coherent'.

"Commonsense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the 'folklore' of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is. At those times in history when a homogeneous social group is brought into being, there comes into being also, in opposition to commonsense, a homogeneous - in other words coherent and systematic - philosophy."

Commonsense, for Gramsci, therefore, has a certain coherence, as well as its fragmentary quality; it is material because it is grounded in the experience of social existence; it contains within it residues of previously held beliefs and opinions, and indeed the relationship between religion and commonsense is a close one. Philosophy, an intellectual form of thought, supercedes both.

Commonsense and folklore are coexistent: "Commonsense creates the folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time."

These considerations, despite the different valuation, accord very well with the implicit model of commonsense I outlined in the first chapter, in which commonsense was conceived as a form of knowledge grounded in the everyday world and bounded by other forms of knowledge and non-knowledge with which it has to maintain a relationship. Traditionally that relationship has been articulated through the mythic; contemporarily it is articulated through the media of mass communication, pre-eminently television. A Venn diagram might make this more clear:
Commonsense here is core knowledge. Grounded in man's material experience of the everyday it defines and is the product of the everyday's typicality. With commonsense, we get through or get by, admittedly in a parochial way, but with a parochiality which is universal, as are the problems with which it has to deal. Commonsense is taken for granted, but it need not be unconscious, and of course its consciousness may not coincide with that of critical reason, but that is another matter. Indeed the judgements about it, mirror those judgements against primitive thought of which, in its ethnocentrism, the nineteenth century was so fond. It is none the less logical and adequate for its task. Commonsense is bounded, one might even say surrounded, by aspects of human existence which are not intrinsically available to it, and with whose juxtaposition life becomes uncertain and ambiguous. On the one hand there is the domain of what we might call non-knowledge:
the natural for the primitive, the unknowable, the unpredictable, the uncontrollable. On the other hand there are the various and often competing specialist accounts of the world, as often as not of that world of the unknowable which itself is unknown, unpredictable and uncontrollable from the point of view of commonsense. Where these three zones overlap we find the domain of the mythic. The mythic bridges, mediates and translates the unknown and the unknowable into terms which are accessible and forms which are familiar. For Clifford Geertz this boundary is essential to an understanding of the cultural significance of ritual: "A man, even large groups of men, may be aesthetically insensitive, religiously unconcerned and inequipped to pursue full scientific analysis, but he cannot be completely lacking in commonsense and survive. The dispositions which religious rituals induce, then, have their most important impact - from a human point of view - outside the boundaries of ritual itself as they reflect back to colour the individual's conception of the established world of bare fact." The mythic frames the world of commonsense and it concentrates the mind wonderfully.

Although the distinction is a relative rather than an absolute one, it is clear that the two dimensions of the mythic, the cognitive and effective, each have their place in this model. The mythic boundary between the particular forms of knowledge and commonsense is essentially a cognitive one; reason is the transformer; the appeal is to the intellect. And equally the mythic boundary between non-knowledge (the world of nature) and commonsense is essentially an affective one; emotion is the transformer and the appeal is to feeling.

Indeed the various forms of television programmes, the news, the documentary, the drama and the entertainment show can be placed within this model and
distinguished, quite simply, through it. Each form articulates its own mix of familiarity and novelty and each mediates in a different mode across the divide into the world of commonsense. Most distinct are the documentary and the entertainment show, the former predominantly appealing to the intellect, the latter to the emotions. Drama and news are more equivocal forms and more complex, though I suggest there is more reason than emotion in the news, while the reverse is true of drama - there is more emotion than reason.

The drama, with which I shall be concerned in this thesis is to be clearly demarcated, at least in the eyes of the producers, from the documentary; the audience is to know that drama is not real. Freed, therefore, from the constraints of direct portrayal, but nevertheless constrained by memory and ephemerality, (a drama is not memorable because it is true), a television drama is narrative form par excellence. In serial or soap box as well as in the isolated play, but particularly in the former, the novelty of character and style is firmly locked into the familiarity of plot. Here the myth is in the logic of expression, the excitement of event and the control of expectation. Its content is the content of direct experience, though heightened, transformed, given prestige; violence, love and sex, the family, work, life and death. Emotion rules reason. As I have suggested drama is to be distinguished most clearly from documentary; television knows it: "...it is essential that the nature and purpose of every programme should be made clear to everybody. Not only must the audience know that they are watching a documentary as opposed to a play; they must know that it is a documentary which sets out to do this or that, and to do it from certain standpoints only... And since the audience must
be in no doubt about such things, this must usually be said more than once.

Documentary is not reality of course; it is a translation of reality and as often as not the esoteric or presumed esoteric reality of others. But documentary treats of particular knowledge and particular worlds - the scientific, aesthetic or political - and it does so in an attempt to broaden horizons of everyday culture. It is an equivocal task - for the boundary remains both despite and because of such attempts; the documentary is the site of intellectual liminality, where the categories of, for example, science, are blurred and those of the everyday extended, and where the result is a prestige illusion of understanding. This is myth also; because the illusion is inevitable and necessary, just as in drama the solutions it offers are impossible. Narrative though in different degrees, and probably in different ways, underlines both.

I have less to say about the news and the light entertainment show. The news with its formulae and its persistence is much studied though not always in a particularly enlightening way; it consists in fragments of narrative and its fragmentary quality masks its forms. Here above all is revealed television's engine of transformation as the novelty of origin, of distance, of size and of conflict are made amenable and manageable in time (News at Ten) and space (Here is the News). News is drama reversed; the chronology of narrative is shattered and the categorial logic of the mythic system assumes dominance. News is reason over emotion.

The show is pure emotion, pure entertainment and the constraints of song, dance and the joke reach out to the edge of ritual, for our participation is necessarily intense but impotent. The mystery, however, is intense, and it is perhaps in the show, above all, that television creates its own canon of stars and idols. The content of the show is itself close and familiar; indeed in light entertainment nothing is new except its style. This very familiarity demands therefore its heroes, and its
extravagance: what is near is pushed away; in the news what is far away is brought home.

**Figure II**

*Television and Myth: the forms*

- **Documentary** (Reason)
- **Drama** (Emotion/Reason)
- **News** (Reason/Emotion)
- **Entertainment** (Emotion)

Television therefore can be understood as a mythic phenomenon essentially because through it we of the profane world have access to something which, in its unmediated state, and by its very distance, is sacred. We may not, as individuals, be particularly anxious about problems of science or aesthetics on the one hand, or of life, death and identity on the other, but our culture, like any other, is. Television betrays the other, while at the same time preserving it. Its particular intensity is that of a synaesthetic experience of sight, sound and touch; it defines the location, where in drama or in documentary, our own world is open to the reassuring challenge of magic and enchantment. And indeed that experience is a communal one; we are participants and not just patients; and this is so through our participation in the entirety of television's culture, through newspapers, magazines, and in conversation. The mythic world of television demands a response which it itself conditions and constrains. It does not exist without us.
This characterisation is, in a sense, overly poetic. Therefore the remainder of the thesis, in exploring the structures of drama, seeks to give it some substance. More work is needed before a full understanding of the other forms of television will be reached. But it is hoped this framework will be useful. Television, I suggest, should be given a significance which transcends the immediate and which despite its appearance, locks its participants in a communication which preserves, integrates, and legitimises, not only our own society, but the continuity of human, cultural existence. In this sense it is mythic.

2. see for example Bronislaw Malinowski. Magic, Science and Religion. London. 1974. p. 96: "Even a superficial survey of the literature would reveal that there is no monotony to complain of as regards the variety of opinion or the acrimony of polemics." and also G.S. Kirk. Myth. Its Meaning and Function. Cambridge. 1970. esp. 28. I have found G.S. Kirk's study to be especially valuable in approaching and understanding much of the literature on myth. Many of the arguments which follow in this chapter have been informed by my understanding of his work.


5. G.S. Kirk, op. cit. 28.


10. idem, The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 10.


15. G.S. Kirk, op. cit. 265.


17. ibid. 8, 75.

18. ibid. 89, 104, 106, 143.

19. ibid. 104.

20. ibid. (15)


25. Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man. op. cit; Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. op. cit.


28. How Natives Think. op. cit. 43.


30. How Natives Think. op. cit. 76-77.

31. ibid. 78.


33. ibid. (p. 469)

34. ibid. p. 445.


36. How Natives Think. op. cit. p. 78: "It is not anti-logical, it is not alogical either. By designating it 'prelogical', I merely wish to state that it does not bind itself down, as our thought does, to avoiding contradictions. It obeys the law of participation first and foremost. Thus oriented it does not expressly delight in what is contradictory (which would make it merely absurd in our eyes), but neither does it take pains to avoid it. It is often wholly indifferent to it, and that makes it so hard to follow." see also Primitive Mentality. op. cit. 444.

37. How Natives Think. op. cit. 368.

38. ibid. 366.

39. ibid. 370. cf. Jean Cazeneuve. op. cit. 18. "It can happen certainly, that myths help to explain what is, but such is not their primary function. They reflect the supernatural and they have a value which is at one and the same time transcendent and life-giving."

40. How Natives Think. op. cit. 371.

41. ibid. 373.

42. La Mentalité Primitive. op. cit. 26.

43. The Notebooks on Primitive Mentality. op. cit. 99 ff.
44. ibid. 104.
45. ibid. 57.
46. Mircea Eliade. Myth and Reality. op. cit. 5.
47. cf. G.S. Kirk op. cit. 27.
48. ibid. 98 ff.
49. The Myth of the Eternal Return. op. cit. 18-20.
50. Images and Symbols. op. cit. 37-40.
51. The Myth of the Eternal Return. op. cit. 4-20.
52. ibid. 85.
54. ibid. 141.
55. The Myth of the Eternal Return. op. cit. 98.
56. Images and Symbols. op. cit. 18: "...the life of modern man is swarming with half-forgotten myths, decaying hierophanies and secularised symbols. The progressive de-sacralisation of modern man has altered the content of his spiritual life without breaking the matrices of his imagination; a quantity of mythological litter still lingers in the ill-controlled zones of the mind." see also Myths, Dreams and Mysteries. op. cit. Ch. 1; Myth and Reality. op. cit. 181-193 (Reprinted in Diogenes 41. 1963, as Survivals and Camouflage of Myth.)
60. Roger Silverstone. Ernst Cassirer and Claude Lévi-Strauss. op. cit.
63. Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, Primitive Classification. London. 1963; for a discussion of the relationship between Durkheim and Mauss and Lévi-Strauss see C.R. Badcock, op. cit.
64. Totemism. op. cit. p. 140.
65. In a sense the present task is impossible without the future one, for myth, as we shall see, is defined operationally and an understanding of in what that operation consists depends principally on consideration of his method.
66. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 10.
67. ibid. p. 18; (cf. L'homme nu op. cit.)

68. ibid. p. 16.


72. op. cit. 209.

73. The Story of Asdiwal. op. cit.; The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. centres around the stories of a dribbling frog.


75. The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. 396.

76. ibid. 468.

77. From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 473.


81. op. cit.


give their minds to master the general principles of savage religion will never again think it ridiculous, or the knowledge of it superfluous, to the rest of mankind. Far from its beliefs and practices being a rubbish-heap of miscellaneous folly, they are consistent and logical in so high a degree as to begin, as soon as even roughly classified, to display the principle of their formation and development, and these principles prove to be essentially rational, though working in a mental condition of intense and inveterate ignorance.

84. Sir James Frazer, op. cit. p. 49: "The fatal flaw of magic lies not in its general assumption of a sequence of events determined by law, but in its total misconception of the nature of the particular laws which govern that sequence. If we analyse (the) various codes of sympathetic magic...we shall find...that they are all mistaken applications of one or other of two great fundamental laws of thought, namely, the association of ideas by similarity and the association of ideas by contiguity in space or time...The principles of association are excellent in themselves, and indeed absolutely essential to the working of the human mind. Legitimately applied they yield science; illegitimately applied they yield magic, the bastard sister of science." For a contemporary reflection on this hypothesis see Edmund Leach. Culture and Communication. Cambridge. 1976.

85. Bronislaw Malinowski, op. cit. 139-140.
86. ibid. 107-8
87. ibid. 84.
88. ibid. 96-7.
89. ibid. 101.
90. ibid. 146.
91. op. cit.
93. Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. op. cit. p. 34.


103. Edmund Leach, I.E.S.S. op. cit.


106. Terence Turner, Oedipus: Time and Structure in Narrative Form. in R.F. Spencer (Ed.), Forms of Symbolic Action. Proceedings of the 1969 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society. Seattle. 126-68: "Symbolic narratives, in short, represent cultural models for coping with typical patterns of subjective stress involved in the orientation of individuals to problematic situations in their social and cultural orders. They are, in a sense, meta-categories dealing with the reintegration of divergent and often traumatic individual experience with the narrative order of categories. The specific vehicle of this underlying message is the narrative itself, as a syntactic framework for the synthesis of time or diachrony (manifested as a combination of structural disorder and contradiction with the experience of individual protagonists) and synchrony (manifested in the underlying formulae which constrain the flux of the event in the narrative structure of social categories).

107. Clifford Geertz, Ideology as a Cultural System. in idem., The Interpretation of Cultures. op. cit. 87-125.


111. Culture and Communication. op. cit. passim; cf. also Eleazor Meletinsky, From Myth to Folktale. Diogenes. 99 Fall 1977. 103-124 and below.

113. ibid. p. 11.

114. ibid. p. 12.

115. ibid. p. 36.


122. The Development of Folktales and Myths, in op. cit. p. 405.

123. op. cit. p. 173.


126. ibid. p. 40.


131. op. cit.

132. From Myth to Folktale. op. cit.

134. From Myth to Folktale. op. cit. p. 111; cf. Géza Roheim, Myth and Folklore. American Imago. Vol. 2. 1941. 256-279: "In a myth the actions are mostly divine and sometimes human. In a folktale the dramatis personae are mostly human and especially the hero is human frequently with supernatural beings as his opponents. In myth we have a definite locality; in a folktale the actions are nameless, the scene is just anywhere. A myth is part of a creed; it is believed by the narrator. The folktale is purely fiction and not intended to be anything else....A folktale is a narrative with a happy end, a myth is a tragedy; a god must die before he can be divine."

135. From Myth to Folktale. op. cit. p. 112-3.


138. see footnote 156, Chapter 2 above.

139. The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. (p. 130)

140. Roman Jakobson. On Russian Fairytales. op. cit. p. 192; "The folktale is a typical collective property. The socialised sections of mental culture, for instance language or folktale, are subject to much stricter and more uniform laws than fields in which individual creation prevails." cf. Marcel Mauss op. cit. above.

141. G.S. Kirk. op. cit. 34.

142. Folktales are conservative: cf. Umberto Eco. The Narrative Structure in Fleming. op. cit. p. 61: "...any fable is conservative; it is the static direct dogmatic conservatism of fairy tales and myth which transmit as elementary wisdom contracted and communicated by a simple play of light and shade, and they transmit it by indestructible images which do not permit critical distinction."; for a discussion of these issues see Chapter 7 below, and Salvador Giner and Roger Silverstone, Innovation, Domination and Communion. Mimeo. 1979.


151. op. cit. passim. but especially *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. op. cit. Ch. 3.


158. Max Gluckman, op. cit.

159. e.g. Will Wright, *Sixguns and Society*. op. cit. 187.

160. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. op. cit. 448;
"What sets the cockfight apart from the ordinary course of life, lifts it from the realm of everyday practical affairs, and surrounds it with an aura of estranged importance is not, as functionalist sociology would have it, that it reinforces status distinctions (such reinforcement is hardly necessary in a society where every act proclaims them), but that it provides a metasocial commentary upon the whole matter of assorting human beings into fixed hierarchical ranks and then organising the major part of collective existence around that assortment. Its function, if you want to call it that, is interpretive; it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves."


163. Edmund Leach, Political Systems of Highland Burma. op. cit. p. 14. :

164. for a totally different perspective, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment. op. cit.


172. Homo Ludens. op. cit. p. 29.


176. see footnote 165 above, and see also Stuart Hall, The 'Structured Communication' of Events. Birmingham. 1973 (mimeo).


178. The world of the mythic has, as Lévi-Strauss points out, no necessary relationship of reflection with the lived in world; cf. The Story of Asdiwal op. cit.; and see also Edmune Leach, Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time op. cit.; Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe. London. 1978. esp. Chapter 7.
179. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality. Harmondsworth. 1967. 129 cf. Kenneth Burke. op. cit. p. 379: "In sum, just as the word is said by theologians to be a mediatory principle between this world and the supernatural, might words be a mediatory principle between ourselves and nature."

180. The Ritual Process. op. cit. 81.


182. A parallel which I note in, Cassirer and Lévi-Strauss: Two Approaches to the Study of Myth. op. cit. 314.

183. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, op. cit. 37.

184. ibid. p. 34.

185. ibid. p. 40.

186. see, for example, the comments of Peter Hamilton, Knowledge and Social Structure. London. 1974. Chapter 9.


189. ibid. p. 325.

190. ibid. p. 328.

191. ibid. p. 419.

192. ibid. p. 420.

193. ibid. p. 326. fn. 5.

194. see footnote 183 above.


196. see footnote 198 below.


199. Philip Elliott, The Making of a Television Series, op. cit.;
Dai Vaughan, Documentary Usage. London. 1976; James D. Halloran,
Philip Elliott, Graham Murdock, Demonstrations and Communication.
op. cit.; Michael Tracey, Yesterday's Men - a case study in
political communication, in James Curran et al. Mass Communication
and Society. op. cit.

200. A substantial number of recent studies here, each with their own
bibliographies: Glasgow Media Group, Bad News. op. cit.;
David Altheide, Creating Reality. op. cit.; Edwin Diamond, The
Tin Kazoo. Cambridge, Mass. 1975; Stanley Cohen and Jock Young
(Eds.), The Manufacture of News. London. 1973; Philip Schlesinger,
Putting Reality Together. op. cit.; Richard Collins, Television
of Current Affairs Television. op. cit.; Peter Golding and Philip

201. Here I can refer to very little: see Richard Dyer, Light
Entertainment. London. 1973; British Film Institute, Football
Jones. Working Papers in Cultural Studies. 1971. 1. 53-64;
CHAPTER IV

On Narrative

Marshall McLuhan has argued that television must abandon the story line. "There simply is no time for the narrative form, borrowed from earlier print technology." McLuhan's understanding of narrative is, however, too literal.

The purpose of this, and the next two chapters, is to illustrate in what ways television can and does tell stories, and to discuss some of the implications of that facility. Indeed the process has already been begun in my discussion of the work of Christian Metz and in the demonstration of its usefulness for an analysis of the form of television's expression. Through such an analysis we can begin to understand how it is that television, and of course film, structures its texts in its particular way. This dimension of narrative is medium specific and of course says nothing about the content of the stories, though an understanding of it depends on a measure of that content. The problems associated with pushing this work further are legion and in particular they involve a minute examination of the image and its internal structure. Such work has begun elsewhere, though hesitantly, and it still seems unable to transcend problems both of translating image into words and of making those words seriously illuminating or the interpretation offered through them ultimately compelling.

For my purpose, such work is in any case preparatory, for my interest now and in the rest of the thesis is with the content of the narrative and with its form. The problems here are of a different order, though they are still enormous. They are not of course solved through the kind of formal and structural analysis which I offer here, but if it is recognised that such an analysis is itself the beginning, though in my view the correct beginning, then it should be clear, at the end of it all, what the problems are and perhaps even how they might best be approached.
So, if television tells stories, what are the stories that television tells? We can begin, as many others have done before, with the classic studies of Vladimir Propp.  

Vladimir Propp's study of Russian folktale took as its point of departure the literary theories of Veselovsky and his thematics, but it owed a much more direct debt to his formalist contemporaries, among whom the study of the texts, both poetic and narrative, as autonomous entities was the principal concern. Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eikhenbaum, and Roman Jakobson, among many others, defined for themselves a new field of poetics and attacked the study of the devices and structures within the poetic and novelistic texts with gusto, an enthusiasm fanned and encouraged in the few years immediately following the Russian Revolution and before the cold hand of Marxist criticism stifled their anti-sociological independence.

Formalism was directed towards making the study of literature and literariness scientific. Boris Eikhenbaum wrote in 1927: "What does characterise us is the endeavour to create an autonomous discipline of literary studies based on the specific properties of literary material," a discipline which claims autonomy for its object and an object defined not by its content but by its form, by its devices: "...the specificity of art is expressed not in the elements that go to make up a work but in the special way they are used. It involved, face-to-face with narrated texts, a distinction between plot (sjuzet) and story (fabula) and it was the former which demanded
their attention. The contrast with the previously genetically oriented literary history was clear enough.

"The genetic approach can elucidate only origin and nothing more, while for poetics the elucidation of literary function is vital. Precisely what the genetic point of view fails to reckon with is the device as a special kind of utilisation of material; it fails to reckon with the selection of material from communal culture, its transformation, its constructional role; it fails finally, to reckon with the fact that a detail of communal culture may disappear, and yet its literary function remains; it remains not as a mere relic but as a literary device, retaining its own meaning, even if totally unrelated to communal culture."15

The claim for the autonomy of the text and for its identification through the study of the devices that construct it involved necessarily a denial of any type of reduction, to the social or to the psychological.16 Neither the author's personality nor the social circumstances of his time were in any sense relevant to a science that claimed not books, but literature, not poems, but poetry, not stories, but narrative, as its object of study. At once, then, there was an explicit claim to generality. Formal units or devices abstracted inductively and justified theoretically had a viability beyond the specific texts in which they were originally located. Herein lay the claim to science and to an objectivity of analysis; "the main test was to establish the unity of any chosen structural device within the greatest possible diversity of material"17.
Vladimir Propp's analysis of the folk tales, Victor Erlich calls it "one of the most valid formalist contributions to the theory of fiction" lies easily in this tradition. And it is in his work that narrative as such, the structures that define how it is that a story can be told, gets its earliest systematic formulation. Propp was not, of course, blind to the implications of his study: "The scheme is a measuring unit for individual tales, just as cloth can be measured with a yardstick to determine its length, tales may be measured by the scheme and thereby defined. The application of a given scheme to various tales can also define the relationships of tales among themselves. We already foresee that the problem of kinship of tales, the problem of themes and variants, thanks to this, may receive a new solution".

The folk tale is, in Propp's view of it, doubly constrained; both by cultural reality outside it and by its internal structure. He concentrates his attention on the second and the result inductively reached, is a morphology: "...a description of the folk tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole." The primary units of the tale are its functions; "an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action," and they are few in number. The morphology is therefore the product of an *ex post facto* analysis and does not reflect or represent the act of creation or of reading with its concomitant uncertainty or risk; it is fundamentally a static analysis of an achieved and completed structure.

From an examination of the folk tales which he takes from the Afanasev collection he produces a morphology which consists of 31 basic functions and nine preparatory ones.
The preparatory functions are of uncertain status and they are not involved in the rigorous chronology of the main functions; they exist primarily to set the scene and there are no rules determining their necessary presence or absence. The 31 main functions, however, give the tale its unity, though even here, on the basis of his empirical study, there are alternative arrangements which lead Propp to hazard a four-fold subclassification of the tales before him. The actors, too, are subject to a simple classification and one which depends on their functional significance.

The reader is referred to Appendix 2 and of course to the subsequent discussion. In brief, an account of Propp's conception of the narrative of the folk (or fairy tale) would be the following:

The scene is set by the absence or death of significant members of a family, by the arrival of a villainous character or by various acts of deception, stupidity or disobedience. The story proper begins with either a villainy or the experience of a loss (lack) - in other words through the assertion of disequilibrium, which it is the purpose of the following action to remedy. The hero or searcher would then leave home and become involved in a series of adventures which tests him and which lead, perhaps with magical help, to a successful resolution; either he finds what he is looking for or triumphs over the villain. The triumph is marked; the hero has some evidence of it and he returns home though pursued. His arrival may be something of a shock, for he will not be recognised as the hero and will subsequently have to test his status against the claims of a false hero. Once this has been achieved and he has gained his full recognition, the hero can be rewarded with marriage or gifts. In any event the equilibrium has been established, the lack redeemed, the villainy resolved.
This formulation is, even in Propp's view of it, doubly limited. It is limited to the genre, the fairy tale which albeit being a misnomer, identifies a specific group of tales linked both by content in Afanásiev's classification and then subsequently by their form when Propp considers them. It is equally limited by what Propp acknowledges is the pre-Linnean level of the admittedly crude, analysis which he offers, but nevertheless necessary as a preliminary, above all as a preliminary to true scientific work; "it must be said that decomposition into components is, in general, extremely important for any science. We have seen that up to now there has been no means of doing this completely objectively for the tale. This is a first, highly important, conclusion".

Nevertheless despite this modesty, which is both substantive and methodological Propp has been criticised in a number of different ways. We need to be aware of these criticisms. They are of two kinds; the first centre on claims that Propp has misunderstood the nature of the folk tale and its narrative structure and the second that he has failed to see the implications or to fully develop the potential of his analysis.

Among the first, the most important, is that articulated perhaps centrally by Claude Bremond that Propp's monochronology betrays the dynamic richness of the folk tale and that it denies its complexity. In so doing it imposes a premature and illegitimate closure on the tale. The folk tale, even at its most basic is not a simple linear structure and any method for its analysis should, Bremond believes, be able to recognise that such narratives can be complex both chronologically - for example, they can present two plots simultaneously - and in terms of character - we should be able to recognise both divergent perspectives and different motivations within a narrative. The folk tale in Propp's hands becomes a static entity which overlooks the fact that a story is not predetermined but open
to a whole range of variations which are themselves the product of the narrator's freedom, however limited. A narrative, for Bremond, is a dynamic structure and analysis must preserve that dynamism in the identification of its risk, its choice, its uncertainty. What needs to be avoided most of all, and Propp fails to avoid it, is the reification of the text.\footnote{33}

These objections are pertinent; they must be seen as the necessary definition of some of the limits of what Propp has attempted, and indeed they give substance to Propp's self-acknowledged crudity. But they are themselves premised on assumptions which themselves are flawed and which lead in Bremond's own work on narrative to an analysis of the logic not of narrative as such but of action. What is missed by Bremond in his dereification of the text is precisely its coherence. Narrative does not consist in its potential, but in its completion. A story must end\footnote{34}, and it is not until its end that it becomes a story. The analysis of its elements is therefore dependent on a previous recognition of a story's integrity and on an understanding of its content, on the decisions that have already been taken. To suggest otherwise is a sleight of hand.

Claude Bremond, while correctly identifying the limits of Propp's work, nevertheless errs in denying narrative's own limits.

Underlying Claude Bremond's criticism, however, is the recognition which he shares with most of Propp's critics that formalism impoverishes its object. A whole range of questions - about motivation, about the place of the subject, about the different modes of narration and the place of the narrator, about the concern with character and with content - are avoided or relegated in Propp's analysis of the folk tale\footnote{35}. 
Indeed, Roland Barthes, in one of his more recent works, draws attention to what he calls the plurality of the text, a plurality that ultimately defies formal analysis. Barthes prefers to think of the infinity of structure, in a manner, perhaps despite himself, very akin to Claude Liévi-Strauss; "...for the plural text, there cannot be a narrative structure, a grammar, or a logic; thus if one or other of these are sometimes permitted to come forward; it is in proportion (giving the expression its full qualitative value) as we are dealing with incompletely plural texts, texts whose plural is more or less parsimonious." Even accepting this, it is of course the case that implicit in Propp's argument is the assumption that folktales are just such "incompletely plural texts" as indeed is my assumption that television is also.

The second set of criticisms develops from this argument about impoverishment but centres more on what Propp has not done rather than on what he has, but poorly. There are a number of dimensions to this: firstly that he excludes any notion of performance, of the dynamic in the presentation and reception of a spoken or sung narrative; secondly that it fails to integrate the text with its context and in particular with the culture that generates it and supports it; and thirdly and as a corollary of this latter point, that Propp's formalism is both too abstract, and insufficiently aware of the concrete logic underlying narrative and in particular mythic narratives. These are points made substantially by Claude Liévi-Strauss, and worked through in practice both by him and by A.J. Greimas. The remainder of this chapter is involved in a consideration of the substantive work of Liévi-Strauss and Greimas and therefore I would like at this stage only to discuss the debate, inevitably rather one-sided, between Propp and Liévi-Strauss.
"Unless the content is surreptitiously reintegrated into the form, the latter is condemned to remain at such a level of abstraction that it neither signifies anything any longer nor has any heuristic meaning. Formalism destroys its object. With Propp it results in the discovery that there exists in reality but one tale." 40

From form to structure. Claude Lévi-Strauss opposes Propp's diffidence with a conception of narrative which systematically moves beyond questions of morphology to take account of content, context and meaning. However the barracking is deceptive; as Lévi-Strauss recognizes and as Propp foresees, the divide between them is neither clear nor unambiguous.

In Lévi-Strauss's own characterization of it, Propp's analysis does not acknowledge that myth and folktales are metalinguistic entities not linguistic ones. In his concentration on the syntax or chronology of the tale he refuses to see that the elements from which it is constructed themselves signify: "Let us say, to clarify this thesis, that in a tale a "king" is not only a king and a "shepherdess" a shepherdess, but that these words and what they signify become tangible means of constructing an intelligible system formed by the oppositions: male/female (with regard to nature) and high/low (with regard to culture) as well as all possible permutations among the six terms." 43 Propp cannot incorporate the content into his system. It remains outside. It will be studied by the historian.

But for Lévi-Strauss, as I have suggested, it is precisely this incorporation which makes the analysis of narrated texts both possible and exciting. The texts themselves, and for Lévi-Strauss, these texts are typically/ideally mythical, are metalanguages, in which not only is the narrative chronology structured, but in which the entire content and not just what Propp chooses to call its attributes, is patterned and constrained by its active inclusion in the text.
and culture alike. Lévi-Strauss's view of the mythical texts and the way of their analysis is a more inclusive, less humble affair, and it is oriented to a desire to understand the texts and to do so by relating them to their context, and to treat the content and its system as a fundamental part of its structuring. Whereas Proppian formalism remains in his view at the level of the abstract and of the syntactic, and hence is ultimately sterile, Lévi-Strauss's own structuralism demands consideration of the concrete context in which the tales are constructed and told, a level of analysis which is essentially semantic and which will be able to recreate the richness of the texts.

"The study of any linguistic system requires the cooperation of the grammarian and the philologist. This means that in the matter of oral tradition the morphology is sterile unless direct or indirect ethnographic observation comes to render it fertile." 46

The analysis of the myth or folktale demands that all of it can be structured, that nothing in it can be relegated to the arbitrary. To suggest, however, that for Propp, the content is indeed arbitrary is misleading. Propp, as Eleazor Meletinsky notes, 47 had a clear sense of priorities. Consideration of content, the attributes of the tale, must take a logical and chronological second place. His consideration of this, at least in publication, gets no further than a list, 48 but he is quite aware of their significance, and that, potentially at least, the characters' attributes, initially listed under three heads (external appearance and nomenclature, particularities of introduction into the narrative, and dwelling place) can be analysed and be analysed in a way remarkably close to that subsequently undertaken by Lévi-Strauss.
Content therefore can be analysed and done so scientifically:

"To speak of the fact that the villain may be a dragon, a witch, an old hag, robbers, merchants, or an evil princess etc., or that the donor may be a witch, an old woman, a backyard-grandma, a forest-spirit, or a bear etc., is not worthwhile, because this would lead to the compiling of a catalogue. Such a catalogue is interesting only if it is presented from the standpoint of more general problems. These problems have been outlined; they are: the laws of transformations and the abstract concepts which are reflected in the basic forms of these attributes".

If, as I have suggested, the whole discussion of form and structure in the analysis of tales is overlain by the distinction between language and metalanguage, underlying it, and in a certain sense parallel with it, is the distinction, less easily drawn, between folktale and myth. That there is a distinction to be made is clear, not and I have discussed it already; that it can/be made unambiguously is equally clear. For Levi-Strauss, as we have seen, folktales are in every sense weaker than myths, though they are of a similar order; tales and myths lie on a continuum, both dealing in similar ways with similar material. The myths construct their oppositions through cosmology, metaphysics and nature; the folktales are more often local, social and moral. The structure itself differs. In the myths the pressures of logical coherence, religious orthodoxy and/the collectivity, as it were, guarantees a coherence which the folktale avoids. The tale is structured in an altogether freer manner.

If this is the case then why, asks Levi-Strauss, does Propp only concern himself, and concern himself rather naively in his view, with folktales and not myths? The simple answer, of course, and one that Levi-Strauss
obstinately refuses to recognize as legitimate, is that Propp is actually more interested in folktales. Instead he berates Propp for his ethnological ignorance, his misconception of the true relationship between folktale and myth, the former being a miniaturization of the latter, and his failure to recognize that far from being historically prior, myths and folktales actually coexist in many societies.

"The point is not to choose between tale and myth, but to understand that they are the two poles of a field that also includes all sorts of intermediate forms and that morphological analysis must be considered in the same way, if one does not want to leave out elements belonging, like the others, to one and the same system of transformations."\(^{52}\)

Lévi-Strauss is berating Propp for not being Lévi-Strauss, and in so doing seems to misconceive the distinct method and the distinct material to which Propp addresses himself. It seems intuitively correct to suggest that whereas the object of Propp's analysis, folktales, are chronologically or syntactically strong and possibly logically or semantically weak, the object of Lévi-Strauss's analysis, myths, are chronologically less strong and semantically far from weak. In part however this judgement is too intuitive; the method masks the content. But the intention is also different. Propp wishes to describe the tale, Lévi-Strauss to describe the system of tales. As Eleazor Meletinsky notes, Lévi-Strauss's analysis "... represents the analysis of the structure of mythical thinking, and not of mythical narration,"\(^{53}\) a comment echoed by Alan Dundes.\(^{54}\) Propp recognized the relation of folktales and myth, as Lévi-Strauss notes, but regarded the description of the tale as necessarily prior; he also recognized what generated the coherence of the folktale more than anything else was its narrative structure. As Meletinsky justly observes:

"Lévi-Strauss's idea of the possibility of interpreting individual functions as the result of a transformation of the same material is very interesting and fruitful. However,
it is better to make such an examination after the summary morphological analysis and not in place of it.⁵⁵

This seems reasonable. A Proppian formalist analysis need not, indeed does not, contradict what a structuralist might offer. The questions it asks, albeit limited, are different. In many cases they may be more appropriate. In this case, that of the analysis of television programmes, and in particular the analysis of drama programmes, these questions do seem to be appropriate. We can by virtue of the tools Propp provides, define the framework of the narrative and we can define in what the structure of a particular tale might consist. There is therefore a level of story-telling about which it is possible to be quite precise, and that is its chronology, the syntagmatic arrangement of its functional units. Such precision demands, as Propp and Christian Met acknowledge, little concern for the nature or structure of the wider culture. Such precision therefore is necessarily exclusive of a large part of the narration, its content, its meaning, which is told. The listing of functional units in the description of a narrative's morphology is necessarily a prolegomena to the work of understanding what and how the narrative signifies.

II

Any attempt to face the problems of a text's semanticity involves moving away from a close concern with its manifest structure, with its visible patterns, and a correlative movement away from a desire to preserve the text's integrity. Questions about a text's meaning necessarily involve leaving the particular, albeit temporarily, in order to establish the generality according to which that particular becomes possible. Structure replaces classification, logic chronology, and by and large, deduction replaces induction. The analysis of a
text, which might be a folktale or an individual myth, becomes the analysis of meaning, of language or of myth as such.

At one extreme, Propp's morphology being at the other, of this broad advance on narrative lies the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and it is an extremity defined by its attempt to generate for myth, a logic of sensible qualities, a logic of the concrete, a logic of culture.

The mythical texts with which he is concerned, manifest that logic but in their entirety not in their individuality. Lévi-Strauss is concerned with a system and its constitution and he is concerned to reveal its basic categories, and their interplay. The chronology of the narrative is reduced to an enigmatic formula, but one which has a logical coherence of thesis, antithesis, synthesis rather than a defined and precise sequence of elements.

Somewhere between, and the vagueness is deliberate, for the metaphor is not precise, lies the structural semantics of A. Julian Greimas, which, as this would imply, is concerned not with narratives as such and certainly not with folktales, nor indeed with myth or with culture, but with a theory of the construction of meaning which in its syntagmatics owes something to the morphology of Propp, and in its paradigmatics to the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Its model of language owes much to Ferdinand de Saussure and to Louis Hjelmslev.

For Greimas narrative is where the semantic action is, and the structures of narrative lie at the heart of a general theory of meaning.

It is in the movement through a text that its various elements, their interrelationship and above all their transformations become manifest. It is in the exploration of the structure of narrative, and in the definition of its grammar, that the semantics as well as the syntactics of language are explored. His analyses are uneven and often eccentric.
Indeed Jonathan Culler has argued that his claim for an adequate semantic theory, or even for a clearly defined move in that direction, is generally open to dispute. I am not here concerned with these claims, but to demonstrate in the acknowledgement of their limitation, in what ways Greimas' understanding and analysis of narrative aids our understanding of the way in which the television drama is patterned. Greimas moves away from the Proppian classificatory schema, but he quite does not leave the text in the way that Lévi-Strauss might do. At the same time his work takes the form of an analytical theory and in its advocacy of structures and in its exploration of canonic formulae the theory has a similar shape to that of Lévi-Strauss and in many ways is compatible with it. For my purpose then, the work of Greimas allows us to deepen an understanding of the nature of narrative and at the same time to direct attention to the ways in which we might formally approach it.

Central to Greimas' understanding of narrative is what he terms its anthropomorphic nature. By this he means that at a certain level, the level of superficial grammar, the narrative presents a logic which translates the abstract categories of contrariety, correlation contradiction and transformation in terms of subject, object and act. The act (faire) is to narrative what the verb is to the grammar of natural language, but also what the operation is within a logical system. There is an assumption, made by others also, that the construction of the sentence, and the construction of the narrative are structurally homologous. The act and the verb and the operation all act as pivots in the creation and in the transformation of meaning.
For Greimas indeed, the structures of narrative lie at the heart of a general theory of meaning:

"...on voit que l'élaboration d'une théorie de la narrativité qui justifierait et fonderait en droit d'analyse narrative comme un domaine de recherches methodologiquement autosuffisant, ne consiste pas seulement dans le perfectionnement et formalisation des modèles narratifs obtenus par des descriptions de plus en plus nombreuses et variées, ni dans une typologie de ces modèles qui les subsumerait tous, mais aussi, et surtout, dans l'installation des structures narratives, en tant qu'instance autonome à l'intérieur de l'économie générale, de la sémiotique, conçue comme science de la signification."65

The path from verb to act is extended in the detailed analysis of the structure of narrative to the functional significance of the test (l'épreuve). It is here, of course, that the Proppian model intrudes. For, like the verb and the generalized act, the test acts in the narrative as an agent of change; from the potential to the actual, from hope to success or failure, from lack to its remedy.66

"Si l'épreuve, comme nous avons essayé de la montrer par ailleurs, n'est que la manifestation superficielle, située sur le plan anthropomorphique, de la transformation de contenus profonds du récit, le narrateur, pour conduire les acteurs déjà institués vers l'épreuve, doit prévoir de quelle manière leur affrontement aura s'effectuer par produire la transformation finale souhaitée."67

It is here, in the test, that the particular balance of liberty and constraint which marks the progress of the narrative is defined,68 and it is here, in the test, that the particular temporality (chronologic) of the narrative manifests itself, overlaying and directing the categorial logic (which may be abstract or concrete).69

In order to understand this more fully we have to recognize that for Greimas, the anthropomorphic grammatical structure of the narrative expresses and, in a sense, operationalizes a more fundamental grammar and is itself manifested in a figurative discourse; it is given a content in which the act becomes an action. The reading of a narrative then becomes an operation which demands a simultaneous recognition
of three levels of ordering; the fundamental, the anthropomorphic (superficiel) and the manifest. The first, the fundamental, is an abstract logic, content free from the point of view of the text; the second, the anthropomorphic in a sense gives this abstract logic life by replacing categories by actors and operations by acts, but whose meaning is still logical and categorial as opposed to chronological, and it is still abstracted from the text; the third, the manifest, is the equivalent to Propp's morphology: a level of meaning which is textually specific, though rule governed. The last two, the superficial and the manifest are equivalent to the semic and the lexemic in Greimas' analysis of the elementary structure of meaning, the and the first, fundamental, is, in this sense, pre-semic. I shall return to this dimension of the analysis again.

I want now to consider how Greimas understands the nature of narrative and to show how this understanding is derived from his analysis of the work of Vladimir Propp, and also in a certain sense, overlaps with that of Claude Lévi-Strauss.

"Le déclenchement de la narration y serait représenté comme l'établissement d'une relation contractuelle conjonctive entre un destinataire et un destinataire-sujet, suivie d'un disjonction spatiale entre les deux actants. L'achèvement du récit serait marqué, au contraire, par un conjonction spatiale et un dernier transfert des valeurs, instituant un nouveau contrat par une nouvelle distribution de valeurs, aussi bien objectives que modales."

This summary definition illustrates the transformation which Greimas works on the Proppian schema, a transformation from an inventory to a model. It is an attempt, above all, to define the system underlying the presentation of a narrative and in so doing to identify the capacity of the narrative to generate meaning.
There are a number of dimensions to this transformation.

Firstly there is the incorporation into the theory of narrative of a per se/a semantic theory which depends both on a simple distinction of level, that between the sememe and the lexeme, and a distinction within the sememe between the nucleus and the classeme. In each basic unit of meaning (the sememe) Greimas distinguishes a core element, the nucleus, and a variable one, the classeme. In narrative this correlates the distinction between an act and its qualification, or contextualization. The nuclei are those functional acts, equivalent to those identified by Propp; the confrontations, deceptions, transformations, present in, and necessary to, any narrative; the classemes are those elements which place them and make them relate to each other; some will be geographical, some alimentary, some physical and so on.

However, Greimas finds Propp's thirtyone functions unwieldy. He suggests that Propp has failed to gather the full harvest of his insights and in particular that he has not recognized the interdependence and balance between the various functions which he identifies. Greimas' reformulation of them involves, it would seem, some sleight of hand, but the principle of them is clear enough. In the first instance, it involves a pairing of the initial eight categories of Propp. This leads to a formulation in which essentially interdiction (γ) is paired with violation (δ), reconnaissance (ζ) with information received (η), deceit (θ) with submission to deceit (η), and villainy (Α) with lack (α). More significantly each of these pairs identifies a particular dimension of the narrative, the threads of which in this situation are broken but which are retied as the narrative progresses. So the interdiction and violation announces the breaking of a contract; reconnaissance and information received
suggests the denial of information or knowledge (savoir) to the hero to the advantage of the villain, and deceit and submission to deceit lead to an equivalent denial of power or ability to act (pouvoir). Villainy and lack, preserve the active/passive dichotomy and de/in terms of a denial of an object which becomes therefore an object of desire, and is situated thus in the realm of wishing (vouloir).^77

Each of these dichotomies, in a redundant fashion, define the rupture with which the narrative opens, and underly the further rearrangement of Propp's categories (a rearrangement which Greimas acknowledges to be hardly more manageable than the original set).^78 It is both the fact of rupture and the dimensions of rupture that are most crucial. Greimas wishes to establish the essential balance in the narrative; a balance suggested in the notion of contract - broken, then mended - and in a conception of the narrative as a system of exchange. 79

What Greimas aims to show, then, in general terms, is how the narrative proceeds to remedy the various dimensions of rupture which have been initially stated. Propp's functions B and C therefore involve the hero in accepting the task; a new contract is potentially established. Greimas argues that the narrative, usually in the order suggested by Propp, an order which in Greimas' hands is essentially logical rather than chronological, demands that the hero first of all gains the necessary power, and for this he seeks and finds helpers or magical agents; he then confronts the villain and gains (or does not gain) the object of his desire, and finally that he must prove himself the true hero and thereby establish his authenticity. So power, desire and knowledge recover their integrity. Finally each narrative restates
the new contract and Propp's function $W$, the wedding, symbolizes that.

However Greimas' algebraic notation for the structure of the narrative exceeds and transcends Propp's model, and an attempt to make his categories comparable to those of Propp proves somewhat tortuous. In addition it ignores the importance that Propp attaches to the alternative models of the narrative structure. It suggests that the narrative of the folktale can be structured with certain of these crucial elements missing and still remain an 'authentic' tale. In Propp's formulation tales can manifest either the combat with the villain (HI), or the assignment of a difficult task (MN), but not, normally, both. Incidentally Propp's function $L$, the claims of the false hero finds no place in the Greimas's scheme, though it is implicit in the need for the hero to prove himself authentic.

Underlying these complaints, which are themselves fairly trivial, is an anxiety about the exact status of the model Greimas offers. By that I mean whether it is to apply to folktales or to narratives as a whole, and if to the latter - a more likely proposition - whether it is to be a minimal or a maximal definition. If narratives are to be defined in terms of their balance and coherence, then what would be the effect of the absence of any of the elements apparently needed to preserve that balance? Indeed, as some commentators have pointed out, there are many narratives, or apparent narratives, which do not manifest a structure as either Propp or Greimas suggests. Are they to be excluded? The advantage of the Proppian formulation in this regard is its inductive generalization: it acts as a summary before it becomes a prescription. The disadvantage of Greimas' formulation lies precisely in its prescription. The reason for introducing these comments now is that they relate substantially to
the claims, explicitly and implicitly made by Greimas, and by other
students of narrative that what they are studying is universal. 84
The key to universality of narrative lies, for Greimas, in the
fundamental formula which he suggests underlies it and indeed the
entire universe of the symbolic. That this remains to be established
goes without saying. This discussion of the work of Greimas then
leaves open the question of the range of its applicability. It seems
reasonable to suggest that empirical evidence will define precisely
its limits.

So far what has been presented is a model of the narrative's equilibrium
of contract ruptured and remedied, and of the points along the way
which define the various aspects of the contract. The narrative
balances in the communication of information (objet-message),
strength (objet- vigeur) and goods (objet-bien). 85

The dynamic in the narrative is provided by the test. Greimas identifies
three tests within the Proppian classification, and noting where Propp
has failed to recognize their symmetry and also failed to identify them
fully, represents them in terms of a qualifying (pouvoir), principal
(vouloir) and glorifying (savoir) test. 86 In his more detailed analysis
of the morphology of the test Greimas succeeds in showing that within
it the first and the second two elements are themselves balanced: the
hero is challenged, he accepts the challenge and is followed by combat
and success (or failure). The one unpaired element in the entire
narrative structure is the result of the test, its consequence, the
achievement or non-achievement of the object.

The balance in the narrative is therefore preserved even in the test,
until the last moment; it is in the achievement or failure, its
postponement or its neutralisation that the freedom of the narrative
consists and it is through this that narrative tips over, as it were, and moves on and forward towards/re-establishment of its equilibrium.

Two further dimensions of the structure of the narrative at the anthropomorphic level need to be considered; the first concerns the basic acting units, the second their movement from place to place. The first follows from Propp's alternative and parallel definition of the narrative of the folktale in terms of its roles. Propp lists seven, each of which dominates a sphere of action. They are the villain, the hero, the donor, the helper, the princess, the despatcher and the false hero.

In Greimas' formulation, and in part following Etienne Souriou, these seven become six and are presented in the form of a model; the actorial model;

Dispatcher → Object → Dispatched Person

Helper → Subject ← Opposer

"... ce modèle semble posséder, en raison de sa simplicité, et pour l'analyse des manifestations mythiques seulement, une certaine valeur operationnelle."

This is a reductive formula. Greimas intends that the characters in a narrative be understood in terms of a simple and exclusive structure. These acting units (actants) are therefore neither roles nor characters, but abstractions, logical from the point of view of the narrative's system, but necessary to it. Each actorial category can be filled by one character in a tale, or by many (there can be many helpers) and, conversely, one character can fulfil more than one of these acting units (a character can be both dispatcher and opposer).
Jonathan Culler has questioned the coherence of this model in terms of the different quality of involvement as between the dispatcher - dispatched, and the other four categories. A further comment might be added. It is precisely in the variety of the articulations of these units (figures) that a story or a genre will gain some unity and identity. The actorial structure is important because in it the two dimensions of a narrated text meet; on the one hand its chronology, the narrative proper, in Greimas' terms, on the other the discourse, the content or thematic structure. The actor in his action both advances the narrative, but does so in a particular way and with particular significance.

"La structure actorielle apparait dès lors comme une structure topologique; tant en relevant à la fois des structures narratives et des structures discursives, elle n'est que le lieu de leur manifestation, n'appartenant en propre ni à l'une ni à l'autre."

The final dimension of the narrative conceived in its anthropomorphism is provided by the movement of the hero from place to place. Greimas discusses this in the context of the chronological development of the narrative. Where the action takes place, at home or away, within society or beyond it, is important for his interpretation of the narrative, and in particular of that of the Russian folktale presented by Vladimir Propp. For here Greimas suggests the tales present a conflict between the individual and society, a conflict of freedom and constraint. The hero is free to act as long as he remains outside, away from society. But it is clear also that the movements of the hero (Propp's functions \^3, G, Pr/Ps, and \^4) are of a second order of significance within the structure of the narrative. Movement from place to place in a narrative is of a different order of significance than the contract, the lack and the test. Such movements are much more the property of the discourse or logic, than of the chronologic
they are contextual rather than actorial. I will give some illustration of this in chapter 6.

The final level of analysis/offered by Greimas in terms of what he calls the constitutional (canonic) model. Here is the base structure, the semiotic foundation to the narrative, indeed, as he believes, the foundation of all meaning. It has much in common with Lévi-Strauss's concern with the binary. In both cases what is presented is a logical structure. Above this primary semiotic level which defines "the fundamental mode of existence of an individual or a society, and subsequently, the conditions of existence as I have already suggested of semiotic objects," we find/two further levels, the first an anthropomorphic grammar, independent of the text, and the second the structures of manifestation embodied in its content and context.

The constitutional model is constructed on the opposition, at an abstract level, of contrariety and contradiction and it is presented, diagrammatically, in this way:

\[ S_1 \longleftrightarrow S_2 \]

\[ \bar{S}_1 \longleftrightarrow \bar{S}_2 \]

\[ \text{or } \frac{S_1}{\bar{S}_1} \sim \frac{S_2}{\bar{S}_2} \]

\( S_1 \) and \( S_2 \) are contraries of each other; \( S_1 \) and \( \bar{S}_1 \) and \( S_2 \) and \( \bar{S}_2 \) are contradictories. For example, to give \( S_1 \) the meaning 'life', and \( S_2 \) the meaning 'death', its contrary, \( \bar{S}_1 \) and \( \bar{S}_2 \) indicate the absence of life (non-life) and the absence of death (non-death) respectively. It is suggested, though Bremond notes, not without ambiguity, that \( \bar{S}_1 \) and \( S_2 \) and \( \bar{S}_2 \) and \( S_1 \) are related by implication; for example the situation of non-death implies life. It need not, of
of course, and in a footnote to the French original which is not reproduced in the translation, Greimas defines this as an unsolved problem of orientation.

The point, however, is the suggestion of the ubiquity and relevance of such a model, particularly in terms of its ability to define the essence of a text or a discourse. We have seen it underlying the relations of contract and test in Greimas' description of the superficial level of the narrative (its chronology). Here it is articulated in terms of the balancing of offer and acceptance, of lack and remedy in which positive and negative valencies are continually opposed. It is also present in the opposition of the actorial model, above all in terms of subject and object, helper and opposer, and indeed in an analysis presented in a later study of narrative, location, action and antagonism are intermingled in an attempt to show how the narrative moves through this logical structure of contrariety and contradiction, in its totality.

Indeed this is the very structure that Levi-Strauss himself identifies to be at the heart of mythic narration. Greimas and Francois Rastier are not unaware of precisely this.

"This new presentation allows one to see that what is first of all the structure permitting an account of the model of existence of the meaning, finds its application, as a constitutional model of the inverted contents, in very varied spheres: indeed, it is the model of myth propounded by Levi-Strauss, it is the form of the achronic articulation of the folktale, but it is also the model justifying a certain number of particular semantic universes (Bernanos, Mallarme, Destutt de Tracy). It is comforting for the semiotician to note that a deductive approach encounters models constructed empirically to account for the limited corpora." It may be comforting but it is by no means certain how we are to understand the precise significance of such a level of narrative.
There is a problem, as for example Claude Bremond notes, of reducing the essential chronology of narrative to a static abstraction, and this is essentially a problem of seeing the narrative in terms of its dependence on, its operationalisation of, a series of logical categories which are not specific to it. There is no certain reason why this should be outlawed, as Bremond would but wish, on the other hand, and equally, there is no certainty that all narratives are so reducible. However as I have already said Bremond's model of the narrative denies in an almost a priori fashion the suggestion of a reduction of what is fundamentally a chronological structure to the play of semiotic forces. For Bremond movement is more important than stasis, time more central than space.

In opposition to Bremond's insistence on movement and chronology with its tendency to deny the integrity of the narrative, Greimas offers a more rigid approach to the semiotic and semantic preconditions for its reading. He identifies the various levels, of imminence and manifestation, of grammar and discourse, and attempts to suggest their interrelationship. The model assumes the compatibility of sentence and story. In his early work, the chronology of the text is preserved, albeit at the price, perhaps, of the lack of generality which these analyses have, by virtue of their proximity to the Proppian schema. Subsequent developments have created the condition for approaching the generality of narrative though still not the universality which is claimed, but this seems to be at the expense of the text, of the narration itself. More importantly there is a consistent attempt to produce an intrinsic semantics, a logic for the generation of meaning, and this involves a corresponding reluctance, not to say refusal, to consider to what extent the deciphering of a narrated text depends on a previous knowledge of other texts and of the culture as a whole.
The content of a tale is structured, but that structuring need not be the exclusive product of the telling; it may precede it. And even though the constitutional model claims adequacy for any and every process of signification, it is precisely how and in what ways it becomes incorporated into a text which is interesting and still problematical. This is, I assume, an empirical question. To answer it one must be aware of the particular nature of the presenting and presented culture as a whole. It is the culture which acts, as it were, as the filter through which the basic categories of the constitutional model gain their content. To understand the resonance of a narrated text, then, involves not just a consideration of its intrinsic chronology, nor even of the static equilibrium which may sustain it, but also a consideration of the redolent categories of its historical context. While A.J. Greimas' formulations by no means exclude that possibility, indeed in part they depend on it, his primary concern with narration leaves open the questions of the integration of the narrated text into the wider culture.

III

It is more towards these questions that the analyses of myth of Claude Levi-Strauss are oriented. The qualification here is important, for much of what Greimas attempts is dependent on Levi-Strauss's insights and he assumes that what he is doing will not prove significantly incompatible with the work of the anthropologist. That their orientation to narrative and to myth is different is not at issue, but the line between them should not be hastily or crudely drawn.
There are, then, two dimensions in Claude Lévi-Strauss's work on myth, the first much closer to the concerns of Greimas than the second. The first, essentially articulated in his early work on the structure of myth, preserves a concern with defining a mythic narrative in terms of the abstract formulations of a balanced logic so beloved of Greimas. But this is quickly relegated to a minor significance not just in the face of more complicated material, but implicitly, through an awareness that such an imposition may be both arbitrary and misleading. Rather than stamp a four term structure on one myth, or a series of myths, and thereby excluding much that might otherwise be relevantly included, Lévi-Strauss, for example, in the Geste d'Asdiwal and in his Mythologiques prefers an approach which seeks the codes at work within a particular corpus. An abstract logic is replaced by a concrete one. The tightness of a balanced structure gives way to an endless array of patterns and codes. Narrative is replaced by myth.

More basically, the myth is replaced by the mythic system, and as a number of folklorists and indeed defenders of the Proppian approach have ruefully noticed, Lévi-Strauss is not really concerned with the texts of specific myths but with the system within which these are to be found. The texts which he takes as the objects for analysis are only the means to an end - the identification of the basic thought processes of the primitive, as they are manifested in the mythic narratives.

Let us be clear about what is involved in this change of perspective. We are firstly faced, quite obviously, with a change of scale. Lévi-Strauss is an extrovert. The careful precision of formalism is replaced by an extravagant, thought not necessarily any less
precise, fusion of form and content. Whereas formalism destroys its object, his structuralism not only preserves it, but situates it; the tales are elements only of a cultural and intellectual system whose meaning is multifaceted. The search for those meanings depends both on a sensitivity to the subtleties of their assumed logic and on a methodology sufficiently powerful to extract that logic from incomplete texts, even in the knowledge that the analyses will be endless. To follow the path traced by what Clifford Geertz calls Lévi-Strauss's 'infernal culture machine' is to follow not just the trajectory of a primitive culture in its attempts to make sense of the continuity and chaos of the natural world, but also to an undefinable degree to follow the rigorous mental meanderings of an inspired anthropologist.

Claude Lévi-Strauss is not concerned with narrative as such, not if we mean by narrative the chronology of a specific tale. However, he is concerned with narration, and the codes at work within diverse texts, and which define their possibility.

"...what I am concerned to clarify is not so much what there is in myths (without incidentally being in man's consciousness) as the system of axioms and postulates defining the best possible code, capable of conferring a common significance on unconscious formulations which are the work of minds, societies and civilizations chosen from among the most remote from each other."

Myths are told; in that sense they are narratives, and in that sense Lévi-Strauss shares a common object with Greimas and Propp, but myth lies outside a specific telling, and in that sense his object is different. But like Greimas, Lévi-Strauss is seeking universals; an anthropology of the tale, and though he is scathing as to the viability of contemporary myth, to make sense of his task we would need to enquire into stories not manifestly, in his terms, mythic.
Levi-Strauss's earliest attempts to come to terms with the problem of mythic communication confine themselves to a very small corpus of texts and to a consideration of the outlines of an appropriate method. His model is the linguistics of Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure, of language as a diacritical system whose basic operation is binary. But myth, as we have seen, is not language but metalanguage. It uses already constituted signs to create new meanings.

The analysis of myth, initially proceeding in a trial and error fashion, presupposes an ability to recognize basic units - mythemes - which can be arranged in a pattern reflecting the diachronic and synchronic aspects of mythic communication. In order to preserve the latter, the synchronic, the need is to identify not isolated mythemes but bundles of them so that beneath the manifest chronology of a single and isolated myth a level of coherent expression can be established, which depends for its understanding on the 'spatialization' of its elements and on their temporal reversibility. The model is that of an orchestra score where the text is read, as it is played, according to both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Myths have a harmony as well as a melody. Levi-Strauss can distinguish its sequences from its schemata:

"The sequences form the apparent content of the myth; the chronological order in which things happen.... But these sequences are organized on planes at different levels (of abstraction), in accordance with schemata, which exist simultaneously, superimposed one upon another; just as a melody composed for several voices is held within bounds by constraints in two dimensions, first by its own melodic line which is horizontal, and second by the contrapuntal schemata (settings) which are vertical."

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114
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His first demonstration of the technique, now well known, is his analysis of the Oedipus myth, in which the elementary chronology of the narrative, as told, is tabulated in an attempt to reveal the structure of the myth and how it is to be understood. Four columns are summarizable in terms of the overrating of blood relations, (most seriously in Oedipus' incest), the underrating of blood relations (actual and attempted intrafamilial killings), the slaying of monsters and finally the difficulties of walking straight and standing upright. The juxtaposition of the first two of these columns as against the second two, suggests to Lévi-Strauss that the myth articulates one solution to the problem of the origin of man. The Greeks believed in the autochthonous origin of man, but at the same time were quite aware that human beings were actually born in a rather different fashion. By opposing denial of blood relations to their incestuous affirmation (difference versus identity) and the denial of the monstrous origin of mankind to the physical manifestations of its inevitability (lameness) the myth is turning over, as it were, this insoluble problem.

If one were to add, as one should, all the variants of the myth, one would then be able to produce in their juxtaposition, not just the structure of one story but of the system as a whole. And Lévi-Strauss continues his analysis by examining in the first instance various accounts of the Zuni origin and emergence myths, where oppositions of life and death, permanence and change, are mediated by the categories of agriculture and hunting and by animals and birds associated with them. The mythic system, whose logic is presented variously by the different examples, is identified in terms of opposition and resolution, the latter the product of the activity of mediators, those beings or categories, which, as it were, are neither one thing nor the other.
The result, at least of this early formulation, is the law of the permutation group - a law which is relevant to myth as such, and which is roughly comparable to the constitutional model of A.J. Greimas:

\[ F_x(a) \neq F_y(b) \neq F_x(b) : F_{a^{-1}}(y) \]

in which \( x \) and \( y \) are the functions of terms \( a \) and \( b \), and wherein the opposition of the first part is 'resolved' by a process of substitution and inversion in the second; \( b \), present in both halves of the equation acts as a mediator whereby first \( a \) is replaced by its opposite \( a^{-1} \) and secondly whereby an inversion is made between the function value and the term value of two elements \( (y \) and \( a) \).

Eili-Koija Kongas and Pierre Maranda illustrate this otherwise enigmatic formulation as follows:

"...if a given actor \( (a) \) is specified by a negative function, \( F_x(a) \) (and thus becomes a villain), and another one \((b)\) by a positive function \( F_y(b) \) (and thus becomes a hero), \((b)\) is capable of assuming in turn also the negative function (by in the juxtaposition of two negatives, generating a positive result - my interpretation) which process leads to a 'victory' so much more complete that it proceeds from the 'ruin' of the term \((a)\) and thus definitely establishes the positive value \((y)\) of the final outcome. This time as a term \((y)\) is specified by a function which equals the inverse of the first term."\(^{122}\)

In this anthropomorphisation of the formula its basic point is, I hope, made clear. In the inversion and opposition of functional value and the value of its terms, the narrative resolves an initial contradiction: it ties a knot. This formula reappears in the Mythologiques in terms of the mythic system as a whole.\(^{123}\)

Underlying these relatively obscure and often difficult formulations, and underlying equally Levi-Strauss's canonic formula for the narrative lie a number of basic analytic principles. We can identify three: firstly the establishment of the binary at the heart of mythical thought; \(^{124}\) secondly the identification of the different dimensions of mythic communication, namely code, message and armature; and thirdly
the recognition of the different levels of coding potentially present in the mythic and the recognition that their analysis is (in a certain sense) endless.

Levi-Strauss's advocacy of a binary structure at the heart of myth has two aspects. He assumes that the distinction between an item and its opposite, a and not a, must be the simplest relationship in any activity of classification; and he extrapolates from above all Roman Jakobson's work in phonology where the binary principle seems to be at work significantly at a pre-semantic level. The naturalness of the binary is then both the naturalness of the activity of the mind, but also a naturalness to be perceived in the objective world. Not only does the mind think in terms of oppositions and difference, but the mind perceives that opposition and difference in otherwise unmediated nature. Species, for example, themselves are distinct.

The analyses consequently take the form of a series of concrete oppositions which Levi-Strauss divines as being at work within a mythic text. So an opposition of eagle and wolverine is an opposition of high and low, sky and earth, along the axes of hunter; the opposition of eagle and vulture is one of carrion and flesh eating bird, of rotten and raw. Using these and similar categories the mythic structure opens out like petals of a flower. But it is a destructuring-structuring activity in ignorance of the chronology of the text, and dependent entirely on the reversible logic of similarity and difference though which Levi-Strauss assumes the primitive constructs his world. It also involves, oppositions which are content specific and tend to avoid the purity suggested by the a, not a category. Levi-Strauss's binariness tends to elide contradiction and contrariety.
This apparent reduction of the activity of mind and the complexity of its texts to such a simple operation has been much criticized, and, to a degree, misunderstood. That our thought is exclusively binary would be an absurd proposition as a suggestion that it never is. Lévi-Strauss himself is aware of its limits.

"... the binary model we sketched is not enough. It permits the abstract definition of values which present a limiting character, but not the translation of concrete properties and the measure of degrees of proximity. To be able to do this, one would have to elaborate an analogical model where the initial and final positions of each myth would fit into a multi-dimensional space, each of these dimensions providing a parameter along which would be arranged, in the most convenient manner, the variations of the same semantic function."

Here the binary becomes an heuristic device; elsewhere it has ontological significance. This is an ambiguity which is the bain of any mature consideration of Lévi-Strauss's work.

The second dimension of Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myth involves a consideration of three aspects of the system; armature, codes and message, to whose interaction I have already referred in discussing the identification of the system as such. By armature Lévi-Strauss means the invariant properties of two or several myths; for example two myths (say M₁ and M₁₂ in The Raw and the Cooked) are both involved in the articulation of the relationship of fire and water. The code relates to 'the patterned functions ascribed in each myth to these properties'; it defines the dimensions in which the opposition of water and fire are articulated. Typical levels of coding considered in his analysis of myth both in the Mythologiques and elsewhere, are those of the culinary, astronomical, sociological, acoustic and so on. I will return to the implications of these levels shortly. Finally the message; this relates to the subject matter of each individual myth; what the myth is manifestly about.
"I can define the relation between the Bororo myth \( (M_1) \) and the Sherente myth \( (M_{12}) \) by stating that when we move from one to the other, the armature remains constant, to code is changed, and the message is reversed."\(^{130}\)

The point, in general, is that the mythic system is the product of the interweaving of these different threads of discourse, and rather like a plait made of three strands, consistency and difference, structure and position, are what constitutes its integrity. To recognize that in the juxtaposition of two myths one dimension (the armature) remains constant, that the codes have changed, but the message is entirely different, suggests, at least to Lévi-Strauss, that he look for another myth where these relationships are inverted. Here the myth will present a further and contrasting message but along a similar armature and perhaps with different codes. Needless to say Lévi-Strauss, in *The Raw and the Cooked*, finds just such a myth, the Sherente \( (M_{124}) \) myth which returns the analysis to the starting point and to the Bororo via a transformation of code and message.

The subsequent analysis is then undertaken in terms of the various codes through which the origin of fire and water are articulated in each of the myths, and also in other myths which are selected to illustrate and to enhance particular points of interpretation and logical interconnection.

The most illuminating illustration of this plaited movement is to be found in his analysis of the six variations of the Guiana, Tupi-Tucuna and Ge myths\(^{132}\) about the origin and loss of honey. Here, within a methodological framework which defines the set in terms of a change in either the nature of the dominant species of animal or in its sex, but not both at once, and by constantly referring to the ethnography and ethnozoology of the tribes whose myths they are, he traces the ways in which the dominant message and its codes defines
the spherical and the musical structure of the mythical system as a whole.

There is, however, a certain unresolved tension here and it brings us to the third of the methodological dimensions of Lévi-Strauss's analysis: that of the potentially endless and multivaried levels of coding present in myth.

On a number of occasions Lévi-Strauss draws attention to the obvious difficulties associated with his task. This is most significantly expressed in the Overture to the Raw and the Cooked:

"There is no real end to mythological analysis, no hidden unity to be grasped once the breaking-down process has been completed. Themes can be split up ad infinitum. Just when you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realize that they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities. Consequently the unity of the myth is never more than tendential and projective and cannot reflect a state or a particular moment of the myth. It is a phenomenon of the imagination, resulting from the attempt at interpretation; and its function is to endow the myth with a synthetic form and to prevent its disintegration into a confusion of opposites." 133

The confidence, then, with which subsequently the system of myth and its structural interconnections, is defined, is dependent on a selection of privileged dimensions. For example it is the opposition between earth and water which seems to Lévi-Strauss to be the central one in the stories about Asdiwal, 134 an opposition most clearly linked to the economic activity of the Tlingit and Tsimshian Indians whose myths they are. In the first volume of the Mythologiques the culinary opposition of the raw and the cooked establishes the main path along which the analysis runs. 135 The system, therefore, is quite clearly a construction. As such, though the analysis might, and in Lévi-Strauss's case certainly does, generate coherence and sense, it is never entirely free from the arbitrariness with which it (as all aspects of culture) began.
Let me create some of the redundancy so beloved by myth and so disapproved of in accounts of this sort by summarizing and developing some of the points made so far.

On a number of occasions in his work LeVí-Strauss deliberately addresses himself to questions of methodology. On the one hand, as for example in his 'Comparative Religions of Nonliterate Peoples', his propositions specify the very basic operations involved in the type of analysis which he advocates.

1. A myth must never be interpreted on one level only. No privileged explanation exists, for any myth consists in an interrelation of several explanatory levels.

2. A myth must never be interpreted individually, but in its relationship to other myths which, taken together, constitute a transformation group.

3. A group of myths must never be interpreted alone, but by reference: (a) to other groups of myths; and (b) to the ethnography of the societies in which they originate. For, if the myths transform each other, a relation of the same type links (on a transversal axis) the different levels involved in the evolution of all social life. These levels range from the forms of techno-economic activity to the systems of representations, and include economic exchanges, political and familial structures, aesthetic expression, ritual practices, and religious beliefs."

Here we are offered, by now a number of fairly obvious directives, which taken together demand that the analysis of myth must be multifaceted and neither dependent on one text nor even on texts exclusively, for the context, specifically the ethnography of the societies in which the myths are told, is of vital importance. The extent to which LeVí-Strauss's analysis of myth is dependent on his knowledge of the ethnography is often overlooked. Even though he acknowledges that such dependence is provisional, provisional that is on the expansion of the understanding of the system sufficiently so that all the information necessary for subsequent decoding can be found within it, the dependence is real and continuous. To relate a myth or a series
of myths to their host society, is to provide for a way of reducing
the arbitrariness inevitable in the selection of levels or in the
ordering of transformations. Myths for example which reflect
the social structure most completely can be thought of as primary,
those which do so but less completely, or less directly, can be
considered secondary transformations.

On the other hand Lévi-Strauss's methodological excursions involve
a consideration of the more intangible qualities of mythical
analysis: their exhaustivity, their redundancy, their dynamic
nature, their truth, the relations of form and content, and the transcendence of narrative.

It is this last dimension which I want to discuss in a little more
detail, because, of course, it relates directly to the concerns of my
analysis. Very simple, and quite obviously, Lévi-Strauss's work
involves a transcendence of the chronology of a text - and this
doubly so. Not only is chronological ordering replaced by a
structural one, but the single text is immersed in a system of texts.

"...every myth is an organized totality: the development
of the narrative throws light on an underlying structure
which is independent of the relation between what comes
before and what comes after"  

This is not to suggest that the chronological and serial ordering within myth is
entirely ignored, but only that it must be of less significance, both for
Lévi-Strauss, and by implication for the natives whose myths they are.

However, beneath this distinction of chronology and structure lies
a parallel but more basic one: that between the syntagmatic and the
paradigmatic. Indeed here the relations are not so clear cut,
for depending on the initial perspective a myth can be considered
syntagmatically in terms of the chronology of its units whose
significance depends on paradigmatic relationship, or it can be considered in toto as one unit of a paradigmatic set. The analysis of the important Tacana myth in From Honey to Ashes is a good example. It reveals that "the syntagmatic chain formed by this myth can be changed into a paradigmatic set for the interpretation of any of the myths of which it is a transformation, while those myths in their turn would form a paradigmatic set capable of throwing light on M303, if we had begun our enquiry from the opposite end."  

Mythical thought, the evidence for which is presented in the myth, for Lévi-Strauss therefore, defines the world not so much in terms of things, but in terms of a body of common properties, "expressible in geometrical terms and transformable one into another by means of operations which constitute a sort of algebra."  

The narratives with which we (and he) are concerned are reducible to, and themselves constitute primary units of a field of abstract relations whose interaction is a clue to the activity of the mind of man. There is then, in the patterning of these categories an identification of a certain level of communication, let us call it mythic. In its independence of a specific chronology, and even in its precedence over that chronology, it seems very much the property of an oral culture whose tales are not so rigidly informed by the linearity of a literate society. An explanation of this level of communication in contemporary texts is at once an explanation of the maintenance of the oral tradition and a measure of its significance. I hope to be able to illustrate in Chapter 6 in what ways this can be done for television.
One final postscript from Levi-Strauss which seems, as ever, to muddy the waters but also to warn again excessive dogmatism in the definition of what constitutes the essence of myth. In conversation with George Steiner he said this:

"There are probably the same mythical structures recurring here and there. But I would not claim that they are the same everywhere. It is quite possible that when we have made sufficient progress in the study of mythology we shall arrive at the conclusion that there are several species, and not only one. This I don't know yet."[51]

IV

The time has come to draw the methodological strings together and to present a model for the analysis of narrative. There is a temptation to add also a model of the narrative, but that remains to be determined. This study, hopefully will begin that process, but the epistemological and ontological problems associated with the notion of structure seem irresolvable. It will be as well briefly, to remind ourselves what they are.

There are two related aspects: firstly the question of whether the structures really exist, or whether they are only the product of the analyst's imagination; and secondly whether the results gained through structural analysis can in any meaningful sense be falsified.

To attempt an answer to these questions is to reduce/not to erase the ambiguity associated with the method. The object is the unconscious - the cultural rather than the individual unconscious; and certain assumptions are made about it; it is assumed to be rational, though not necessarily exclusively so, and it is assumed that in its activity it creates order in a world of chaos. It can be demonstrated that what is produced in that activity is ordered,
and that order is a precondition for a minimal degree of communication. It is self evident that people act in an ordered fashion. What is being attempted is the identification of the links between manifest action, in the broadest sense, and latent structures such that the former becomes explicable in terms of the latter. Insofar as structures are acted upon, or acted within, they can be tested. That testing depends, as Raymond Boudon points out, on the nature of the object which we are studying. We assume it is systemic. If we can define its limits and if these limits are clear and real, then testability is possible; if they are not then we cannot directly test our results. The difference between a kinship system and a social system, between Lévi-Straussian structuralism and Parsonsian structural-functionism, is crucial in this regard. But this testability is not the same as falsification in Popperian terms; as we have seen the notion of structure itself is based on assumptions which in the final resort are arbitrary. In that sense all that can be done is to offer an account, of course philosophically based, but theoretically grounded, which within the limits it itself defines and within limits defined in reality by its object, offers coherence. This coherence is provisional. It is also metaphorical. Structures therefore are neither real nor the product exclusively of a fertile imagination. As Jean Piaget suggests structures exist somewhere "between the theoretical design partially related to the observer's decisions and the actual organisation of the behaviour to be explained."

Our texts then are real. We do tell stories. We do produce and listen to narratives. The object of our investigation is clearly defined. It is quite obviously ordered. It makes sense. On the other hand our analyses of that sense, our explanations of it, may be
various and they will be endless. We can improve on them, but we cannot finally and unambiguously choose between them. In the absence of these final criteria, criteria which it has been argued do not even exist in the natural sciences,157 we are forced into making judgements of adequacy in more humble terms. Although, as we have seen, in the last analysis the theory on which our perception of structure and structures is based is arbitrary, we have criteria for choice at our disposal, which some would call aesthetic, others economic,159 and which in terms of generality, coherence, simplicity, even elegance make one more persuasive, more adequate even, than an other. The claims of structuralism are those, and the ambiguity is intended, of a positive hermeneutics. It is an ambiguity centrally grounded in the activity of the human sciences, an ambiguity explored preeminently by Max Weber,160 and restated though in different terms by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his own recent defence of his epistemology.

"The value of the epistemological model offered by structuralism to the human sciences cannot be compared to the models available so far. Structuralism uncovers a unity and a coherence within things which could not be revealed by a simple description of the facts somehow scattered and disorganized before the eyes of knowledge. It also does this more economically, with a very small number of principles, axioms, and rules which, in a variety of domains, have proved their fecundity. But structuralism does not presume to contain the truth. It is content to say that things are a little clearer today than they were yesterday."161

With this epistemological excursion undertaken, but not forgotten, I can now outline, in summary form, the model of the television narrative which will be empirically illustrated and explored in the subsequent chapters.
The model presented in figure 3 is that of the narrative which and the previous one discussion in this chapter/would lead us, I hope, to expect. It is of course, a schematic presentation and should be treated with caution. It is itself a summary.

A MODEL OF NARRATIVE

EXPRESSION

Substance
(e.g. in television/film: image, noise phonetic sound, music, titles)

Form
(e.g. in film 'la grande syntagmatique').

CONTENT

Substance
(Events of the everyday world)

Form
(narration)

Chronologic
(Sequence)

Logic
(Schemata)

Function
'Actant'
(Acting Unit)

Qualification
(Category)

Transformation
(Equilibration)

DISCOURSE
(e.g. Television: and sub-discourses: e.g. news, drama etc.)

FIGURE III
The primary distinction that can be made is between content and expression; a distinction which reflects the obvious fact that the same story can be told in different ways by different media.

In the context of an analysis of the television narrative the expression is the chronological ordering of, pre-eminently, picture and sound. To understand its form we define its constituent units; the simplest of which is the shot, the most complex of which, in its juxtaposition of visual and aural patterning, is the sequence. In television or in film the visual is, in a certain sense, preeminent. By virtue of it we are made aware of space and movement, and of discontinuities which may or may not (each is significant) synchronise with the non-spatial movement and discontinuities in the aural dimension. Picture and speech sometimes coincide, sometimes they do not. Movement through a televised text is uneven but controllable.

It is also controlling. Our perception of the content of a text is mediated - precisely - by the patterns imposed on it by the nature of video tape or film strip. The units defined at this level are basic, but transcendable. They are transcended as soon as one moves attention away from the medium to its content, away from expression to substance. This movement is, of course, circular. We are able to make distinctions of expression because we have already understood the content. We can focus on the set of codes that define the particularity of the medium because we have already understood, unconsciously perhaps, those codes which make the text coherent, that give it sense.

Associated with this distinction in the hands of Christian Metz, is the distinction between film and cinema, between the specifically and exclusively filmic and that which is available to the film to use.
In a parallel sense we can suggest a distinction between television and the televisual. The narrative of television is the narrative of expression, the chronology of sight and sound, the chronology of pre-eminently though not exclusively, of video. It is a chronology of the camera and the microphone, of cut and continuity, of movement of body and of movement of voice.

The televisual narrative, on the other hand, is the narrative of content. It is the what rather than the how. It is heard and seen, of course, but it is not dependent on the particular combination of sound and vision that television generates. It is the narrative available equally to television or to film, to the theatre, to the novel, or to myth. We can say, quite obviously, that all these different media could tell the same story, albeit in a different way.

That difference, however, imprecise, is nevertheless important. Narrative becomes televisual because it is televised. A tale is altered and limited in its telling by the medium of expression through which it is told. There are then two sources of constraint within a televised text: the constraint of television, of its expression, and the constraint of the televisual, that which comes to television already (partially) defined. It is to this, to narrative as such, that we need now to turn.

The content of the narrative, like its expression, has two dimensions: form and substance. The latter is easy to deal with analytically but far from easy in practical terms, for what acts as substance of the content of the television message, as for all other so-called mass media of communication, are the events, attitudes
and values of the everyday commonsense world. What becomes the substance of the content (strictly the purport\textsuperscript{164}) has a life of its own outside the specific narrative which includes it.

To understand the narrative, then, involves stepping outside it, and this stepping outside in turn involves a familiarity with all the codes at work in the culture which acts as its host. This is, in any sense, an impossible task. In distant societies, both in time and space, the problem is eased but not erased by the relative simplicity of the culture, but also the relative poverty of our ethnographic knowledge. In our own society we are faced with a complexity and with rapid change; our knowledge of it, never strictly ethnographic, is suffused by doubt and contradiction. We are inside it and no amount of theoretical distance can avoid the ultimate impossibility of the complete understanding of the content of our own culture.\textsuperscript{165} It is like disentangling a ball of string from the inside.

More accessible perhaps, though not without its difficulties, is the form of the content, the narration as such. The bulk of this chapter, in terms of the theories, pre-eminently of Vladimir Propp, A.J. Greimas and Claude Lévi-Strauss, has been devoted to it. The narration has two dimensions, both present but not always equally, and different genres of story-telling can be identified by the relative strength of one rather than the other. On the one hand the diachronic, on the other the synchronic, or what have been called here the chronologic and the logic. Narratives are told both in time and space, or, following Lévi-Strauss, in non-reversible and reversible time. They consist of events, subjects/objects and descriptions, just as sentences consist of verbs, nouns and adjectives.
In its analysis, we can and we have distinguished various levels. To speak of chronology is to speak, like Propp, of morphology and function, of significant units of action. A function is significant in terms of its contribution to the movement of the narrative as a whole; it is significant if its absence would alter the sense of the narrative, or its integrity. Functions are acts, and acts may be of different types, and of different modalities—intentioned, threatened, completed, incomplete, successful or unsuccessful. Not all acts, however, have the same functional significance. The preparations leading to a murder are only significant once the murder has been attempted; and it is the act, be it successful or otherwise, which will be functional in the Proppian sense. A manifest act may be functional in more than one way; equally a number of different acts may together fulfil one function.

However, this same unit, which in the morphology can be called the sequence, has a different value in the context of reversible time of the narrative's logic. Lévi-Strauss identifies the movement as between sequence and schemata, and short of inventing a more barbarous neologism in a text that already has its fair share of jargon, we might accept this distinction. Narratives, and especially mythic narratives, contain therefore a double movement, and the actions of the hero, in their sequence, do not by themselves contain the full measure of meaning. These actions are metaphoric—in A.J. Greimas' terms they are anthropomorphic—and they enact logical transformations much more central to the integrity of mythic communication. At this level of analysis the concern is more with the contextualization and connotation of the act. But even this can be pushed further, to the level of a formula or logical model, and then the concrete is left far behind. This involves a reduction
of the logic of narrative, indeed the reduction of the logic of any semiotic system, to the play of an abstract formula. And this reduction, finally, suggests and attempts to define in what narrative's basic units consist; its balance and its equilibrium.

What links, in effect, the function and the qualification, the act and the category, and temporal and the intemporal, are the actors in the narrative themselves. Let us be clear about what we mean here. We are no more concerned with individual characters in a play than we are with actors who, on television, play them. The notion of 'actant' (acting unit) defines a reductive level at which the various characters in diverse narratives, can be seen to be functionally identical. The acting unit, be he the hero, the villain, the dispatcher, the dispatched, the sort for person; or helper/opposer, exists by virtue of his involvement in functional acts, an involvement which whilst still at the anthropomorphic level moves the narrative from one category to another. The hero in his movement from situation to situation, from act to act, transformed by virtue of his different involvements. No only is the chronologic defined by these movements: the hero having gained help, triumphs over the villain and finds his happiness; but the logic also follows that movement: the hero, now on earth, now among the stars, now with the help of a jaguar, now with the help of a tortoise, defines the pattern of meanings which the narrative also produces and upon which it depends.

The transformations effected through the function of structure and qualification, chronologic and logic, generate a coherence which in its particularity we might wish to call the discourse. We can talk of narrative discourse, of the television discourse, but we can equally talk of sub-discourses, that of the play, the documentary,
the advertisement, the news and so on. There is no reason why a model such as this should not be useful in defining the various discourses in which narrative is manifested, to define the particular balances of chronology and logic, of variation in form and substance of expression, as well as the differences of substantial content which distinguisn them.

I began this chapter by quoting the enigmatic Marshall McLuhan:
"There is simply no time for the narrative form borrowed from print technology." Television, in its picture and its synaesthesia destroys chronology. I don't think that it does. Rather, television through the electronic technology of sound and picture shifts the balance in the pattern of its communication away from the dominance of linearity and towards the equilibrium of reversible and non-reversible time. In this it reasserts the particularity of mythic narrative - the balance and resolution of the novel and the familiar, of stability of change, of frustration and achievement. Television's narratives are mythic; they are in equal part mask, mirror and exemplar.

Such narratives are defined as much by their form as by their function. Within them the work of reading has, very largely, been done. The reader's involvement, with the narrative, in its risk and in its desire, is constrained by the rigour of its structuring. Mythic narratives are, in everything but detail, largely predictable. In television this is also the case. Mythic narrative also, despite the unique chronology of a given text, is buried within an eternally recursive system in which endings are relativized and beginnings insubstantial. Television, is equally, both endless and beginningless.

The model I have suggested for the study of narrative allows us to make some of these distinctions and to explore them both for television and for other media. It is the task of the next two chapters to illustrate how this might be done.
Chapter 4. Footnotes and References


2. But this is the case with many semiotic studies see .  

3. see below pp. 205ff.


6. for example: Victor Shklovsky, Art as Technique, in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Rees, (Eds.), Russian Formalist Criticism. Lincoln, Nebraska 1968. 3-23.


11. Roman Jakobson, Recent Russian Poetry. Sketch 1. Prague 1921. p. 11. quoted by Boris Eikhenbaum, op. cit. p. 8. "The object of study in literary science is not literature but 'literariness', that is, what makes a given work a literary work."

14. ibid. p. 16.
16. cf. the claims being made for autonomy in the study of language, by Saussure, and in sociology, by Durkheim. Chapter 2 above.
18. Russian Formalism. op. cit. p. 349.
20. ibid. p. 18.
22. for a discussion, see below pp. 179.
23. ibid. p. 25-65; 149-155 and Appendix 2 below.
26. ibid. 79 ff.
27. ibid. 104 ff.
28. ibid. p. 10.
29. ibid. p. 16.
32. cf. Bertol Natthorst op. cit. but note that Propp was by no means unaware of the variations possible within a tale; op. cit. 92 ff. and also Les Transformations des Contes fantastiques. op. cit.
35. A summary of these criticisms can be found in Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, Language and Materialism. London. 1977.


37. Dell Hymes, Breakthrough into Performance. in Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth Goldstein. op. cit.

38. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp. op. cit.


40. op. cit. p. 132.

41. ibid. p. 138; 145.

42. cf. Vladimir Propp, in Pierre Maranda op. cit. p. 145: "In order to establish these principles we must consider the tale in relation to its context, the situation in which it was created and in which it exists. Here, everyday life and religion, in the widest sense of the word, are of the greatest importance, since the reasons for transformations are exterior to the tale and we will not be able to understand their evolution without relating the tale itself to the human context in which it exists."

43. Claude Lévi-Strauss. op. cit. 142.

44. Morphology of the Folktale. op. cit. 86-91.

45. on the limitations of Lévi-Strauss's claim to produce a semantics see Dan Sperber, Rethinking Symbolism. Cambridge. 1975.

46. Claude Lévi-Strauss. op. cit. p.141.

47. Eleazor Meletinsky, Structural-Typological Study of the Folktale. op. cit. p. 258.

48. see footnote 44 above.

49. ibid. p. 91.

50. see Chapter 3 above.

51. La Structure et la Forme. op. cit. p. 17.

52. Reflections of the Work of Vladimir Propp. op. cit. 130.

53. op. cit. 257.

54. Morphology of the North American Indian Folktale. op. cit. 43-47.

55. op. cit. p. 258.

56. see footnote 122 below.

58. see especially Sémantique Structurale. op. cit.


60. in any case Greimas' theories are constantly developing; see E.U. Grosse op. cit.

61. see below p.196, and footnote 122.


64. Du Sens. op. cit. p. 168. "Le faire est donc une opération doublement anthropomorphe: en tant qu'activité, ell presuppose un sujet; en tant que message, elle est objectivée et implique l'axe de transmission entre destinateur et destinataire."

65. ibid. p. 159.

66. The Interpretation of Myth. op. cit. p. 104.

67. Du Sens op. cit. p. 261

68. Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 211.

69. In Greimas' view, the basic structure of narrative, and indeed of all meaning (see below) consists in an abstract logic; Lévi-Strauss, notwithstanding his concern with the binary and the canonc formula of the narrative, nevertheless focuses on a concrete logic, a logic expressed through empirical categories.

70. but see Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. esp. 50-54


72. See Appendix 3.

73. Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 40-54.
74. and also The Interpretation of Myth. op. cit.

75. Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 192 ff.

76. but note that Propp himself acknowledges that as being possible, actually important, see Morphology of the Folktale. op. cit. 64-5.


78. Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 195.

79. Du Sens. op. cit. 175; Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 192 ff.

80. Sémantique Structurale op. cit. 203.


82. Morphology of the Folktale. op. cit. 104-5.

83. Claude Chabrol op. cit.; Bertol Nathorst op. cit.; Claude Brémond. op. cit.

84. Claude Brémond, Logique du Récit. op. cit. p. 327: "...notre prétension à dégager des universaux (un lexique et une syntaxe applicables à toute espèce de texte narratif existant ou imaginaire) est fondée: ce qui ne signifie pas que la métaphysique qui en dérive soit vraie, mais qu'il est impossible à l'homme, s'il veut communiquer à d'autres hommes le récit d'une expérience humaine, de ne pas s'engager dans un tel système de roles."

85. Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 201.

86. Élements d'une grammaire narrative. op. cit.

87. Morphology of the Folktale. op. cit. 79 ff.

88. Etienne Souriou, 200,000 Situations dramatiques. quoted in Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 175.

89. ibid. p. 80.

90. Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics. op. cit.

91. Les actants, les acteurs et les figures. op. cit. 176.

92. Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 208 ff.


94. Elements d'un grammaire narrative. op. cit. p. 160 ff.; this model is presented as axiomatic. see The Interaction of Semiotic Constraints. op. cit.
95. Logique du Récit. op. cit. 92 ff.

96. The Interaction of Semiotic Constraints. op. cit. 88; Du Sens. op. cit. 138.

97. Structurale Sémantique. op. cit. 211-212


100. The Interaction of Semiotic Constraints. op. cit. 89; Du Sens. op. cit. 138.

101. Logique du Récit. op. cit.

102. Greimas' more recent work has nevertheless kept the relationship between theory and textual analysis alive. see Maupassant. op. cit.

103. cf. footnote 102.; Sémantique Structurale. op. cit. 233; The Interpretation of Myth. op. cit. 121.

104. Jonathan Culler. op. cit. 40-54.

105. in Edmund Leach, Structural Study of Myth and Totemism. op. cit.; and Structural Anthropology. Vol. 2. op. cit.

106. Mythologiques. 4. vols. op. cit.

107. and in particular see Eleazor Meletinsky, Structural-Typological Study of the Folktale. op. cit.; Bertel Nathhorst, Formal and Structural Studies of Traditional Tales. op. cit.


111. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. p. 15.

112. Not entirely, of course, for Greimas too, looks beyond the specific narrative.


116 ibid. p. 212.

117. The Story of Asdiwal, in Edmund Leach, op. cit. 17.

119. ibid. p. 219 ff.


123. From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 249.

124. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 12.


126. Roman Jakobson and Moris Halle, op. cit.

127. see footnote 70 Ch. 3 above.


129. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 199.; cf. A.J. Greimas' discussion of 'isotopy' esp. in The Interpretation of Myth. op. cit.

130. ibid.

131. ibid.

132. From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 155-60.

133. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. p. 5. and 118; The Story of Asdiwal. in Edmund Leach, op. cit.

134. ibid.

135. op. cit. and continues in The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. 468 and 471 ff.


137. From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 354-6. Myths in any case comprise a closed system. see. The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. 468.


139. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 334.

140. ibid. 147-8.

141. The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. 129-30, 195.

142. From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 228-9, 354.
143. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 240.

144. ibid. p. 92.; From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 466.; Structural Anthropology Vol. 2. op. cit. 115, 145, 268.

145. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 118; From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 355-6.

146. The Raw and the Cooked. op. cit. 111.


148. From Honey to Ashes. op. cit. 356.

149. ibid. p. 473.


155. see footnote 161 below.


158. for example R.H. Brown, op. cit.

159. see below, footnote 161.


163. Christian Metz, *Language and Cinema* *op. cit.* and see Chapter 2 above.


165. cf. Jean Pouillon, *L'analyse des mythes*. *L'homme*. 6. (1) 1966. 100-105. p. 104: "The indigenous one - and who is not indigenous? - does not understand the myth that charms him, not because of intellectual incapacity, but because of position; it is also because of position that the ethnologist, because he knows other myths elsewhere, can understand it." quoted in J.A. Boon *From Symbolism to Structuralism*. *op. cit.* p. 162.

166. cf. Tzvetan Todorov. *Structural Analysis of Narrative*. *Novel*. Vol. 3. No. 1. Fall 1969. p. 74: "Sequence is perceived by the reader as a finished story; it is the minimal narrative in a completed form." Seymour Chatman, following Roland Barthes *op. cit.*, distinguishes between kernels and catalysts in narrative chronology; the kernel is equivalent to Propp's function and loosely to Lévi-Strauss's sequence. (p. 14) "Catalysts have only a chronological aspect; this happens and then that happens. Kernels are chronological but also logical; this happens and then that happens because that has happened."


169. see above p. 196.

170. see above p. 185.


CHAPTER V

INTIMATE STRANGERS. MORPHOLOGY

In this and the subsequent chapter I wish to explore the structure of a television narrative. I intend to show in what ways a series of television drama programmes follows quite closely the pattern for the telling of tales already outlined and also that it constructs its meanings in ways similar to the myths discussed by pre-eminently Claude Lévi-Strauss. The television serial drama works within a convention and that convention has both diachronic and synchronic dimensions. It has a clearly defined chronology and it constructs its meanings concretely.

I am not offering a proof or even an experiment in any strict sense. Any conclusions, subject as they are to the epistemological qualifications already discussed, cannot be extended much beyond the examples themselves. However there is very little in the experience of watching television drama which would lead me to expect that what seems true of this series will not also be true of others. Indeed this series, concerned as it is with the details of personal relationships much more than with the unequivocal action of say a thriller or a detective drama, might be expected to be less overt in its narrative structuring, or even less dependent on such structuring. The narrative of test and combat, of alienation and integration, of success and failure is clearly more apposite to drama of the latter type. If it can be shown to be relevant to a drama series of the order of Intimate Strangers then that demonstration could well be expected to have greater significance.
The set of programmes selected for analysis was the series *Intimate Strangers*, produced by Richard Bates for London Weekend Television and broadcast in thirteen weekly episodes between September 20th and December 13th, 1974. They were shown at 9.00p.m. on Friday evenings, peak viewing time and were watched in between 4,344,000 and 5,874,000 homes throughout the country. 

A certain number of more or less intuitive considerations led to the choice of this series. Firstly, it was felt, generally, that the television drama, given the amount of time devoted to it in the schedules, had been relatively poorly studied. The drama, and particularly the serial drama, seemed to represent as much as, if not more than the news, for example, a central dimension of television's production. Secondly it seemed that a contemporary drama (contemporary both in time of writing and in subject), would of its very nature be more likely to illuminate the problems with which I was to be concerned, more likely to reveal the structures associated with folktales and myth and hence more likely to act as a paradigm for further analysis.

Thirdly, and for similar reasons - the concern to reduce as much as possible complications in the analysis - it seemed reasonable to choose a series of plays which was written specifically for television and which also contained both complete serial and complete episodic narratives. And finally it was hoped to avoid somewhat the problems associated with authorship by choosing a series that was written and/or directed by more than one individual.

*Intimate Strangers* fulfilled all of these criteria, though it was not, as I've already mentioned, a series of crime or adventure, and therefore perhaps unlikely to be as transparent, as 'dramatic' as
anything of that sort. It was contemporary, in both senses, and written especially for television. Each episode, although incorporated into the series as a whole with its own narrative coherence, was itself narratively self-contained. In addition to the normal group involvement in the production of a television series (camera, sound crews, make-up, set designers, actors, etc.) there were four directors, four writers and a producer involved in its creation.

The programmes were recorded off-air on to video-tape. The copies used for the analysis were, unfortunately, in black and white.

II

I would like, in what follows in this chapter, to discuss the chronology of the narrative in its two dimensions, that of the series as a whole and that of the episode. I will do so, in the first instance, by summarizing the plot of the series in a relatively simple and undetailed way, and then continue by discussing it in terms of the model of folktale narratives already presented. I will do the same, in more detail, for one particular episode, episode 6, and then, referring also to the narrative structures of the other episodes, more briefly summarized in appendix 8, I will discuss the implications of this part of the analysis as a whole.

There are two methodological points which I would like to raise at this stage. The first has to do with the problems of discussing an audio-visual text in writing only. These are problems which, short of providing a set of tapes to accompany this discussion, are insuperable. There are two aspects to this problem. One cannot hope to convey the detail, both in its arrangement (mis-en-scène)
and in its movement, of the visual image. Any discussion of it is necessarily subject to selection, and necessarily subject to the relative arbitrariness of individual perception. Fortunately my project does not depend on the minutiae of the visual image, although it is of course dependent on the image as such and my perception of it. But I am less concerned with the details of camera angle, point of view, size of shot, or the intricacies of editing than with being able to point out in relatively unambiguous terms dimensions of action and movement, and of the specifics of location or dress. I can point to, for example, a particular location as being in a garden, or an office, and to a man in a tie and suit or on the other hand in shirt sleeves and tieless, with a minimum of ambiguity and, for my purposes, the maximum of significance. This is not to say that other aspects of the image will not be present or, for other purposes, important.

The second dimension to this problem of transcription has to do with the narrative itself. Its more or less unselfconscious description necessary for and prior to analysis as such, involves, inevitably a reduction and a translation. The summary of a narrative, particularly of one drawn from another medium is just that, a summary, and therefore subject to question. Indeed such a summary description is structured, and subsequent analysis could well be open to challenge on the basis that what is being analysed is not the original text but the summary of it. Once again, short of referring to the original texts, there is no way of checking the accuracy or relevance of the summary, and even then no way of defining it as final and totally adequate, as true. If narratives are structured then one can identify and summarize them. If they are not then no summary description will prove any better than another or more correct. This is the first
circle from within which this analysis seeks to extract itself, but I freely acknowledge that it is inside a circle where I begin.

The second methodological question also involves a circle, and that has to do with the fact that both text and analysis are both the produce of, and articulated within, the same culture. In one sense, this seems to me not as important as it might be, for theory and method itself, if offered both with care and an awareness of limits, provides some of the distance between the text and the resulting analysis, which is more obviously present were we to be involved in the texts of a distant and different culture.

But the implications of this difference need to be noted. In the case of an analysis of myth such as undertaken by Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marcel Detienne or Edmund Leach, what is involved is the elucidation of meaning which may well be appreciated, albeit unconsciously, by those who utter and hear the myths, but of which we, without the benefit of such an analysis, can make little sense. Such accounts as these mythologists offer may well be difficult to substantiate but it may be equally correct to suggest, as Peter Caws does of Lévi-Strauss's work in particular, that "Its greatest contribution has been to claim for the intellect a territory which we had all but abandoned to the absurd."6

This whole relationship of analyst and object is clearly very different where that object is a television programme and where the analyst is a member of the culture and society that produced it. The problems are not so much of generating conclusions that seem valid, but of making these conclusion convincing to those who will read them; to those who are equally members of that culture, and who by virtue of their involvement in it and as members of a television watching
community, will in one sense have no need of such analysis. They understand what they are watching already. The dangers here are not of surprise or contradiction but of the banal and the obvious. The claim for the intellect this time is for a territory that had all but been abandoned to the trivial. The task is not to illuminate what we have not previously understood, but to suggest the rules according to which we understand what we do. The conclusions should be illuminating, but they are unlikely to be entirely surprising.

III

The Series Plot

1. It is early morning. Joan Paynter is in the garden, Harry Paynter her husband of some thirty years, is getting dressed upstairs. They meet for breakfast in the kitchen, and discuss their future holiday and the likely events of the day. Harry, as usual, leaves for work. His journey involves a drive to the station in his veteran Bentley and a train journey to the city, where he works as a production manager for a publishing company. At work he delegates a job to a young member of his department. Later, at a lunchtime meeting with his solicitor Harry is told that their usual holiday cottage, which they had attempted to buy, had been sold and furthermore that their holiday there was now impossible.

Harry returns home to find daughter Kate in residence and faces Joan with the news. An argument ensues. Kate attempts to ameliorate the situation, and though not without some difficulty, Harry persuades Joan of his new holiday plans. After some friends' thirtieth anniversary party, they make peace, but on the following morning, Sunday, and the day when they are due to leave for their holiday, Harry is called urgently to the office. A problem has resulted from his delegation and Harry must go and sort it out. He will meet Joan at the ticket barrier at the station. He arrives just in time but as he reaches Joan he collapses, and the train leaves without them.

2. Harry is recovering in hospital after a heart attack, and Joan is warned by their doctor that he has been lucky and must be very careful in the future: no smoking, little drinking, much exercise. Joan brings him home and settles him in bed, while the rest of the family gather - Kate, and other daughter Judith with her husband Matt. Matt provokes Joan with his apparent insensitivity about his father-in-law's illness.
The recovery progresses, and Harry, Joan and Kate are relaxing in the garden when Bob, the company secretary arrives to discuss Harry's future. Bob wants to persuade Harry to take an early retirement, and that refused, he then promises to find a way of keeping Harry at work in the company. The new job, although well packaged, seems to Harry to be worthless. He walks out at lunchtime on the first day. On his return home he tells Joan of what he has done and the two of them move apart. Harry goes into the garden, Joan runs upstairs.

3. Harry and Joan arrive, (Joan is driving a hired car) for a holiday in the Lake District. Harry is still expected to take it easy. He walks round Coniston, while Joan unpacks. He discovers the presence of Ruskin, an old hero of his. They meet the Lansons; he is a retired soldier who coincidentally served with Joan's late brother during the war. Harry and Joan reject the offer of a joint walking trip and subsequently their relations with the Lansons become estranged. Phoebe Lanson breaks down over dinner when reminded of the loss of their own child. The holiday, otherwise, continues, with Harry and Joan thinking of the future and remembering their past. However, a message arrives for Joan from Bob, Harry's old company secretary. It seems that Joan has been talking to Bob without Harry knowing. He is angry, and after a row, they decide to return home.

4. Harry is under pressure, especially financial pressure, to find a job. He sees the bank manager who reluctantly agrees to keep supporting Harry's overdraft. Later Harry meets with an ageing publisher in London who cannot offer him a job, but does suggest someone who might be able to help.

Tom Daniels has a new business locally. He offers Harry a directorship of his printing works, although at a small starting salary. Harry promises to think it over and suggests to Joan that they invite Daniels, and it transpires, his secretary/girlfriend to dinner. After dinner Daniels offers a share in the business in return for a contribution of £20,000. Harry hasn't got it, but he intends to raise it. His search, finally, leads him to a city money lender. Harry baulks at the interest asked and returns home empty handed.

Joan has been against the venture from the start but they momentarily sink their differences on Harry's return, for it is Judith's birthday and she and Matt are at home when he arrives. However Tom arrives angrily. He has found out about Harry's attempt to raise money and he calls the whole deal off. Harry is dejected, but he remembers an advertisement that Matt has seen in a local paper. He goes to ring but it is after hours.
5. Harry and Joan are at breakfast, but Harry is reluctant to go to work. Work, when he does arrive, is a small printing works in a converted chapel. Harry is a superior sort of salesman. There is nothing about Foster, the boss, or the two minions, Dale and Foster's secretary which he likes. He is not busy. He comes home for lunch and dawdles. He is starting to drink. His family life becomes increasingly strained. He has a row with Judith and he does not talk to Joan.

A day or so later, stepping out of his routine, Harry makes for the local at lunchtime. He meets Pat there, the owner of an office bureau, and they have lunch together. After some hesitation Harry agrees to go to London with her the following Thursday. Joan is lied to.

The trip to London involves lunch, a visit to an art gallery, and a roof garden tea. Pat suggests they go to bed together but Harry demurs. They part friends, but Harry returns home irritable. He tries to talk to Joan but fails, and can only shout at her.

His work seems to deteriorate. He rejects an offer of a lunchtime drink from Pat, and finds himself back home with his family; Joan, for whom he buys the Chinese vase that she had wanted (though it is the wrong one), and Judith and Matt, to whom he lies about his work.

But neither family nor work provide any consolation. He is threatened by Foster and is dispirited by Judith and Matt's continual rowing. He rushes round to see Pat, only to be attacked and vilified by her. Pat leaves him alone in her flat, drink in hand and almost in tears.

6. Harry is drinking before breakfast. He is responsible for an idle works and threatened by Foster. He must produce some worthwhile orders or else. Help comes in the shape of an old friend, Stephen Kenyon, who unwittingly suggests to Joan that Harry's recent trip to London might not have been what she believed it to be.

That evening Harry is not hungry. He gets drunk and lies to Joan about his trip to London. Joan has to put him to bed and as she does so she checks in Harry's diary. She finds out that he has been lying. Kate's subsequent arrival does not really help matters, and Harry has a row with her too, envious of the amount of money she is earning.

However, the deal with Kenyon, first explored in London, and then confirmed at lunch in Tunbridge Wells with Foster present, seems to generate new hope. But while they are signing it, the apprentice Dale jams a potato up the exhaust of Harry's Bentley and the ensuing explosion prompts Harry to attack him.
Jobless, Harry returns home and Joan and he face each other with their past and lack of future. A cathartic row leaves both exhausted and dejected.

Early next morning Harry finds Joan walking alone in the garden, and the first tentative steps at reconstruction are decided upon and later tested on Kate. Harry is proposing to start up on his own; the house and the car are to be sold.

Harry has found a bookshop in Tunbridge Wells. It is run by an ageing Miss Temple. There is a flat above and Joan accepts the inevitability of their move. Harry begins to familiarize himself with the bookshop and the bookselling business, while Joan tries to interpret and disguise the nature of their move to her friends. The car is sold, and they agree to sell the house.

The contract for the purchase of the bookshop is agreed and they move in. Harry becomes involved. He is happy. Joan misses the house and on a visit there to tend the garden, meets the prospective buyer and her children. They discuss their men; Joan is anxious and upset.

Matters are made worse by the falling through of the sale of their own house. Harry goes to London to see Bob and asks him if he can take his own pension early. Bob refuses. Meanwhile Joan, left to look after the shop, refuses to serve an old friend after a certain unpleasantness.

Harry arrives home to find the shop closed and Joan absent. He goes round to the house and finds her sitting disconsolately in the darkened, empty, sitting room. She feels his gain to be her loss, and although Harry persuades her to return to the flat, her doubts and sorrow remain.

Joan is going to London for the day to buy curtain material. At breakfast, Harry noting her rather dowdy appearance, suggests she also buy a new dress and dressing gown.

On her arrival in London she buys curtain material, a dress and dressing gown and shoes, and loaded with purchases, she walks into a hotel. She meets there an old friend, Lionel, who has just been stood up by a girlfriend. Lionel, she learns, is divorced. He buys her a drink, lunch, wine and takes her up to his bedroom for coffee and brandy. He persuades her to try on her new clothes. She is seduced.

Joan's initial dissatisfaction and feelings of guilt are assuaged as they talk and she gains some insight into marriage and into sex. They make love again, and it is now her turn to cross-examine Lionel. He discusses his marriage and his loneliness, a conversation continued during tea in the restaurant downstairs.
They both go home separately: Joan to Harry, Lionel alone on his train to Manchester. At home, in front of the television and later in bed, Joan discusses her day with Harry, but in the face of limited interest fails to tell him very much.

9. The morning of a busy day. Harry is very involved in the shop, but Joan is depressed and distracted. She puts off a friend's invitation and goes to the sale of their old furniture. She leaves in tears. She goes to their old house and meets two prospective buyers. She feels rejected and Harry attacks her inability to contribute and her general lethargy. He tells her to go and see Maurice, their doctor.

Joan does go and see the doctor, but sees instead of her usual, a Doctor Bowers, his female partner. She is given much advice and resolves to pick herself up by involving herself in Harry's life.

Her first attempt to make contact with her old friends is rebuffed, but she goes shopping; then on to the hairdresser and that evening prepares Harry a special meal. It is, however, cut short, because Harry has to go to his painting class. Joan offers to meet him and his fellow class mates in the pub afterwards.

That evening she does join him, and they all get on quite well.

The following Sunday afternoon they are in their bedroom together. Harry is drawing and Joan asks him about painting and about bodies. She persuades him to draw her naked. He accepts the challenge and the two of them discover in conversation and finally physically a new basis for their relationship.

10. Another Sunday. As Harry and Joan get up, he suggests that they buy a double bed. They go to church. Judith and Matt come for lunch, but have a row about a prospective trip to Canada.

Judith is pregnant, but she has not told Matt. Indeed her decision to come off the pill was a unilateral one and Matt doesn't know about that either. He does not want children for the time being.

Joan and Harry decide to spend the day in London and despite strained finances they buy a bed. While they are trying them out, they meet Kate and boyfriend Bob (Harry's old company secretary). Later the two of them have lunch, go to a movie and Joan spends a little time in a baby shop.

Meanwhile Judith is consulting a doctor about an abortion; it fails. She is told to face Matt with what she has done.
On Joan and Harry's return they find Judith outside the door of the shop. She and Matt have had a row and Matt has walked out. The following morning Harry goes round to sort it out with Matt, and together they return to patch up their quarrel. Kate arrives to complete the family.

Harry and Joan travel to London for the Remembrance Sunday service, an event which prompts their own recollections of the war, their childhood and their early years together. This is continued with the help of a photograph album when they return home.

He suggests that Joan start selling antiques in the shop, but Joan is disinclined. Another meeting with Harry's classmates in the pub is followed by their mutual comforting in their double bed.

They find themselves subsequently at a party where old friends congratulate them for their courage and determination and where their own togetherness is reflected in a row that separates another couple.

They visit Portsmouth together, Harry has (apparently) persuaded Joan to buy some antiques and they spend some time at an auction. They also meet in their old wartime local an old seaman whom they recognize and who insists on their going back to his place. They find the whole event uncomfortable.

However, Joan manages to buy some good pieces, and they drive home well satisfied.

Harry and Joan travel to London to see their accountant. On Tunbridge Wells station, they meet an old colleague who tells them of big changes at his old place of work and that they are looking for a new production manager. The news at the accountants is gloomy. The bridging loan, because of the unsold house, is crippling.

But on their return Harry is 'phoned by Bob, still at Turnmill, who says that the new boss wants to see Harry about a job. They are both uncertain, but next day Harry travels to London and is indeed offered a responsible and well paid job. He has twenty-four hours to make up his mind.

Lunch with Bob and a public relations lady is followed by an interview with the lady in her bed-sitting room. They have a long and increasingly intimate discussion. This is extended into dinner and the girl suggests they go to bed together. Harry says no, though they part friends.

Meanwhile, the agent responsible for the sale of the house has been speaking to Joan. There is a buyer and Harry has to decide by the following morning.
The following morning Harry indeed decides to sell the house and refuse the job. His description of what passed between him and the P.R. lady prompts Joan to tell him of Lionel. She is forgiven. Harry, though hurt, understands, and can accept it.

13. In the middle of the night, Harry hears on the 'phone that his mother, in an old people's home, is dying. They both rush to her to her bedside to find her in a coma and a doctor waiting. They visit the chapel.

The following morning they receive a letter from Kate saying that she is setting up house with Bob, and Harry and Joan plan how to spend their wedding anniversary. Harry is given a talking to by his doctor. His mother dies.

Joan is buying and selling antiques, and Harry is busy too. Unbeknown to her, he has designed a bungalow which he plans to build with the money released by the sale of the house. Joan is delighted when she sees the model.

In the evening there is a family party: Matt, Judith, Kate and Bob join Harry and Joan for champagne and dinner. Bob gets drunk and aggressive. He finds the family oppressive, and falls off his chair pulling table cloth, crockery and cutlery on to the floor.

The following morning Bob is excused, accepted and subsequently more accepting. Kate and he have Joan and Harry's blessing. Harry then takes Joan to a field where he suggests their bungalow could be built. Does Joan like it? She does. They kiss and then separately, but together, pace their way round the imagined building.
In the following morphological analysis of the series narrative, I will, as far as possible, try and avoid cluttering the text with the various symbols which identify in the Proppian and the Greimassian schemes the different functions. These details can be found in Appendix 2 and 3. What I want to achieve, simply, at this stage, is to identify the chronological structure of the narrative, its linearity, prior to showing how that linearity itself can be interpreted in systemic terms within the framework of the equilibrium model of narrative suggested by A.J. Greimas. Again I will not insist on any formal correspondence between the functional notations of Propp and Greimas, for indeed, as I have already pointed out, these are more hazy and less complete than might appear. Finally I will treat the analysis, for the time being only, as non-problematical. I wish to introduce, however, the notion, specifically discussed by A.J. Greimas, of the qualifying, the main and the glorifying tests into this initial analysis. They satisfactorily determine the three types of encounter the hero has during the course of the narrative and this is useful even though for Propp they are not distinguished quite in such terms.

A brief glance at the suggested morphology of the series narrative (Appendix 4) will immediately call the lie to any idea that the narrative must consist in a single linearity, for it is clear that there is, at three points, duplication or triplication of functional sequences. It is clear that episodes 2, 3, 4 and 5, with minor qualifications
have the same functional significance, and this is similarly true of 7 and 8 and part of 9 as well as 10, 11 and 12. To a degree this has to do with the existence of multiple lacks (see below), but there are also other possible explanations.

The general structure reveals itself to be closely identified with the classical Proppian model: an initial situation and lack defined (episode 1) is followed by a series of tests (2-5) each of which involves gaining help or support, prior to a significantly climactic struggle in episode 6. In a simple narrative this would be successful and subsequent tests would only confirm the achievement of the hero. In this narrative however this significant struggle ends in failure and while the narrative preserves the functions of acknowledgement, transformation and wedding, they are manifested negatively. The narrative could have ended here, but it would have been incomplete, unresolved. A new narrative is called for, and at the end of episode 6, with its continuation in episode 7, it is defined.

A new initial situation precedes a further series of qualifying tests whose hero, interestingly, is Joan rather than Harry. Once again these tests (7 and 8 and part of 9) generate another significant confrontation, successfully achieved this time. The three following episodes (10, 11 and 12) function as further, almost self-congratulatory units, and they in turn lead to a final episode which is predominantly concerned with the re-unification of the family, indeed the 'wedding' and transformation of the two heros.
Let us look at each episode more closely, bearing in mind that the concern is not with the details of its own functioning but in its functional contribution to the series narrative as a whole. Only in episode 6 and part of episode 9 do the two coincide.

That the first episode is scene setting is obvious. Harry's relationship to Joan, their relationship to the rest of the family, to their environment, and to work constitutes in Proppian terminology an initial situation. Clearly too the heart attack at the end of the episode, the catalyst of the action for the series narrative, functions as a lack. The precise nature of this lack, however, is not so obvious, for it is not just physical health. Subsequent developments play out what is still either only implicit in, or causally dependent on, the action of the episode. What is implicit is the lack in Joan and Harry's relationship, let us call it social health. What follows as a direct result of the heart attack is Harry's loss of job, let us call it cultural health. I will discuss this more fully shortly.

I am suggesting that there is implicit in this first episode an order, or perhaps more reasonably a violation of an order. This is implicit, but it is warranted for without it the lack which follows itself is unjustified. We need to know, because the narrative subsequently is involved in effecting a resolution to the question, why it is that Harry has a heart attack. There is in this episode, and indeed in the series as a whole, no clearly defined villain or dispatcher whose manifest involvement in the narrative at this stage would make these functions explicit. We can talk of fate taking a hand, and this indeed is perhaps the best way of identifying the deus ex machina. But we can also suggest that Harry is violating an
ideal of moderation in all things, an ideal of social balance or
equilibrium, which without begging too many questions seems to be
the dominant preoccupation of the narrative as a whole. It might,
a final paradox, even be in their normalcy' that they have infringed
some rule of behaviour, an infringement which identifies them as
suitable characters for the subsequent narrative.

Episode 2 begins with a series of announcements about Harry's ill
health, his lucky escape from certain death, and his need to take
it easy, to refrain from many of his normal socio-cultural activities.
A number of Propp's sub-functions (B
3
, B
4
, B
5
) are involved in this
phase of the narrative.

In what follows (Episodes 2 - 5) this particular lack of physical
ill-health is heavily underplayed. Much more important is the
lack of work (Episodes 2 and 4) and lack in their relationship
(Episodes 3 and 5). But what unites all of these episodes is
their inconclusivity. At the end of each the lack, be it cultural
or social health, is restated clearly, as having been unredeemed.
In each Harry looks for help in order to find himself, to re-establish
himself as an integrated human being, healthy in all ways. Indeed
this idea of an integrity of cultural, social and physical health
is the underpinning lack which in these episodes are explored only
partially. So in episode 2, this search for work, through the help
of Bob Blake, and in episode 4, through a succession of individuals,
are both searches for a means to an end, that of the whole man, not
the end itself. Similarly, though in a slightly different way,
episode 3 and 5 function as means to an end, the context this time
being lack of a relationship. In episode 3, he and Joan are looking
for themselves in their past but remaining separate despite that
search, and in episode 5 Harry's involvement with Pat fails to generate
alternative help outside the marriage.
Episode six is more complex. Indeed the narrative is more condensed so that it seems fair to say that the series and the episodic narrative here coincide. The lack of work and of a relationship with Joan is made clear as is Harry's preparedness to remedy both. His involvements away from home have however a double significance, and there is room for alternative interpretations. The contract with Kenyon is clearly functional in a similar way to much of the action in episode two and episode four. But the help successfully gained in the sealing of the contract with Kenyon also is the key to his confrontation with Foster, the boss, and in the series as a whole, that rare species, the villain. This test then seems also to have more than just relevance as qualification: it is also a main test, which successfully completed, redeems the lack rather than just provides the aid for its redemption. This interpretation is reinforced by the action of Dale. The successful completion of the qualifying and main test is followed immediately by a second test, which, in beating Dale up, Harry fails. As a result he loses his job, his heroic status is denied and he returns to Joan a beaten and punished man. Rather than being revealed as a true hero, he is exposed as a false one, and the row which follows suggests a divorce rather than a wedding.

My only anxiety about suggesting this interpretation, lies precisely in the weakness of the main test, and its ambiguity. It is, as it were, almost defined *ex post facto* by virtue of the clarity of the functions which follow. But its ambiguity is very much a product of the mode in which the narrative unfolds, in other words in the underplaying of the major dramatic action and potentially final confrontation. We will find the same problem in episode 9.
The last part of episode 6 establishes a new initial situation. In the discussion that takes place plans are made and Harry identifies his intention to act on them.

And this thread is continued in episode 7 with Harry's acceptance of self-employment and their move to a new home. The rest of episode 7 and episode 8 as a whole are similar in structure and functional significance to episodes 3 and 5. This time, Joan is the centre of attention; she is the hero, though the lack of social and cultural health remains the same. It is now Joan who has suffered the loss by their move: her work in the garden, and her relationship with Harry have been severely disrupted, not to say destroyed. At the end of each of these episodes, as in 2 - 5, that lack is unambiguously and negatively restated.

Episode 9 is similar in structure to, though less complete, than episode 6, but like it series and episodic narrative to a degree coincide. Joan is dispatched by Harry to seek help for her general low spirits. She does so, and it involves her not only with the doctor but also in the conviviality of her contact with Harry's young friends. The doctor clearly acts as a helper/donor, but it is the latter encounter, together with the more intimate involvement with Harry where the functions of a qualification test and, most significantly, of the main test seem to coincide. Here the villain as such, is absent; (perhaps it is Joan?). But it is clear that in the two encounters Joan's social and physical identity are re-established. Those lacks at least are redeemed.

It is then in the redemption (actual or potential) of a lack that the main test gains its recognition. The qualifying test generally can be seen to be at one remove. Only the means of the redemption
of the lack are gained. That in some cases, such as this one, the two are relatively indistinct does not alter the significance of this analysis.

Joan and Harry's love-making at the end of episode 9 is in every sense therefore a consummation, but it is also a hint of the positive ending of the series as a whole. In this legitimate union, in its rediscovery, the wedding (W) is suggested but not stated.

What is absent from the episode are those functions which in the Proppian schema follow the main test, but precede the final crowning achievement. These functions are provided by the three episodes which follow in which, though again in slightly different ways, Harry and Joan jointly test their union, and their integrity, against the world. In episode 10, their children Judith and her husband Matt, and Kate provide the opposition. In episode 11 they are faced with their past together, but Joan also completes her identity by her cultural involvement in buying and selling antiques. In episode 12 their marriage is tested by Harry's involvement with the public relations lady and once again in the world of work, and by Joan's revelations of her affair with Lionel. Indeed it is these episodes which confirm the centrality of/lack of social health, the lack in their relationship in the narrative as a whole. Harry's work, and his health are of little direct concern.

The final episode in a quite unambiguous fashion suggests the functions of recognition, transfiguration and of the wedding. Not only is the anniversary party held, but Harry and Joan are dressed in new clothes and present a new face to the rest of their family. The 'palace' too is planned as a just reward for their joint achievements.
The series as a whole, notwithstanding the ambiguities I have mentioned, seems to me to be an eloquent example of the sort of narrative Propp defines in his morphology, and as such has much of the folktale about it. Though obviously in the context of a psycho-social drama, where help is of an intangible (but none the less real) kind, and where conflicts are not expressed in demonstrably physical action, the passage from initial situation to final resolution preserves essentially the chronology particular to, since Propp, the folktale. To say this now is not to prejudge what will inevitably be a more considered final conclusion, but to stake a claim for the relevance of such an analysis, and for its significance, before both relevance and significance get buried by the sludge of qualification.

IV

We can move a stage deeper into the analysis of the narrative structure of the series by focussing attention on both its movement and its balance. The question now is in what sense can this narrative be understood in terms of a balanced and transformational structure? A full answer must await the discussions of the next chapter where the many layers, often over determined, through which the narrative works its way, have been examined.

In very simple terms, and quite obviously, the narrative of the series, Intimate Strangers, so far described, moves from one situation of harmony, albeit unstable, (Harry and Joan's life prior to their heart attack) to another situation of harmony, (the redefinition of their marriage and their future plans). That the second situation is different from the first and to an extent provides a resolution of it, a resolution demanded as a result of the events following the heart
attack, is also trivially obvious. But it is this movement that does
demand some discussion, not only because it seems of empirical relevance
but because in the theoretical work of A. J. Greimas it is in terms of
just such a transformational structure that the narrative, and narrative
as such, gains its significance.

What is missing on the other hand from this narrative as a whole, is
a clear personification of two of the major 'actants' (acting units)
and this makes the precise nature of the opening narrative above all,
at least in Grema's terms uncertain. The first episode, ending with
the heart attack, the unambiguous lack, fails to identify either villain
or dispatcher. In their absence and in the absence also of events which
would suggest loss of identity (C3) and loss of power (C2), the narrative
begins, in structural terms, rather weakly. We can postpone discussion
of why this should be so and its significance, but we are left in the
rather unsatisfactory situation of having to recognise the tacit presence
of Harry's loss of identity (self recognition) and power in this first
episode. The necessity to do so is premised on the clear evidence that
each are subsequently sought for and restored as the narrative progresses.

The heart attack is then the most clearly defined lack or loss, but as I
have already noted, this loss of physical health is accompanied by a loss
of cultural health (work) and social health (the deterioration in their
relationship). The end which Harry works towards then has this triple
valency. In order to be successful he needs information, both about the
world and about himself, and power. He loses both implicitly in the
first episode, though as we have seen from the morphological analysis so
far undertaken, neither he nor a villain are involved directly in
reconnaissance and the receipt of information, and he is not the subject of
a manifest deception.

Fate is both villain and despatcher. Implicit in its workings is the denial
of the contract that Harry has with life and with his society. The heart
attack either denies or reinforces his negative status and situation. He
is not a complete man, either physically, culturally or socially, and while
he is remaining in society/outside it. By his heart attack Harry has been literally
transformed into a different being. His and Joan's subsequent action, as
the narrative progresses, involve his (and their) reconstruction and their re
incorporation into society. There is no return; the solution advances
beyond the ruptured initial situation. The denial of their alienation
and of the loss of order in their world, involves a new and different
order.

Episodes 2 - 5 and then 7 and 8 involve respectively Harry and then Joan's
search for power, the wherewithal to effect their final reintegration into
society and the regeneration of their coherent identity. In each case,
faced with potential helper or helpers they are involved in a preliminary
negotiation (though this is often implicit) and in the achievement and non-
achievement of desired help. In Episode 6 and Episode 9 these functions
are also present, though in the first their successful achievement is sub-
sequently denied. Episodes 10, 11 and 12 involve successful attempts
at the reconstitution of their self-awareness and of their visibility -
both dimensions of knowledge and of recognition. Episode 13 completes
the narrative by stating all three dimensions to be successfully achieved.
Joan and Harry are transformed (C2), they are recognised as heroes (C1)
and they are 'remarried' (C3). Indeed in the last sequence and in their
commitment to the future they establish a new contract with each other, a
commitment which simultaneously reaffirms the liquidation of the lack.
The ambiguities already noted in episodes 6 and 9 particularly with regard to the main test reappear here. The main test in which the principal lack is liquidated is only weakly expressed. It can be argued that for Episode 6 the contract and the job are presented as the most significant object of search, even though in Episode 9 it is replaced by a search for a relationship. The fact that the first fails and the second is successful does perhaps indicate the particular morality of the plot, that it is in human relations, not work, that the key to humanity is to be found, but at least for the time being this is beside the point.

This discussion, albeit schematic, does suggest a number of points. Firstly, beneath the manifest complexity of a plot such as that of *Intimate Strangers* it is possible to determine a relatively simple patterning of events and movements. Secondly that this patterning initially discussed in morphological terms, can be understood also in structural terms and that this identifies the narrative as a coherent and balanced system. Thirdly that this system is articulated through a series of relations which involve above all the alienation of integration of, principally, the hero/es and his world. Fourthly that that articulation involves in the movement of the narrative through time, but also as we shall see, of its movement through space, a series of transformations. These transformations affect both the hero and through the hero, the meaning of the narrative as a whole. It is in the actions of the hero and, in this case, his helpers, opposers and the object of his desire, that this message is anthropromorphically generated. It is not the case, of course, that all meaning is generated from within the narrative. A great deal of the meaning of the story is dependent on the familiarity which its audience has with the culture within which it is being articulated and on which it depends. However, once that is accepted, then it is equally correct to
say that in the movement of the narrative itself, a movement specifically but not exclusively, dependent on its structural arrangement, meaning is created independently of that particular cultural context.

The final point is this. The narrative of Intimate Strangers, analysed as a whole, betrays very closely a structure which elsewhere is seen to be particular to the folktale. We are presented with an initial situation in which there is a rupture, in this case multiply expressed. The hero, firstly Harry, then later Joan, and implicitly both of them together undertake to seek for redemption. The form of their search depends on the particular nature of the lack. We have seen there are three dimensions, natural health, cultural health and social health.

The search itself is in three stages. An initial series of tests or encounters in which the hero looks for assistance, help or advice, is followed albeit weakly in this case, by a confrontation in which the redemption of the lack itself is the object of the encounter. These tests and there are two of them, the first unsuccessful, the second successful are followed by a series of further tests whose object is to confirm the achievements so far gained, and to do so in a way which establishes the hero's status. The series narrative ends with the materialisation of the results of their search. The lack is redeemed. Joan and Harry are reunited together with their family. They are, indeed, reintegrated into their society. Order is restored.

The only complexity at this level of analysis is the duplication which follows Harry's failure in Episode 6. That duplication also involves a change of hero. Joan then follows, though less intently and less fully, the narrative path which Harry has already defined. Her success in Episode 9 confirms his narratively subsidiary success during the preceding three episodes. From this point, the end of Episode 9, Harry and Joan act as joint heroes.
It will be worthwhile to examine in an inevitably more detailed way the narrative of a single episode. Let me look at Episode 6.

A fuller summary of the plot of this episode follows:

Harry begins the day with a brandy and over breakfast rejects both Joan's offer of fish pie for lunch and her joke about the alcohol on his breath. He arrives at work to discover it idle, the workers sitting on their machines. He is responsible. Harry runs to his office, opens the mail and makes a call to a local school in the hope of an order, only to find that Foster, his boss, is already there. He opens a drawer, takes out a quarter of brandy and drinks from the bottle.

Meanwhile Joan, busy with her housework, receives a telephone call from an old friend of Harry's, Stephen Kenyon, who wants to get in touch with Harry about some work. Kenyon had only just heard of Harry's heart attack, a piece of information which makes Joan suspicious.

Back at the works Foster intrudes and Harry is given both a talking down and the threat of the sack if a large order is not produced and produced quickly. By the evening Harry is both depressed and drunk. He won't eat and lies to Joan about his previous week's trip to London, a visit during which Joan believed he had met Kenyon. Bedtime is an occasion for Joan to help Harry into his pyjamas but also to check the truth of his story in the diary once he is asleep. She realises Harry has been lying.

Next day, Saturday, Joan gardens while Harry and Kenyon meet in the City. The deal is, in principle, agreed. Kenyon will come down to Tunbridge Wells and see the work after the weekend. Harry, delighted, but slightly the worse for wear, and having driven his Bentley into Joan's wheelbarrow, arrives home to find daughter Kate in residence. Kate's present of a bottle is eagerly accepted.

Sunday morning finds Joan finishing her gardening and leaving for church. Kate and Harry, both involved in their work, discuss some aspects of the printing industry, a discussion which leads to a row, principally as Kate points out, over the fact that she earns considerably more than her father. Joan's return and interruption serves only to fan the flames. Kate stamps out of the house.

However, tempers cool and the following morning Kate and Harry make up. His lunch with Kenyon and Foster goes well and the deal is agreed. Later, in Harry's office they sign it. But while this is going on an apprentice, Dale, plans and executes a practical joke; he jams a potato up the exhaust of Harry's Bentley. The ensuing mild explosion prompts Harry to run into the works, find Dale and attack him. He is pulled off by Kenyon and Foster.
Joan returns that evening to find Harry alone in the dark. He tells her of the loss of his job and of the attack. They are led into an increasingly heated and desperate analysis of their past together, Harry's old and more recent 'affairs', and their lack of future. They both end up exhausted and defeated.

Early next morning Harry awakes to find Joan's bed empty. He quickly dresses and discovers her walking in the garden. She does not want to come in. They begin to discuss their past and to discover the possibility both of coming to terms with it and of being able to make positive decisions about their future. Harry wants to work for himself. They realise the enormity of the proposition and the implications - the selling of the house, the car, the discovery of who their friends really are. They test their ideas on Kate who is delighted.

Finally, after finding themselves separately in situations redolent of the past, Joan and Harry come together in the garden. They express their mutual fears and anxiety but they resolve to face the future together. Hand in hand they walk back to the house.

I have analysed this episode in terms of a modified and extended model of Metz's 'grande syntagmatique' the significance of which, for present purposes, is two-fold. Firstly it produces a breakdown of a continuous narrative in autonomous units of signification, autonomous that is with respect to the signifier (the form of the expression), to the specific medium through and in which the narrative is expressed. In what follows the numbered segments correspond to these units. Secondly, and more generally, the Metzian type of analysis centred as it is on a text's signifying process, allows us to recognise and acknowledge the relative complexity or simplicity of that construction. The number and nature of the autonomous segments recognised in this manner goes some way towards identifying a particular genre, or style of story-telling, a genre or style exclusively linked to the technique and technology of its telling.
This type of classification is important in two other related ways. Juxtaposition of segments defined in terms of the signifier with those defined in terms of the signified (more strictly in terms of the form of the expression and the form of the content) allows us to appreciate one element of the dynamic of the narrative - to be understood in terms of the coincidence or non-coincidence of the units of the two levels of analysis. And secondly such analysis allows for a way of establishing the similarities and differences between one aural/visual medium and another - say film and television - as well as of establishing at the level of the signifier, differences between one style of television making and another.

But, as I have already suggested, the principal concern of this thesis is with the narrative rather than with the particularities of the carrier of the narrative and so the autonomous segments of the episodic televisualisation of *Intimate Strangers* are presented without further discussion.

Once again, also, the detailed analysis of the text, this time of episode 6, is presented in Appendix 6 and 7. The first presents the morphology, following Propp, and the second transforms that into a structural arrangement. I will attempt a summary here.

To some small degree the opening sequence assumes some knowledge of prior events, though the force with which Harry's early morning drink is presented is sufficiently clearly the breaking of a
prohibition; the narrative, by virtue of it, is remarkably
self-contained. Joan is the first potential helper or denier of
help, and her failure to respond or provide what Harry seems to
want suggests the ongoing lack in their relationship. 11

But Harry's basic preoccupation, and since he is still the
centre of attention, the narrative's main concern, is with his
work, and his actions away from home. On arrival he learns of
his failure to produce enough orders to keep production going
and of his boss, Foster's attempt to fill the breech. Foster is
a complex figure, morphologically. He appears to be both
dispatcher; he challenges Harry to get the orders, to fulfil
the task, but he is also a villain, in the sense that it is both
his potential disapproval and his apparent hold over the key
to Harry's cultural existence that he becomes someone to be
defeated. (2, 4 and 5).

Joan too (6) comes close to villainy, and is so far as she
acts treacherously, then it seems that her involvement with
Harry increasingly signals a move from a potentially helping
relationship and therefore from tests of a qualifying nature, to
a potentially confrontational relationship and therefore to a main
test (see 19).
A good part of the narrative, (8-14) in which Harry and Kate are involved, sparring with each other, and during which Joan goes to church is, in terms of the movement of the narrative, fairly neutral. The impression one gets is of a more or less deliberate postponement of tension, after Kenyon and Harry have agreed to follow up the deal, and before it is finally agreed. Kate is clearly a potential helper, though at one remove both from Harry's involvement with work, the first of his likely main tests, and from his involvement with Joan, the second.

Her support which is finally gained (14, and in another context 21) is, as it were, of a limited nature. The 'magical agent', the knowledge that Harry takes with him of her understanding of his situation, is of narrative significance, chronologically, but also of significance in articulating the fluctuations in Harry's kinship relations.

The completion of the contract with Kenyon and Foster is, (15 and 17) as we have already seen, of double significance functionally. On the one hand the qualifying test, in which Kenyon is the potential donor, is successfully completed. Harry gains the contract which is the key to his success in establishing his security at work. In the signing of the contract, then, Foster's threat is averted. Foster's villainy is annulled.
Harry's involvement with Dale (16 and 18) is therefore functionally clear. He stands to confirm or to lose by this supplementary test all his previous gains. He loses them, and with that loss with its accompanying denial of his heroic status, and his punishment as a false-hero, he returns home.

In the context of the episode and the series, segment 19 has multiple functional significance. An initial skirmish with Joan which leaves them as far apart as ever is followed by a major confrontation in which the lack in their relationship is finally made absolutely clear. As a result both Harry and Joan, but particularly Harry, ends defeated; the relationship is in tatters (W-). Joan's function is complex, and to a degree, ambiguous. Her involvement in this segment and previously, as potential helper in and hence/the various qualifying tests which Harry undergoes, is overlain by her villainy here, which in the context of their marriage, is suggested by her failure as helper and her opposition to Harry's actions. However, having said that, Harry's failure in the world of work suggests that he too, could be construed, momentarily, as the villain. The ambiguity is significant. It derives from each of their separate failures. It is the ambiguity of exclusion.

In their failure they have found themselves outside the clearly defined categories and roles assumed to be central for the effective functioning of a marriage and they have found themselves, in their darkened room, to be, momentarily, outside of society.

The dawn (20) brings with it a new narrative, or perhaps more strictly a new move in the narrative. Harry finds Joan walking by herself in the garden. Together they discuss the past and the future. They agree to act, to effect a change in their circumstances, and their plan is tested on Kate (21). The last two segments which
function most clearly as connectives, confirm that the past has gone, and that with some anxiety, they are ready to face the future.

Once again implicit in this morphological analysis of episode 6, is the way in which the narrative articulates rupture. As it happens, that rupture which is threatened in the opening segment is maintained through Harry's subsequent failure. We begin with a lack and a threat, and we end with failure and that lack magnified. What follows, in the last few segments of the episode, announces the continuation of the plot. Without them we might be excused for seeing the plot as a tragedy, and that through no fault of his own (fate the villain) Harry has failed to defend the surplus (job, marriage, family, health) which in other stories might be the object of search. There is then, in this episode a certain negatively fully expressed equilibrium. We can recognize it more/follow the narrative in terms suggested by A.J. Greimas (Appendix 7).

The central narrative, that is prior to the announcement of the new move, consists in a movement from rupture (A) to rupture (A). Harry's drinking is symbolic of his denial of a contract with the world and it is also a violation of a specific prohibition - not to drink. The move ends with the reaffirmation of that rupture in which Harry and Joan together deny their contract with each other and by implication with society as a whole. In a sense one can say that they have suffered a social heart-attack.

Between these two points of the narrative, the search for recognition ($C_1$), for power ($C_2$) and for the object of desire ($C_3$) is pursued and each of the tests is associated with one or other of these dimensions of search. Harry's initial involvement with Joan looks for help ($\tilde{C}_2$), and its failure defines his lack of relationship ($C_3$).
Subsequently, in what is a repetition of that test, Joan's actions suggest all three of the ways in which Harry is deprived. In her duplicity about the diary, she is both seeking information, deceiving Harry and threatening him. It is manifestly their relationship which is now the object of search in this episode, and henceforth in the series as a whole. It is the key to both Joan and Harry's social and cultural, and even physical renewal.

The encounter with Kenyon and with Kate separately and together involve Harry's search for the means to act, for power, and his conflict with Foster is a conflict over goods. Equally obviously his thrashing of Dale, the glorifying test, deprives Harry of his potential heroic status, and of recognition, both by himself and by others, of his success. And this situation is repeated with Joan. So at the end of this encounter we are faced with a hero who has failed ($\bar{A}$), who is punished ($\bar{C}_2$), impotent ($\bar{C}_2$) unrecognized ($\bar{C}_1$) and whose contract with society has been exploded ($\bar{A}$). We are, as it were, back at the beginning.

While, as I've already suggested, there would be no absolute necessity for the narrative to continue at this point, it does so, and it does so by establishing along the three dimensions of knowledge, power and desire the three axes of the ensuing narration. Harry and Joan in their discussion in the garden affirm their own lacks; they attempt to discover something of the reality of their situation, to understand one another and to establish thereby their ignorance of each other. Secondly they reveal the lack in their relationship and in their relationship with society. Finally, and as a consequence of both of these moments they realise their own past impotence. Nevertheless they decide to make a go of it ($A_1$) and as a preliminary test their ideas on Kate. The stage is set, as it were, for a whole
new movement of the narration. Episodes 7 to 13 develop and complete both this new movement and the narrative as a whole.

VI

I have suggested that the narrative of Intimate Strangers, both of the series and of its episodes substantially follow a similar pattern and that pattern is one which links these narratives with the folk narratives previously discussed by Vladimir Propp, and to the model of narrative in part derived from Propp and elucidated by A.J. Greimas. This is significant, obviously, not just in these terms, but in so far as it has been shown that these texts present a narrative which is in substantial part like that of the folktale; that beneath what seems so contemporary and particular, lies a level of expression which links that contemporaneity and particularity, the product of an industrialized, literate culture, with the cultural products of past societies, neither industrialized, nor so essentially literate. If there is something universal in the telling of stories, then the albeit very limited data presented here, at least suggests that that hypothesis remains plausible. Indeed the chronological narratives of Intimate Strangers, are clearly accessible. The telling of these stories depends on a temporal logic which is already familiar no less to us than to the audience of the folktales of Russia or of France or of pre-Columbian America.

This suggested continuity is not however in any sense an identity. The narrative of Intimate Strangers, as are the narratives of all contemporary tales are particular, both in terms of the particularity of our culture and society, but also in the sense that each text itself is unique. The analysis of Intimate Strangers has produced enough evidence of its particularity for this statement to be obvious.
But before discussing some of these dimensions in terms of the problems and ambiguities that the analysis has raised, I want to say a brief word about the analysis in general, and above all about its static appearance.

It goes without saying that a Proppian methodology seems to obliterate what Roland Barthes and, following him, Seymour Chapman have called the risk of the narrative, and what I have called its uncertainty. The morphology is of a completed narrative and is dependent on its unity for without it no functional or morphological analysis would be possible. Claude Bremond in discussing both Propp and Greimas is at pains to make this point clear, but Bremond, as I have already suggested, in his own way overcompensates for this absence, and produces a scheme for the analysis of narrative which deprives it of its unity and fails to recognize its closure. Narratives are both structured and therefore in a certain sense closed; they have a beginning and an end; but they are also open, in the sense that as the narrative progresses there are a number of possibilities, a number of choices available to the acting units.

Logically, at any one point in the narrative, for example say the result of a contest, there are four possibilities; that it will be successful, that it will fail, that its result will be complex and affect the different acting units, or actors, in different ways, or that it will be neutral, that final success or failure is withheld. The uncertainty of the narrative, its risk, consists in the uncertainty as to which of these possibilities will be the one taken. Given the number of such choices that both acting units, and hence producers and audience, have to make in a complex story, then there are obviously a great number of potential narrative variants. But however great a number of ways of telling a story there are, measured in terms of the
different paths the action can take, not only are they limited, but that limitation is reducible to a permutation of only four basic choices. This dynamic, of a strictly limited uncertainty, is implicit in the Proppian model, and hopefully, in my discussions so far. It does not take much to bring it to the surface. It certainly does not involve a rejection of the formalism which has been used to open up the narrative, whatever other reasons there might be for rejecting such an approach. Narrative risk, I suggest, consists in this limited certainty or uncertainty and we can recognize it once we acknowledge that the outcomes of particular actions are neither pre-given, nor entirely free, but articulated through the codes of narrativity, a most significant one of which is that of its chronology.

However, there is a further point. The assumption that a narrative is, in its own terms, closed, and that within that closure there is a precise and to a large extent predictable chronology makes following a narrative itself a more not a less, involving task. Firstly because certain of its functions can be left implicit, and have to be available to the reader, or audience, if he wishes to make full sense of the chronology; and secondly some functions, in their interconnection, can be left incomplete, for example it often happens that the three moments of a test are split up - the hero and the potential donor meet, the test is undertaken, but the resolution of the test is delayed. Here, in morphological terms, we can recognize the dynamic of the narrative, that is its delay and its significant absences. Neither would be available or explicable without the assumption of the sort of model as being central to the narrative as I have assumed and argued for here.
It remains, nevertheless, to outline what seem to be particularities of the narrative of Intimate Strangers, an outline which perforce leaves open the question of their significance and their typicality.

They begin with and may also subsequently stem from what I have called the mode of the narrative. Mode is not a very precise term. I want to be able to suggest that Intimate Strangers, for example, stresses the passivity rather than the activity of its characters, limits the extremes of action, dwells on the exchange of meanings rather than of goods, is prepared to weaken the contrasts of black and white and deal more often in various shades of grey. The notion of genre, is too specific, and style too personal; mode identifies in a very general way, the contextuality of a narrative, its atmosphere, its orientation. Without wishing to labour the point, it seems reasonable to suggest that the drama of Intimate Strangers is one of understatement. In its understatement we are involved more with the intricacies of social interaction and psychological development, than with overt action either physical or mystical.

Now while it is the purpose of the argument that this is irrelevant as far as the recognition of the morphology of the narrative is concerned, it seems fair to suggest that it is the mode of the narrative which has produced the absences, ambiguities and difficulties associated with that morphology. I have noted a number in my account thus far. Let me, briefly, bring them together now.

Clearly in a narrative such as that of Intimate Strangers, in its realism and in its close concern with the events of the everyday, the function which in Proppian terms calls for the receipt of the magical agent, has to be interpreted in metaphorical terms.

The heroes in this narrative, essentially Harry and Joan, both separately and together gain help and support of an intangible
nature rather than a magical agent as such. Rarely is anything handed over, except perhaps money (ep. 7 and implicitly in episode 12), which is in any way directly effective in the pursuit of the main object. But help is given and refused, advice is often offered. This seems trivial and indeed it is, except that in so far as the particular content of a function is important - if it is for example consistent in identifying the coherence of a narrative and what I have already loosely called its mode.

The narrative of *Intimate Strangers* has further dimensions which reinforce its consistency. It may be remembered that the narrative proper of the series begins with Harry's heart attack. It seems at that point, that this event is entirely fortuitous, and so it is. No villainy has been committed. Harry suffers passively, and it is this passivity, and the absence of any overt villainy which sets the pace for the rest of the narrative.

There are two points which arise from this; the first has to do with the nature of the lack, and the second with the lack of a villain.

To deal with the question of lack first. There are in the series three dominant lacks, each motivating one main thread in the narrative. A lack, as we have seen, is assumed to be more subjectively felt and initially a passive imposition, whereas villainy implies something more objectively determinable and entirely imposed by an identifiable agent. They are, obviously, in an asymmetrical relationship, villainy will generate a lack, but a lack can exist without villainy.

In the series as a whole there are three interdependent lacks. The first, and the catalyst, is the lack of natural health, as it is primarily felt by Harry - his heart attack and its physical consequences. But this is quickly forgotten. From episode 3, to episode 12, when
he goes for a check up, Harry's physical health, and hence this natural lack, is scarcely mentioned and is even narratively insignificant.

The second of the three lacks, that of work (lack of cultural health) which follows immediately from the first becomes much more central. Harry loses his job, and his singular involvement as hero until episode 7 is oriented in terms of remedying that particular lack. His solution, to open a shop with living quarters above is not without its significance as I hope to show in the next chapter. Essentially however this lack is redeemed by episode 7. Subsequently, though much more weakly, in episode 11, Joan also has to remedy her lack of employment.

The third lack, which, albeit implicitly, precedes the heart attack, is the lack in Joan and Harry's relationship, in their marriage. This lack I have chosen to call social. The lack in their relationship affects Joan and Harry differently and unevenly, but when it becomes the central narrative preoccupation, as it does for example at the end of episode 6, and from episode 9 onwards, it demands that they act, jointly, as heroes. Marriage itself becomes the object of search and they the seekers; and this is different, obviously, from the more classic form in which the princess is the sought for object, with the hero a singular seeker.

Despite this complexity, however, there is no real problem in identifying a hero for each of the episodes and for the series as a whole. But of the six acting units identified by Greimas in his reformulation of Propp's similarly oriented discussion only two, the hero and the helper/denier of help, are consistently present in *Intimate Strangers*. The figure of dispatcher, which
Jonathan Culler sees as of a different order of relevance, is occasionally visible, most particularly in episodes 8 and 9, when Harry dispatches Joan. The receiver (destinataire) does not appear in this series at all, and if Culler is correct no more is there a place for him in the Proppian classification. The hero fills this position. Indeed, and finally, the object of search is, as we have seen, only implicitly, and then not always, an acting unit.

If this is so then this 'folktale' is articulated by a hero and his potential helpers. Villainy is rarely personified. Dispatch is also rare. Hero and receiver are elided and the object of search is either a good or an idea, 'work' or marriage.

The actorial structure though relatively clear, seems to fall short of the full complement defined by Propp and Greimas as being central to the folktale. As it stands the actorial model of the series narrative of Intimate Strangers could be expressed diagrammatically as follows:

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Helper/Non-helper
    ↓
  (Dispatcher) → Hero → (Villain) → Object of Search
    (Receiver)
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The most significant absence is that of the villain. Although occasionally appearing in the episodes (Foster 6) his appearance is not often unequivocal. More often what overt villainy there is is generated by other acting units; for example, Joan as potential helper in episode 6 commits villainy in her involvement with the diary, so does Harry as hero, in his attack on Dale and on Joan. In one
sense the narrative has refused to name the opposition; it has refused its own negativity. Evil as such has been dissipated; if it appears then it does so in a distant and unrecognizable (unrecognized) form. The characters never face it. In a second sense, and more obviously the villain is internalized. He blends with the hero and the helper/opposer. Villainy and evil are either too distant or too close to be clearly conceived. Initially villainy, as I have already suggested, has the character of fate; subsequent villainy has the character of an inner struggle. In a psycho-social drama such as this the hero is a complex figure at war with himself, acting indeed as his own dispatcher.

To be able to say as much, and to recognize its obviousness, is perhaps a function of our ability to bring to a narrative like *Intimate Strangers* such a model as this. On the one hand the absences are significant; on the other the drama still lies in their presence. What might be suggested then is that in addition to seeing an absence, we are also able to recognize compression, and that part of the task of reading such a narrative as this lies in the ability and the necessity to prize the actorial layers apart.

There is further, though more complex, evidence of this compression in the role of seducer. Seduction is central to the narratives of episode 5, where Harry fails to consummate his involvement with Pat, in episode 8, where Lionel successfully and unambiguously seduces Joan, and in episode 12 where the public relations lady fails to seduce Harry. Joan's seduction is, as I have said, unambiguous. She is clearly the seduced, Lionel the seducer. But Harry's two involvements are more equivocal; he is both seducer and the object of the seduction, and likewise his female opposites.
It is tempting to treat the seducer as a separate category, as a separate acting unit, and to treat seduction as a unique act. But seduction is no more than a particular act; it is the content given to a test whose functional significance may be in terms of providing help/opposition, or the redemption of the lack itself. Those involved are the heroes, the helpers and the villains.

The presence of seduction in a narrative is noted more for its semantic than its syntactic effectiveness. While the seducer is subsumable under existing categories of acting units, and the act of seduction is of differing functional importance depending on its place in the narrative, seduction itself is never anything more than a powerful agent of transformation, never less than a serious threat to an existing relationship. The implications of this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Therefore the consistency of the mode is further defined in terms of the relative weakness of the main test, a weakness which follows logically from the lack of explicit villain. Obviously, without a villain there can be no struggle with him. Other functions too seem absent: branding and pursuit above all. Both once again would seem to be more relevant to a narrative of explicit action, though branding can be seen to have some metaphorical visibility and perhaps in episode 9 Joan's lack of clothes and Harry's painting of her constitutes some form of marking which this function suggests. However this is probably stretching a point.
I am suggesting that these particular qualifications, which seem to be consistent with each other, define a particular mode of narration. I am not suggesting that, by virtue of them, the Proppian model for the analysis of narrative now becomes irrelevant. On the contrary, it is by virtue of the formalist and structuralist analysis so far undertaken that these observations have become possible.

But there is clearly more to it than this. The narrative of *Intimate Strangers* seems to have much in common with the narratives explored by Propp and formally reduced by him. In so far as that model is effective in defining the particularity of the folktale, or more specifically of what he calls the fairy tale, and in so far as that model or variations of it have been used to define in an equivalent way the folktales of other cultures and other times, then this analysis suggests that *Intimate Strangers* too, has much of the folktale about it.

How much of course, is the leading question. Each is the product of an oral dimension of culture; but folktales as we come to know them are imprinted by the literacy of those of who have come to record them and of course such a series of plays as *Intimate Strangers* is filtered through a still dominantly literate culture. Clearly too there are differences in the nature of performance and in the manifest content. But each is ephemeral, the product of the moment, and their themes and, of course, their structure, are similar.

If the folktale is ephemeral by virtue of the lack of literacy of those involved as creator and audience, the television drama is ephemeral by virtue of the technology, and of the values of the culture which presents it. That ephemerality encourages variation and change, but at the same time keeps these variations firmly in hand. The folktale
and the dramatic narrative have to be instantly and unequivocally recognized as such. It is central to the argument of this chapter that that recognition is premised on the anticipation of an already familiar chronological structure.

We are concerned then with the repetitive but ephemeral communications, whose novelty is outweighed by and dependent on the familiar. There is then underlying the apparent freedom which is suggested by the enormous range of subjects and treatments of television dramas, of which of course, *Intimate Strangers* is only one example, a kind of necessity, and that necessity has both chronological and logical dimensions. It remains to discuss, in the following chapter, in what the logic of the narrative of *Intimate Strangers* consists.
Chapter 5. Footnotes and References

1. There have, of course, been studies of the structure of dramas—though not as far as I am aware, very many: see Philip Drummond. Structural and Narrative Constraints in 'The Sweeney'. Screen Education. Autumn 1976. No. 20. 15-37.; Peter Wollen. North by North West. A Morphological Analysis. Film Form. 1.1. Spring 1976. 19-34.

2. Figures kindly provided by London Weekend Television.

3. The series Intimate Strangers, has been forgotten, and short of being able to test my analysis against a current text (which might be significant in its advantages), there seems no reason to apologise for the eccentricity of choosing it. Indeed the significance of the analysis is independent of the text which, in its ephemerality and its having been forgotten, becomes only typical. The test, in a sense, is whether what is offered here and in the next chapter is illuminating of other, very different series, or even different types of programme. I think it will be.


7. See above Chapter 4 and Appendix.

8. cf. Vladimir Propp. op. cit. esp. Chapter IX The Tale as a Whole.

9. see Appendix 1 and Chapter 2 above.


11. The mixture of symbols, those belonging strictly to the preparatory section and those belonging to the main narrative derives from two aspects of the narrative. Firstly the overlaps of the series and episodic structures: the former, in this first segment involves Joan and the continuation of her unsatisfactory relationship with Harry. This is mixed with the provision of information about work and about Harry's past (Kenyon) which acts as a catalyst for the episode's narrative.


16. Besides the kind of arguments which Lévi-Strauss, for example, levels against formalism, i.e. that it destroys its object - arguments which are essentially methodological (and those of Barthes), there are those, more ideological perhaps, which complain of formalism's failure to relate a text to its context, and in particular to the determining structure of the economic. cf. Victor Erlich. op. cit. esp. Chapter IV Marxism and Formalism.


18. cf. Chapter 4 above.

19. cf. Philip Drummond, op. cit. p. 24 with regard to *The Sweeney*, "...villainy is rendered amorphous, abstract, perhaps anonymous, unlike the law, villainy creates no 'character'."


CHAPTER 6

Intimate Strangers: - A Structure

The statement of the empirically obvious can only be justified if the explanation of why things should be so close to what they seem is itself both unexpected and persuasive. This chapter is an exploration of much that is obvious or at least manifest in the texts of the series Intimate Strangers. It is obvious because we, as members of the culture to which the programmes are directed, recognize both consciously and unconsciously their content and the significance of that content. We understand its meanings; we speak its language.

My aim is to explore the conditions upon which that understanding is based and to do so in a way that puts flesh on the skeleton of the narrative chronology already outlined in the previous chapter. To mix metaphors, my concern is with the meat of the narrative sandwich, one layer of which is the formal structure of interdependent functional units and the other the pregiven content of the text, the images and meanings which are the common property of our everyday world. The meat of this sandwich lies in the fusion of these two layers. 1

I wish to suggest that the way these meanings and images are incorporated into the television text and the way in which they fill out the narrative of such a text is open to the same kind of analysis of, and that the texts are remarkably close in their composition to, the stories, the myths and the folktales of preliterate cultures. I wish to continue to argue and to illustrate the thesis that at a formal level these television programmes maintain a way of narration that would seem in other circumstances the particular product of oral cultures.
The significance of this is twofold. Firstly as I have already suggested it raises questions about the place of television in what is otherwise a predominantly literate culture, for example on ways of perception, and secondly it suggests that it would be possible to argue for continuity in culture; an argument that would itself raise questions both about the uniqueness of contemporary civilisation and about the intensity and nature of its change, but also about the relative coherence or incoherence of our culture and our participation in it. Finally such a suggestion might well incline us to find what others have called the power of television as much in this consistency and continuity of expression, as in its technology, and as much if not more in the cultural centrality of its messages than in its ideological manipulation. These issues will be fully discussed in the final chapter.

Structuralists have often noted the incestuous relationship their activity has with the obvious. The splendour of Claude Lévi-Strauss's analysis of South American myth is in significant part a result of our unfamiliarity with the entire corpus which he takes as his object; the very occasional banality of some of Edward Leach's analyses are equally the result of our familiarity with the Biblical stories to which he addresses himself. The question that structuralism asks is much more the how, rather than the what or the why; the what is largely assumed and the why is largely unanswerable. The how is the result of what Roland Barthes calls the structuralist activity and the how is never entirely surprising. Marcel Detienne completes his analysis of the Adonis myths of Ancient Greece with the following observation:
"... the paradoxical situation is that, in Greece, in this particular sector, the structural analysis applied from the outside turns out to be in agreement with the analysis which the Greeks who were contemporary with these myths elaborated from within. Neither Theophrastus or Philichorus of Athens, any more than Hesiod, would have felt themselves on unfamiliar ground confronted with an interpretation in which our only innovation has been to coordinate that decoding which the Greeks themselves had already initiated in the works that were parallel and, in many cases, complementary to most of the myths themselves." 7

The dangers of the project are then clear: the path runs between the banal and the ridiculous, and when the concern is with the culture of our own time and place, to which we all in a certain sense have privileged access, that path is particularly stony. The distance which separates Lévi-Strauss from his primitives, a necessary distance in the search for clarity and objectivity, protects his results. It is in the nature of things that he is an anthropologist and then a structuralist. When the object is contemporary culture and the 'primitives' are ourselves, the reverse is true, the method, structuralism, creates the distance and in its use we become anthropologists. But as a result of this methodological and not ontological distance the analyses lose their protection; they become naked and they become vulnerable. It is for this reason, perhaps, rather than the presence or distortion of history, which is at the root of Lévi-Strauss's dismissal of the possibility of the structural analysis of the contemporary culture.

But to dismiss out of hand the possibility of asking the same questions of contemporary culture as of preliterate culture is clearly nonsensical. The problems are the same, indeed the answers may well be similar. We can recognise the specific character of the present without annihilating its relationship to the past.

However, the difficulties of doing this are clear. When the mirror is held too close, the image is distorted. And this over proximity is not confined to the text, but extends quite obviously to that which supports the text, to the cultural and social context.
The need for ethnographic support for the hypotheses suggested by structuralist analysis, though provisional, has often been noted. Much of Lévi-Strauss's work consists in the cross referencing of what he has understood from the myths with what he knows from the ethnography of the tribes whose myths they are. Such reference allows him to argue for a very subtle interrelationship of myth and social structure, and for the suggestion that myth is in significant degree autonomous, its text sometimes reflecting, sometimes transposing what is known to be the case, say for example of the kinship structures of its host society. The ethnography upon which such a discussion is based is assumed to be unproblematical; but it is not and it is also certainly limited. And it is the paradox of this which makes some of its more astute critics realise that much of Lévi-Strauss's own deductions about the nature of myth are themselves particularly limited.

In the analysis of contemporary society, however, what we know about it is both problematic and unlimited; the uncertainty at the heart of sociological understanding is well documented. We are faced both with the enormous complexity of contemporary society, a complexity which makes any generalisation about it almost impossible, but also with the squabbles in epistemology and methodology which makes even the most hesitant assertion of knowledge subject to ridicule. There is little or no ethnography of our own society against which our text can be unambiguously placed, and as a result the analysis which follows, at least until supported by many more of a similar order, must be treated as very largely provisional and partial.

Without a drastic change of perspective the television programmes with which we are presently concerned will tell us nothing we do not already know; we will be blinded by and to the obvious. The
transcendance of these limits involves a change of perspective and a demand that we treat them as the products of an alien culture, that we become anthropologists, and that our texts become anthropologically strange to us. Of course, this procedure begs as many questions as it answers, not the least that it is in any complete sense impossible, and secondly that it assumes what it is the purpose of the analysis in this case, to assert - that our society and culture have preserved something significant from previous societies and cultures and that that something is available to structuralist analysis. But it also, given the lack of an ambiguous ethnography of our own society, forces us to draw on the tacit knowledge that we as members of that society do indeed have; we are all our own ethnographers therefore precisely because we are members. Statements about work, or about fashion or about the relations between the sexes which bulk large in the following account have this uncertain and vexatious status, in part derived from a situation of membership and familiarity and in part from a methodological procedure which demands distance and unfamiliarity. The proof of this particular pudding lies very much in the eating.

How then to proceed? I have established in the last chapter that the narrative presented in the programmes *Intimate Strangers* follows a pattern, and that pattern, in its morphology has much in common with the folktale, not least in its redundancy and in its simplicity. In following the logic of action, of loss, redemption and of test, what I hoped to have achieved was a description of the framework of the narrative. This is the track on which the individual story with its characters and particularities of action and of meaning runs. Although dependent on our understanding of these meanings, that analysis did not explore or explicate them. In so far as it is possible to do just that, then this is the present task.
The model of the narrative in chapter 5 suggests that we visualise two levels of narrative transformation, that of the morphology (chronologically) and that of its logic. Strictly speaking this logic is not a logic of the tale as such but of the system of which that tale is but an element, and even more a logic of the cultural context within which the system of tales is embedded. This latter logic precedes its incorporation into the tale. The former logic, that of the tales system, functions, as it were, to translate the general logic and cultural codes into those more specifically useful for the narrative. The process involves a selection, a simplification perhaps, but it is the process basic to the generation of meaning within a tale and within a system of tales. A.J. Greimas is attempting a similar distinction, that between grammatical properties and narrative properties, and that between context analysis and the narrative model, and he makes the point in this way:

"The context is presented in the form of 'content - fillings', independent of the narrative itself and taken up a posteriori by the narrative model. But at the same time, these content - fillings are already constituted contents; just as a novelist in the unfolding of his story gradually develops his characters from a name chosen at random, the process of myth-making creates actors which it provides with conceptual contents. And it is this diffuse knowledge of the contents shared by the Bororo but not by the analyst that constitutes the code which must be broken." 14

The proposal is then an exploration of the codes which in their application and combination generate the meaning of a particular text, its message. Whether this is, in the strict sense a semantic operation has been questioned. 15 The fact that the analysis is itself coded, and like the tales themselves, context dependent, would suggest that the operation is something less than a generative and rather more an interpretive procedure. Be that as it may, the messages are coded, and while we may argue about the meaning of the text (indeed it is the nature of the text that we will so argue) we will not dispute that these meanings are the product of discoverable
rules. The task is to identify, then, the levels of content through which the text is articulated and to define the units, A.J. Greimas would call them lexemes, which act as formal points for this articulation.16

II

We need to be clear about a number of basic terms, some of which have already been used. The chronologic defines the level of story telling which is more or less fixed; it identifies the unity of a particular narrative in terms of its morphology and its functioning. The code, any number of which may be at work within a text, can be defined in terms of a specific and consistent level of the text's articulation, for example the alimentary code, the cosmological code, the techno-economic code and so on. The content fillings refer to those meanings available in the context of the presenting culture and which are used by the text and its system; it is through the particular context that the codes of narrative find their representation. The message refers to the series of manifest meanings derivable from a particular text; in principle endless, as many contemporary critics in their notion of 'reading' point out, nevertheless in practice quite limited as the same critics in their notion of 'symptomatic reading' acknowledge.17 The message of a text is always problematical, and not the exclusive property of the text itself; what is encoded must be decoded, and each individual receiver will do this, of course, in the last resort in an unique way. Each will derive a different message from the one text. The obviousness of this assertion does not belie the equally obvious but opposite assertion that the substantial agreement or coherence which surrounds the message of a text is the product, significantly, of the coherence of the text itself, and the logic of its construction.
More seriously problematical for the kind of textual analysis proposed and undertaken here is that of the definition of its basic or minimal unit. The range of terms and definitions available for the principle units in narrative analysis is legion. From Vladimir Propp's functions, the net is cast to include 'narreme', 'event', 'eidon', 'videme/cademe', 'lexeme' and 'function and indices'. The first and last in this list, those of Vladimir Propp and Roland Barthes have both been criticized by B.M. Colby and Gerald Prince (who have suggested their own terms), for the lack of rigour in their definition of minimal units, a lack of rigour which each of the two latter authors attempts to rectify by specifying the precise rules of the transformation and interrelation of the units they specify. For example, B.N. Colby writes:

"The main difference between the function and the eidon is that the eidon is defined in terms of higher order categories and sequence rules. The function is defined only as a specified narrative action."

The significance of such higher order categories and sequence rules lies in Propp's failure, Colby believes, to recognize variations in plot structure other than in terms of 'deviance' from the basic pattern. Such arguments have already been the object of much consideration (chapter 4) and no further comment is warranted here. Suffice it to say that attempts to move the study of narrative towards a transformational system similar to that of Chomsky's analysis of language, whether inductively (Colby), or deductively (Prince) seems to lead either to an over formalisation sufficiently removed from a vital narrative to make anything other than a minimal sense of it, or to a still basic classification of manifest units in which the postulated rules are limited to the identification of the unit's connection and exclusion, but which fails to allow any theorisation either about the specifically analysed text or about narrative in general.
Natural language and narratives are sufficiently different, as I have already pointed out, for the attempt to make procedures perhaps suitable for the one suitable for the other, of limited relevance. However, the failure to search for greater rigour in the analysis of narrative is one equally to be avoided. Propp's identification of the functional units at the base of the narrative, marks an important principle of linguistic analysis, that of commutation. If the replacement or transposition of one unit by another would lead to an alteration or destruction of the sense of the chronology of the narrative, then that unit manifested in action or in event, becomes both significant and basic for the understanding of the narrative as a whole. With this in mind, one can distinguish between, as Roland Barthes and B.N. Colby do, for example, between primary and secondary units, those whose significance is fundamental and whose absence would destroy the narrative as such, and those whose presence adds richness to the narrative as long as they appear in an appropriate place. In this sense the minimal unit of the narrative which Propp identifies as a functional unit and which I have also called the sequence is not the smallest unit of the narrative. As the discussion in this chapter will presently reveal, the sequence of the chronology when transposed into the segment of the logic, while it remains the same unit, is immediately vulnerable to the disintegration of multiple coding in which even the flicker of an eye can have significance. But just as in the form of the expression band of the television text the shot was seen as the minimal unit, so too now, it is the segment. In neither case does this minimum preclude further and more precise analysis. Far from it, what it does preclude, however, is the locking of that analysis on to the manifest structuring of the text. Beneath the shot, and beneath the sequence/segment of the context of a narrated text, the number of interpretable units is endless.
The basic unit of the narrative text is therefore the functional unit identified in principle by Propp. I have distinguished the two modes, as it were - the sequence, the unit of action, significant diachronically, and the segment, the same unit of action significant synchronically. In each mode this unit is subject to further investigation and dissection. Any subsequent units of the text will be both dependent on, and contributory to, the sequence/segment, and will in any case be code specific.

A number of further points arise. The number of codes at work within a text will be great; some of them will be of greater apparent significance than others. They will be consistently more visible. Thus, for example, in his analysis of *La Geste d'Asdiwal*, Lévi-Strauss identifies the geographical, the techno-economic, the cosmic and the social as the dominant codes through which the narrative is structured whereas, in the *Mythologiques*, the alimentary and the acoustic codes are also subject of some considerable discussion. Similarly, in A.J. Greimas' analysis of the primary Bororo myth it is the alimentary code (isotopy) which is judged to be more significant than the natural code (isotopy). In identifying a particular code, and in adjudging its relative significance for the narrative - both of which are empirical operations - the aim is to define a consistent thread of meaning. If a particular story is located somewhere specifically, and if the characters move from one location to another, the nature of their movements, the point of origin, of transition and of return is significant. So too, at another level, are the clothes they wear, or the colour of their hair. In this sense nothing in the narrative is irrelevant and relatively nothing is uncoded. The demand for the inclusion of everything in the story, and especially a myth, simultaneously with the demand for the identification of a
privileged or rock-bottom level of coding is theoretically apposite though empirically impossible. It is theoretically apposite because without such a demand anything less becomes, rather than provisional, arbitrary and insubstantial; but it is impossible because not only can a text never be exhausted but also because the attempt to exhaust it will deny it its truth.

In the analysis of any text, and these television programmes are no exception, the identification of its codes and of their articulation, is therefore, in the Weberian sense, partial and provisional. One can, however, suggest that there are those, the geographical, the techno-economic, the social and the physical (biological), which are of greater significance than others (for example the alimentary, the acoustic, the fashion, the nominal, the colour etc.) The distinction, which of course will vary from text to text, significantly derives not just from the text itself but from our (my) perception of the most important dimensions of the structure of human activity as a whole; location, production, social relations and physical survival, respectively.

How these codes manifest themselves in any given text will of course be specific to each text. One television programme, for example, can be located in the city where the principal movements of its main characters are from the office to the street; another, say *Intimate Strangers*, involves principal movements from home to city. Beneath these manifest differences one can distinguish, apart from their joint involvement with place, a distinction between a place of domestic security and relative inactivity, and one of alien insecurity and action. One can even suggest that beneath these differences lies a simple but fundamental dichotomy of proximity and distance.
Working back from this dichotomy one can establish how its various manifestations are presented in different texts; how each generates its own particular message from the different codes at work within it.

The binary distinctions with which the following account, along with others, is studded, have therefore a powerful heuristic significance. No claims are made for their privileged reflection of a basic mode of human thought, but a claim is made for their ability, even as a priori categories, to open up a text. As G.S. Kirk notes, some of the binary categories with which Levi-Strauss adorns his analysis have as much to do with the actual practice of living and of the experience of life of the Indians with whose myths he is concerned as with any fundamental thought process. The distinction between high and low, and near and far, is empirically significant and narratively important; it may only incidentally be of ontological significance. 36

It is however, the case that with binary distinctions a little goes a long way; the distinction between nature and culture in the techno-economic code, 37 between life and death in the physical code, between here and there in the geographical code and between man and woman in the social code identify not just a basic logical opposition but a logical opposition of consistent cultural importance. Much of the account which follows derives from an awareness of this and many of the arguments which seem to transcend the specificity of the detailed analysis are premised on the assumption of the potentially universal significance of such basic categorial pairings.

The relationship between code and message is significantly mediated in the person and the activities of the characters who appear in the narrative. The process which A.J. Greimas calls anthropomorphisation involves the quickening of the abstract categories through the actions of the narrated. 38 The acting units become, then, the carriers of
the action but also the focal points of the narrative's symbolic significance. As we have seen in an action of functional significance the narrative is moved forwards; and as we will see it is in the same action that a conceptual transformation occurs. In myth it is in the transformation of say jaguar into frog which is significant in the opposition of jaguar and frog; similarly in contemporary drama it is in the opposition of husband and wife, the murder of a villain by a cop, or even the change in the status of a hero to a villain, which is as much of conceptual as of narrative significance.

Much of the significance is generated by the context in which an action takes place, though not all. Central, for example, to Kenneth Burke's understanding and definition of dramatism is the pentad of act, scene, agency, purpose and agent. The notion of context here is therefore of some breadth. While the act, in Burke's terminology, provides the narrative with its movement, the agent (including presumably those passively involved in the action) is the centre of the narrative's meaning. It is not just a question of being able to list the basic acting units, present in the narrative, as for example Propp and Greimas and Barthes have already done, but actually being able to explore the narratively specific qualities attached to the acting units at any one time. What are their qualities? Are they male, female, old or young, black or white, good or bad and so on? And the same questions apply to the context of the action (Burke's scene strictly). What is the nature of the location? How and why does the significance of an identical act, say work or murder, change as the location of that action, say the home or the office, also changes? Part of an answer to such questions, which juxtaposes agent, act and scene, depends on a series of assumptions which any analysis must make about, among other things, what is
appropriate. A measure of the narrative's equilibrium (or disequilibrium) can be found in the appropriateness of agent, act and scene, and of their interrelationship. For example as we shall see, in *Intimate Strangers* it is immediately established that the garden is Joan's place; her activity in it, gardening, is natural for her and by and large narratively neutral, not so however Harry's. His occasional ventures into the garden either reinforce the loss of his masculinity (i.e. his loss of job) or signal, in anticipation, that loss. The garden, and gardening are not for him.

Recognition of the how and why of this narrative appropriateness, which is an appropriateness of the static category rather than the dynamic function, is an essential part of being able to read a narrative. Indeed there are those narratives, and television narratives in particular, which depend very significantly on their congruence and which, as a result present texts, albeit often quite complex, of remarkable consistency. This pressure towards verisimilitude gives the television text its overdetermined character; its processes of signification are clear, as code upon code speak the same message.

As a result little of the televisual text is ambiguous. A television play is not like a poem. It is not built on ambiguity. Its tropes, the flashback, flashforward, slow-mix have nothing of the complexity of the contradictory and half-expressed meanings in which Sir William Empson so glories. The television text is in C major, and although such a characterisation may be being exaggerated by an analysis which is in the same key, it is unlikely that the latter will deny us the possibility of recognising what little ambiguity there is within the former. The solidity of action, the visibility of space, will always limit the subtleties of character, the ambiguities of role and the hesitancies of motivation. Indeed motivation itself is a functional category, the product of reaction rather than action, definition
rather than speculation. It is a truism that television, precisely in its combination of sound and picture, leaves little to the imagination. Radio has a much greater facility here.

In this sense, the television text is closed in a way more complete than any other, even that of the cinema, for the latter, in our culture at least, has been able to transcend the restrictions of narrative and has produced texts subversive of the degree zero writing, still, and perhaps always, the particular privilege of television.

The assumptions upon which the following analysis is based should by now be reasonably clear. Methodologically what will be presented is something rather less than a grammar, rather more than an interpretation. The problems of producing a grammar of narrative in the manner of a transformational grammar of natural language have already been discussed. The problems of presenting an interpretation under the guise of objectivity are equally obvious. As Umberto Eco points out, even A.J. Greimas' analysis of the Bernanos texts, disciplined and formalised though it is, is only one possible way of approaching them. There is no certain privilege in such analysis, and as Eco again is at pains to point out, semiosis is endless and anything which freezes a single system at a certain (arbitrary) point suffers inevitably as the result.

The way of the work which follows has its origins in the analysis of mythical stories undertaken by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and A.J. Greimas. In it I will be concerned to understand the television programmes in terms of what I take to be their structural arrangement and semantic construction. The categories which have proved so fruitful in the analysis of myth are, as it were, tested. The programmes seem to be, and I hope to show that this is the case, accessible to
the same kind of analysis as that undertaken by the two senior structuralists. That they are so seems, to me, significant. But that significance is not all inclusive; it is for example perfectly clear that the story of Harry has, albeit in its entirely mundane way, something of the Christ myth about it. It is a story of his (near) death and resurrection; of the construction of a new life and the treading of the steady path towards a utopia. There is equally, and perhaps more immediately relevant, something of the culture hero in Harry. Deprived of social and cultural support in his loss of job and the disaster of his marriage, he constructs a world in which he becomes, in common parlance, the self-made man, and a contented active husband.

These are the themes, and there will be others, which can be found in this text. Each could provide the initial impetus for a fully fledged and entirely consistent interpretation of the meaning or message of the text. Each is a selection and each in a certain sense freezes the text in a particular way. There are no ultimately compelling arguments for excluding the ways offered by these interpretations in favour of the one I am suggesting, except perhaps this one. What is being offered here grows out of a recognition that a narrative text is a construction, that it is systemic, that it is ordered, and that it is in its system and its order, that its sense is created. That to define and understand a system means to specify its rules, and to suggest in what way these rules are relevant to and provide the key to the understanding of an entire, specified, range of texts. To talk of rules is probably a little premature; to talk of patterned constraints might be more apposite. But whatever one wishes to call them, the exercise, and the justification for the exercise, is clear. If the tales told by the 'primitive' and by those in technically more advanced but still oral cultures can be
reduced and understood through a certain way of coding, can our own tales similarly be reduced and understood? If the answers provided by the analysis throw some light not just on the questions associated with narrative as a whole but also on the relationship between one particular culture and its narratives, then it would seem to me, the approach is worthy of consideration.

III

The predominant concern will be with the narrative of the series as a whole. The chronological, morphological, structure of the series narrative is in many ways a complex one, especially when compared with the simple narratives which have been listed as subjects of previous analyses. Instead of one lack, there are three; instead of a simple one move tale; there is a tale with two moves; instead of one hero, it could be argued that there are in fact three heroes in Intimate Strangers; Harry Paynter most obviously, Joan Paynter, and then Joan and Harry together.

At the manifest level therefore we are faced with a series of television programmes involving a number of characters whose names we know and whose attributes we quickly learn. We watch one of them, Harry, have a heart attack. We recognise that his illness (lack of health) directly produces the loss of his job, (lack of work) and exacerbates his shaky marriage (lack of relationship). We watch one episode after another in which Harry's attempts to redeem the situation, in particular the lack in his relationship and the lack of work, fail. We see his despair in failure (especially 6) and we follow his new attempts, successful this time, to find work. Meanwhile Joan is struggling; she feels the lack in her relationship and lives it (especially 7 and 8); she too, albeit reluctantly, finds work and even comes to terms with her own physical lack (the reference to her
menopause in chapter 9). Then, their individual lacks significantly resolved, Joan and Harry act together to affirm their relationship; and as it were, they act to reverse the movement of the initial causal chain; the successful redemption of their marriage generates an atmosphere in which they both find security in work, and almost incidentally, Harry is declared fit and well (episode 12).

How is this, I think relatively uncontroversial reading articulated; what are its elements, what is its message? We can provide some substance to these questions by exploring the manifest level, the content, of the programmes a little more fully. The simplest way to proceed will be to treat each lack with the narrative thread that it engenders separately.

The Physical Lack

Harry's heart attack is the *deus ex machina* of the narrative as a whole. Although preceded by the events of the first episode, everything which follows is dependent on it, even though it subsequently becomes displaced as the central concern of the narrative. Harry's lack of work and lack in marriage quickly assume dominance. Episode 2 immediately following his attack and episode 3, in which he and Joan go on holiday together, centre in part on Harry's recovery; his passive convalescence in the garden, his active recuperation in the Lake District. Little more is heard of his illness until episode 9 when Joan and their doctor discuss it in the context of her own symptoms, until finally he is cleared, after his mother's death in episode 13.
Still at the manifest level it is possible to make a number of observations about the context in which Harry's near death and subsequent recovery is treated by the narrative. The location of the main events is important. His heart attack occurs, after a hectic few hours at work in the city, at the railway station. He is about to go on holiday. The railway station is a point of transition. Like airports, motorways, derelict buildings and so on, they have a marginal significance in contemporary culture. Things happen there, especially in our narratives, which do not happen in the relative security of home and hearth. How often do we see murders committed and villains getting their come-uppance in these marginal locations? Harry's heart attack occurs at a natural site for a cultural death.

His natural recovery, especially in so far as it takes place in the two subsequent episodes occurs in what is, for us in our culture, the most appropriate location: close to nature. First of all in his garden at home and then on holiday walking in the Lake District, Harry recovers sufficiently for his physical health to no longer become a preoccupation of the narrative. To all intents and purposes it is by virtue of his contact with things natural, albeit mediated in the environment of home and hotel, which effects the cure.

The search for health, then, involves Harry in little that is narratively complex. He moves away from his customary areas of involvement, above all his work, and his journeying is extended to a place where he had not been since before his marriage. The Lake District awakens many memories of the past, for him and for Joan, and it is, in a sense, of symbolic significance that these figures: Ruskin, Donald Campbell, Joan's dead brother Peter, and the vital but anachronistic figures of Hector Lanson and his wife, as well as Hitler and Christ, surround him in his period of recovery. Each of
them are marginal figures; all except Lanson are dead, only memories; even Lanson's son has disappeared. Figures from the past therefore are used, as it were, as helpers in the search for health. More direct help, in this search, are the doctors.

There are a number of doctors, the specialised agents of physical recovery of our society, present in the narrative. Harry has his own doctor; white, respectable, late middle-aged, who is centrally concerned with the heart attack. But doctors appear at three other points in the narrative. Firstly (episode 9) when Joan goes to see Maurice, Harry's doctor, about her depression and unhappiness, and finds herself face to face with Jennie Bowers, white, smart, middle-aged and postively female. She provides an instant and natural cure for Joan, uncomplicated by the prescription of medicines. Then there is the unnamed young doctor who refuses to carry out the abortion which Joan and Harry's daughter Judith wants because she has become pregnant without the consent of her husband. Finally there is the doctor who attends Harry's dying mother. Young and black and very proper. He is unable to do anything to help. The doctors in Intimate Strangers, are examples of an important group of figures of mediation and help in our culture and can be classified in the following way:-

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctors (Physical Lack)</th>
<th>White/Black</th>
<th>Young/old</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Cure/No Cure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pratt (1.2.13)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowers (9)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>±</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortionist (10)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's Doctor (13)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(where + signifies the first and - the second element of the opposition, ± signifies a middle position and +/- signifies both).
The point of presenting such a table at this stage of the discussion is simply to illustrate, albeit very superficially, that this particular group of characters, like any other, are constructions. Their deconstruction in this manner, reveals how and from what, each doctor in this case, is constructed. Each opposition defines one aspect of a particular code, that of colour or race, age, sex and effectiveness from which a mutually exclusive choice can be made. To explore the structure of a message, then, rather than its content, would involve a consideration of the range of significance of each of these codes. Emphasis is switched from the integrity of a character to the coded elements which make it up. It would be difficult however, to take such an analysis much further without the consideration of a greater range of texts. One might be tempted to suggest from this that female doctors do not need any medication - mediation to cure their own; and that the black doctor is an appropriate agent (angel) of death. But this is in a sense too speculative and intuitive. A study of the imagery of the medical practitioner in television dramas would nevertheless tell us a great deal about our culture's perceptions of these significant figures.

The Social Lack

The lack that quickly becomes visible in Joan and Harry's relationship antecedes but is seriously exacerbated by his heart attack. Their search now separately, now together, is consistently visible in the narrative, and by virtue of the three agents (one acting unit) who are involved, it is quite a complicated task to follow it.

We can begin by considering the events in their sequence. Much of the dynamics of their relationship is centred, quite naturally, at home and the full significance of the domestic geographical code will be discussed below.
The series opens with Joan strolling in the garden while Harry finishes his toilet in the upstairs bedroom. Harry looks down at her; she does not notice him. This picture is reversed at the end of the episode 2 after Harry's loss of job and a major row with Joan. Then he is in the garden and she is at the upstairs window. When he comes to look up towards her, she has moved away. In the meantime their togetherness and their distance has been played out in the kitchen at breakfast time and in the other rooms of the house, their sitting room, their dining room and their bedroom. The latter is the setting for significant nonactivity.

The resolution of the initial conflicts in the first episode, which centre on their coming holiday, stems from activity outside the home however. Kate, their daughter, provides help as a result of a drink with Harry at a pub; and Joan herself is won over at the golf-club dance. But the negative intrusions into the marriage also come from outside; the loss of the holiday cottage is announced at the city pub by Harry's solicitor, the heart attack occurs at the station, Harry loses his job in the city. Home is clearly an island of potential security more or less passively subject to the shocks of disaster and repeal which the outside world seems to generate.

This pattern of the playing out at home of the conflicts generated and the solutions granted abroad is one that continues throughout the series. The most directly serious threats are those of seduction; and each time a seduction appears possible (episode 5, 8 and 12), Harry or Joan must travel to the city. Equally the attempts at cure prior to episode 7 involve, just as in the case of Harry's physical health, a movement away from the strict boundary of the house, to the Lake District holiday (episode 3), and to the garden and to early morning, (episode 6).
Once they leave their first home and set up shop and house in the same building, the conflicts become more intense. Joan has lost her garden and with it her territory and natural space. But Harry has cut himself off from the city. Their old house becomes a beyond, and Joan returns to it. It is empty and there is no resolution to be found there. The break in their marriage is exaggerated too by her seduction by Lionel, and it is only the doctor Jennie Bowers, and the meeting at the pub with Harry's young school friends, which brings them, finally, together.

The subsequent action (episodes 10-13) in which they act, mostly, as joint heroes, allows them to take their newly found togetherness into the various locations which had previously been threatening. In episode 10, for example, they go to the city to buy a bed, have lunch and visit the cinema. The tensions and the agony of marital relationship have been left behind, in Tunbridge Wells and in the persons of Judith and Matt, daughter and son-in-law respectively. In episode 11 this togetherness is played out in the city again (the Remembrance Day service) and in Portsmouth, against the background of their rediscovery of their past and the slight change in Joan's status.

Episode 13, coda like, revises the themes of the early part of the series; the threat of the city to their relationship: both work and seduction. The threat is resolved in the shop below the flat. The final coming together occurs upstairs in the sitting room. The final episode, also, has an ambivalent significance in terms of this lack, apparently so clearly resolved. The last episode in which Harry takes Joan to a plot of land where he proposes to build their new bungalow revises the dichotomy of home and garden in a r expansion of the domestic space with its potential for conflict. The ambiguity of the message is further emphasized as Harry and Joan pace out the
boundary of the bungalow in the middle of the field; each doing
the same thing but in opposite directions, while we the audience,
as if in a helicopter, ascend slowly until their figures are lost in
the suburban landscape.

Figure IV: The dynamic geography of Intimate Strangers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home (House)</td>
<td>Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat (Home)</td>
<td>(l+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(House)</td>
<td>(1-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Home)</td>
<td>(7-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8,10,11,12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This might hesitantly be reformulated as

House(garden): Countryside(city) \( \sim \) Flat(shop): Landscape(sky) which is a
close approximation to the narrative formula

\[ F_x(a); \quad F_y(b) \sim F_x(b); \quad F_{a-l}(y) \]
suggested as central to the movement and definition of the mythic
narrative by Claude Levi-Strauss. 49

Here the dominant oppositions are of house and garden, house and city,
city and garden. The flat-shop opposition involves a compression
of the dualism of work and home and a denial of garden, but this is
overcome, at least potentially by the end of the series; though
in the absence of a real house or a real garden a landscape only is
visible. The resolution of the original opposition is not actually
effected.

The purpose of this account is to illustrate one of the particular
consistencies and patternings at work in such a narrative. Here both
the lack, the search for, and the redemption of, a marriage relationship,
is explored in close accord with place. Indeed as we will see shortly,
an understanding of the code of space is essential to an understanding
of the dimensions of much of the action and to its overdetermination. It could literally be said that there is a place for everything.

However, clearly there is more to the working out of the social lack, the lack in Joan and Harry's relationship that the ramifications of place and space. Of great importance are those who are involved in the actions associated with its redemption, both as hero and most particularly as potential helper and opposer.

Whereas in our discussion of the physical lack the number of mediators was small and relatively clearly defined, here the number is larger, and at least as far as the potential helpers are concerned, as opposed to the seducers, an amorphous group. The relative ease with which the doctors could be identified, and classified in part reflects their significance in our culture. In practice, as in the narrative, they act as mediators, placed on the boundary of nature and culture, where they bring cultural cures to restore natural health and sometimes the reverse. Their capacity to intervene between life and death makes them potentially and actually powerful figures.

Jennie Bowers (episode 9) though narratively relatively inconsequential, has this function, though doubly so, for it is her advice (woman to woman) which forces Joan to do something herself about her relationship with Harry. But the directness and unambiguity of Jennie Bowers' intervention as helper is unique. Problems of marriage and relationship are less overtly the source of professional advice in our society, though increasingly they are becoming so, and even that advice is not given by a figure as venerated as the medical practitioner.
Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpers</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Young/Old</th>
<th>Married/Unmarried</th>
<th>Working/not working</th>
<th>Successful/unsuccessful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kate (1 + 11)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansons (3)</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennie Bowers (9)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People (9)</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of helpers, and these are the most central, seems quite wide, though a number of points about it could be suggested. This series seems to value and give potency to the unmarried; here neither Kate nor the young people are married and Jennie Bower's marital state is not mentioned. Each in his own way, as a working, active young person, acts positively to ameliorate the distress caused by the lack in Harry and Joan's relationship. Those who fail, or exacerbate that lack, albeit unwittingly, the Lansons and Diana, are married and not working - though their marriage in each case is, like Harry and Joan's, flawed. The Lanson's only child disappeared fifteen years ago (and without children no marriage is complete - episode 3); Diana's husband is still in Sri Lanka and in any case a previous affair, which she and Joan discuss, effects her status as a completely social figure. Help it seems, in order to have a chance of success, must come from characters whose attributes are contrary to those of the heroes.
And that help, in its extreme form, in seduction, is more potent still when it is offered in marginal situations. The three seducers are, of course, a much more clearly defined group; in this case being female and young is a recipe for failure. Their territory, like that of the helpers, consists in locations which, structurally, are mediatory: a pub, a hotel, a roof top, a bed sitting room. The message, superficially at least, seems to be that the most powerful magic results from the juxtaposition of the opposite in character and the ambiguous in location. Unsurprising perhaps, but a hypothesis worth testing.

The Cultural Lack

The third lack is work. After his heart attack, Harry is offered a sinecure in his old office by the company secretary, Bob Blake. It is a non-job, and this negative situation, either literally no work, or work which is demeaning or intolerable and therefore something less than work, is the situation which is maintained until episode 7. For the first half of the series therefore this is the lack which dominates the narrative and Harry's search for work, for material security and so on, follows classically, the pattern of journey, test and failure. The successful redemption of the lack, paradoxically, is of little narrative consequence, for it functions mostly to dramatise the lack in their relationship and Joan's perception of it. Eventually this lack is redeemed (episode 8/9) and interest in it is only maintained through Joan's limited search for work - in her case the buying and selling of antiques. The nature of this resolution, that is the redemption of the lack in terms of a job that involves no production, but only the buying and selling of objects (books and antiques), will be discussed later in this chapter.
Too much work contributes to Harry's heart attack. Too little, subsequently, drives him to drink and to Pat. The balance achieved by being his own man, with the bookshop, protects him from the public relations lady and from the temptations of a seat on the board of his old firm (episode 12).

The drama of this search, however, falls to episodes 2, 4, 5 and 6. Here the spatial and actorial determinants of the narrative are clearly revealed, and the plot itself is at its most clear and unambiguous. The lack is revealed as a result of Bob Blake's intervention (episode 2). In episode 4 the offer of a partnership results from a visit to an old publisher in London, and leads to a second visit to London to find money to pay for his share. In the next episode he has found a job nearer home, but he hates it and does little or no work. He finds Pat, and once again finds himself in London. Finally in episode 6 with the same local job, it appears that with the help of Kenyon, he has gained a contract. But his attack on the apprentice destroys what little hope there was of security and success. He returns home a beaten man.

Geographically the dominant opposition here is that between home and city. The city is a man's world; it is the world of work; but without a job it rejects Harry who has to find work closer to home. The clarity and strength of the initial opposition is weakened: first when he finds a job in Tunbridge Wells, and then (episode 7) when he finds his work beneath his home. Joan too, in a parallel movement, is deprived of her work in the garden, and from episode 7 onwards, but especially in episodes 11 and 12, she is also encouraged to work from home. The possibility, a product of their increasing confidence in their work and their relationship, that they will build a house in the field that Harry has found, is narratively significant not just because it is the last sequence of the series but because it poses the same spatial
question and opposition with which the series began, though transposed to a new level. (see figure IV)

Harry's failure in work, up to and including episode 6, is symbolic of his failure as a man, and the various contributions to his failure, over determined by the non-consummation of his relationship with Pat, all generate this transformation. Harry moves from the hero of the resurrection to an anti-hero and villain. Indeed his subsequent, though understated success with the shop, is 'villainy' as far as Joan is concerned. Even in his success, his heroic status, is, at least for the time being, denied.

This movement too, implies the potent status of the city, a potency emphasised in the familiar metaphor of it as a jungle. Man's cultural activity there is taken to such an extreme, that it becomes a danger similar to that of the untamed (uncultured) nature of a forest. The city takes culture to a point beyond itself, a kind of super culture which is at the same time a bursting of the cultural bonds and a transformation of them; the culture of the city, though a product of man's activity, is like nature, beyond him and beyond his control. The solution to this contradiction is offered in terms of Harry's withdrawal from the city, but because it involved the loss of his manhood, it is hardly an efficient compromise. That this, however, is a fundamental problem for the narrative, as for our own society, is beyond question. Its implications and resonance will be discussed more fully below, as also will the change in the nature of Harry's work, that from production (the manager of a production department of a book and part-work publishing house) to that of non-production, almost consumption, when he starts buying and selling books.
### Table III

**Helpers/Opposers. (Cultural Lack)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Young/Old</th>
<th>City/Non City</th>
<th>Successful/Unsuccessful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bob Blake (2)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey (4)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mancroft (4)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniels (4)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesty (4)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster/Dale (6)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenyon (5)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Temple (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant (12)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.B. (12)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The message to be read in this table of the helpers and opposers in the context of this cultural lack seems to support what I have already stated about the city. In terms of this classification the city is the domain of the young and the male and Harry does not profit by it. The potential helpers who are older, Geoffrey and Mancroft are slightly less extreme in their opposition; they, for example, postpone judgement and move Harry one step along in his search. The difficulties are only postponed in the case of Foster, who gives Harry his job in Tunbridge Wells.

However, the clearest contrast comes in the shape of Mrs. Temple, the owner of the bookshop, who sells to Harry and instructs him in the way of bookselling (though their discussion is principally about the buying of books; episode 7). It is ironic, one might think, to see that in a world of work, when convention has it that the young thruster holds the key to success, that it is the retiring old lady bookseller who provides Harry with his magical agent. Harry is, literally, transformed once again, by this transaction, although the solution to the problem of
work is not an unequivocal one; he loses his manhood, and he takes to woman's work.

IV

I have presented some of what seems to me to be of the most significant dimensions of the narrative within the framework of the manifest thread of the physical, social and cultural lacks which are at the centre of the plot of Intimate Strangers. I propose in this section to explore the codes which underlie and constrain these dimensions, and to do so in particular in a way which illustrates the redundancy at work within the text.

The four basic codes of the text, are most obviously the following: the geographical, the techno-economic, the social and the physical. Each is articulated respectively though the basic oppositions of proximity and distance, of nature and culture and the transformation of the one into the other through work, the opposition of male and female, and finally the fundamental dichotomy of life and death. The choice of these codes is warranted by the manifest context of the text, though there are clearly others of significance. As I have already suggested, in principle, everything in the narrative text is coded.

1) The Geographical Code

The action is placed significantly in three areas: the home, the garden and the city. The first two are established in the opening sequence, and until episode 7 are constantly reaffirmed, and the third is equally of continuous importance, until its influence is denied in the final episode. Home and garden are together opposed to the city in terms of proximity. Their distinctiveness is underlined by the activities associated with each and their privileged actors.
Further there is a fourth 'place' which completes the structure in the sense that it complements and opposes the home in the way that the city complements and opposes the garden. The city and the garden are both places of work, but the former is both distant and distinctly cultural, the latter close and significantly natural. The clarity of that opposition is mediated on the one hand, domestically, by the home, and on the other by a group of transitional locations, such as church, pub, hospital, which are united in their distance and in their ambiguity. In churches, in pubs, in hospitals, men are faced with the limits of culture, either cosmically, narcotically or medically; at home men are faced, in their marriage, with the limits of nature. Whereas the city and the garden are uncomplicated in their opposition and in their structural position, home and 'church' are more complex, acting as mediators, on the one hand on this side of nature (home) and on the other, on the far side of culture (church), between city and garden.

The basic geographical code schematically looks like this:

**Figure V**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City (Culture)</th>
<th>Church etc. (Nature/Culture)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home (Culture/Nature)</td>
<td>Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>Garden (Nature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and this is the basic structure within which the action is undertaken. Given this we can begin to understand the narrative significance of the various moves of location, in particular that of episode 3, where they
go on holiday. The countryside becomes in terms of the above scheme a natural there and the move both increases the distance and strengthens the opposition between nature and culture. If Harry needs to recover from the effects of the city, although he begins in the garden (episode 2), the return to natural health must be undertaken as far away, both geographically and logically, as possible.

Another move, that from the home and garden to the flat and shop, includes a weakening in the opposition, both in terms of the denial of nature (the sale of the house and the loss of the garden) and the bringing of culture closer to home (the opening of the shop under the flat). Once again there is a logic here which the narrative quite reasonably exploits; a consolidation, compression and a minimisation of the difference and the conflict between nature and culture; reculer pour mieux sauter.

Schematically we can represent the moves as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure VI</th>
<th>Dynamics within the geographical code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Episode 3</td>
<td>b) Episodes 7-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Ch.</td>
<td>H Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>(Culture-proximity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (Country)</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nature/Distance)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = City</td>
<td>S = Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H = Home</td>
<td>F = Flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch = Church etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G = Garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last movement, albeit only potentially, involves a return to the basic structure and at the same time a reassertion of the difference between home and garden (proximity) and city and church (distance); within the narrative distance has been denied only to be re-established visually as we, the
audience, ascend heavenward. Harry and Joan's proximity and familiarity become our distance and strangeness. Indeed our position in this final tableau is the one most understated in the narrative as a whole, that of the church.

The dynamic within this code is of two kinds. The first has already been made apparent, albeit implicitly. It is a movement within the categories of the code as the action develops chronologically. This is a movement, dialectically produced, by the interaction of message and code, and of logic and chronologic: events, tests and transformations at one level, effect the balance of the geographical categories at another. The second dimension of the movement is, however, more obvious and here the journey becomes a significant mediating category. Not every movement is marked in the narrative, but given the significance of this code every marked journey is at the same time a mediation, involving those who take it in a transformation. So Harry and Joan's journeys to the city, often accompanied by noise (especially during their return from seduction or near seduction) becomes significant both chronologically and logically. The movement from a situation of extreme culture to one in which culture and nature live in uneasy compromise (home) is in mythical terms, an extreme one and often fraught with danger. Journeys are important dimensions of narrative; their significance lies not only in the potential for narrative postponement, but in their categorial mediation.

2) The Social Code

The action of the narrative centres around the home, and around Harry and Joan's marriage. Much of the significance of the drama involves the relationship between them and other related figures. The relations between the sexes are therefore of prime concern. Both Harry and Joan, as a result of the events and the tests which they face, change their positions respective to each other and with respect to the rest of the world. The
manifestation of these changes is indeed in their geographical movements; in these changes of location is expressed the threat to, and the changes in, their social status.

To begin with, there is a very clear distinction of male and female, expressed, as I have said, primarily in their territory: Joan's territory is the garden, close to nature. Harry's is the city, close to culture; and the home where the events of their marriage are played out is, in a sense, their joint territory. Marriage is seen as an imposition of culture over nature; a primary but always vulnerable institution where the natural (instinct, passion, etc.) and the cultural (the rules of social intercourse) meet.

After Harry's 'death' (episode 1), he briefly attempts recovery in Joan's garden and then in the country, again Joan's territory, emphasised by her previous visit before the war. Subsequent developments take Harry back to the city, but his failure in a man's world is unambiguous. His illness has left him less than a man and in his return home, in his setting up shop and even in his final involvement as architect of the new home, he has moved closer to womanhood. Joan meanwhile moves in the opposite direction; after Harry's failure, which is her failure too, she loses her garden, her naturalness, and becomes involved in the world of business, buying and selling antiques. She moves closer to manhood.

These movements, and particularly Harry's, are articulated in the context of other relationships, both positively and negatively expressed. Given the basic geographical schema (above) we can add the sexual/social dimensions to it.
The characters who emanate from the different locations, but who are not logically tied to them, given this classification - above all city-women, become potentially threatening. And correlatively if a character finds himself or herself in an opposite location, that itself is potentially threatening. What is interesting, as far as this series is concerned, is that Harry maintains his integrity against the threats of city women (less potent because not in their 'natural environment') whereas Joan, herself not at home in the city, succumbs to its male representative (doubly accented in his liminal significance - he lives in Manchester, beyond the city territorially, and logically, in his predatory actions). It does seem that, beyond the garden, it is still very much a man's world. For example again, although it is a female doctor who provides the advice which seems to transform their marriage, it is advice given to Joan who in turn transforms it into a series of cultural activities, hair-do, shopping, cooking, each of them not just to please Harry, but in terms of the code, to bring her closer to him.

The movement in this narrative, paralleling that of the spatial movements, involves therefore not a blurring of the boundary of man and woman, male and female, but at least provisionally (the final sequence leaves the possibility of any reworking open) the bringing of them closer together.
The opposition between man and woman expressed by the opposition of city and garden is weakened by a pulling in of the action towards the home: work comes home, and home is the site (the church also) where man and woman, nature and culture, somehow reach their unstable compromise, in close proximity to each other. The movement through the narrative is expressed then in these terms, that of a weakening of the opposition of man and woman, though of course, at a manifest level, both Harry and Joan gain confidence in their new-found togetherness.

The second dimension of movement is within the code and within the relation of the sexes: here it is sex and conversation, and the opposite of both, sleep, which act as mediators between male and female. If sex is the most extreme form of communication between man and woman then sleep is the most extreme form of non-communication. Each in a certain sense is natural. Conversation, polite and angry, informed or boring, finds itself between these two extremes. It is therefore the most neutral of mediations. In sex, sleep and conversation not only are the manifest relations of the marriage expressed, but each is a significant and dynamic element of the social code.

3) The Techno-economic Code

The dimensions of work now follow the scheme already outlined. We can distinguish between cultural work and natural work, that is 'work' done in the city by men and work done in the garden by women. We can also distinguish, importantly, between production and consumption.

That the category city - men - work versus garden - woman - work is so clearly defined in the series can be illustrated once again by referring to the women who in the series seem to transcend their categorial limits. Both Pat and the Public Relations lady, in one sense clearly the doyennes of city life, are in another, less unambiguously so. Pat runs an employment
agency in Tunbridge Wells. She therefore helps men find work (at least it is only to men that she refers when she describes her work). The Public Relations lady is also not directly involved in production; she too is concerned to sell Harry to the public. Equally Kate, the only, other significant female worker in the series, (Judith a more marginal figure, actually also buys and sells in a store) is not involved in production, but in translation. Her appearance in the garden is, to be sure, (episode 1 and 2) as a nonworker, but she is happier to be there than Harry is.

But the techno-economic code, apart from having either a cultural or natural dimension, also involves the difference between production and consumption. Once again both space and sex role are clearly opposed as producer and consumer at the beginning of the series. Harry goes off to the city to work as a production manager. Joan goes to the saleroom to buy an antique and do the rest of the shopping. Her friends are involved in a similar way.

Their joint failure in their respective activities - Harry's failure in the city, and Joan's failure to keep her garden forces Harry away from production, and Joan towards it. Each movement, like that of their sex-roles, weakens the opposition between them. Harry buys a bookshop, and starts selling books. Joan is eventually persuaded to buy antiques (we never actually see her sell them, and her single attempt to sell a book to one of her friends (episode 7) ends in failure). As a result, Harry becomes less than a producer, though his distinctiveness is preserved by virtue of his design of the new house, and Joan becomes more than just a consumer, though here the weakening of her economic position is even less than that of Harry's. But the change in their economic status allows them
to work together; and this is approved by the narrative once again in the final sequence when they, together but separately, work in a field (garden to be) in their pacing out of the house's boundary prior to its construction.

Diagrammatically the structure of the techno-economic code can be presented in this way:

**Figure VIII**  The techno-economic code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Church etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Production</td>
<td>Natural Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Shop*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Consumption</td>
<td>Flat+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Natural Production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*work without cultural production: only selling - buying. *
+work/life without natural production: no gardening.

**The Physical Code**

The fourth and final important level of coding to be recognised in *Intimate Strangers* is that of the physical; here the opposition of life and death is the most significant. This code is perhaps not as clear-cut as some of the others; it has something of the cosmic or transcendental about it, but it nevertheless is manifested in the text in terms of Harry's heart attack and as such relates once again and underlines the geographically based scheme already elucidated. Together with the categories of nature and culture each of the four areas of activity is identifiable in terms of whether it affirms or denies life or death.
Figure IX

The Physical Code

City

Cultural Death

Home

Cultural Life

Garden

Natural Life

Church etc

Natural Death

Harry's 'death' is the product of overwork and his involvement with the city; his recovery is the product of his time in the garden and in the countryside, affirmed finally by his deeper immersion in home life and the bringing of work there. The natural 'death' associated with church, and with other transformational locations, appear as so often with the church only marginally. 53 In episode 3 and again in episode 13 Harry's relationship with the past, in the first case with heroes that have long since died, in the second with his mother who is dying, is accompanied by visits to church. But even here he is something of an outsider. Joan has to intercede for him and to lead him in prayer. She is after all, by virtue of her nature, closer to and more involved in God. The only exception to this, and it is a significant one, is again in the last episode. Harry and Joan go to Church together, but more importantly Harry is portrayed, after that almost ritual dinner with the family as the great architect. His mother has died her natural death and now his and Joan's mortality is suggested as they become two tiny specks in the bourgeois wilderness of the field, garden and house of Tunbridge Wells.
If we were to integrate the codes so far discussed, the ensuing structure would present a remarkable consistency and simplicity.

Figure X  Summary Structure

City
Distance, culture, Male: Death: Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Church etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity: Culture/Nature</td>
<td>Distance: Nature/Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Male, Life</td>
<td>Male/Female, Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Garden
Proximity: Nature, Female: Life: Production

The significant movement within the narrative is away from, and a denial of, the city, its maleness and its association with death and dangerous insecurity. But that denial equally involves that of the garden, the natural world of woman and life. What is asserted therefore by the compression of the structure into flat and shop is cultural life and the balanced and relatively secure existence of male and female, and of consumption. The corollary of this, finally but only implicitly stated in the final shot, is of a natural death, a death equally of man and woman and a recognition of the natural limits of mankind. The city at its worst is a super-culture; its very life is murderous. The church, equally distinct, is by virtue of its equilibrium (the balance of nature over culture) much less threatening though equally a location, though of a different order, of the transcendence beyond the cultural. Therefore the fragility of man's cultural existence is constantly being affirmed - through excess in the city, in its weakness in marriage and in the mediatory role of the church. Given this, the garden, most strongly the preserve of nature, is an escape though, in a man's world, not a very significant one; nor is it particularly potent in its curative or threatening action. (the city's super-nature takes over
Therefore whereas for a primitive, nature is the source of all that is threatening, for us, at least for those of us who read the text of *Intimate Strangers*, that boundary between the known and the unknown, the controlled and the uncontrolled, has been transformed. The city is the jungle and the journeys to and from it, as we have noted, are fraught. Why else would Joan put on her fur coat to travel to London? What other significance can be attached to the noise and the complexity of the journeys there and back? Why is Harry (episode 4) accosted by an old friend in a railway train compartment and told about the dog eats dog of the city? Why finally is the journey of the agent of disaster, Bob Blake (episode 2), given so much stress, whereas Kenyon's (episode 6) is not?

I will return to the problems of interpreting the messages of the text shortly, but I would like first of all to draw attention to the other levels of coding, too complex for a detailed analysis to be undertaken here, but which fill out, as it were, the bare bones of the structure so far described.

It is tempting to pursue the structure of multiple codes to a smaller scale and to enquire whether, or to what extent, it manifests itself within the domestic geography of the home. Much has been written on the significance attached to different areas of social space and to the relationship between that and the space of the wider society. In our own society, though we are familiar enough with the different functions each room of the house would be expected to fulfil, we are less aware that these areas may be the expression of a simple logic. However, the fact that in *Intimate Strangers* the four significant rooms of a house are all given due weight leads to an enquiry as to how they might be related to each other. Rather more tentatively, perhaps, than earlier in this chapter, I suggest that the domestic geography of
Of course, women are also recipients of Joan's culinary largesse, but again in the series only five times; once with Daniels' secretary who does actually spend much time in the kitchen, and the other four times are with the daughters, Kate who does not help (she has links with the male world) and with Judith who does. Harry's only attempt to help occurs when he is drunk and angry; in other words less than a man. Eating is a natural activity; it is also in the dining room a public one.

The other opposition brings together the sitting room and bedroom, the former the domain of cultural conversation and natural sociability, in public, the latter of natural communication and its denial of it in sleep, in private. Conversation is opposed to sex and sleep as I have already suggested. The dimension of the public and the private only reinforces that opposition.

Kitchen and dining room are linked also in their relative proximity; each is the location of an unchallenged 'gender in dominance'. Equally and centrally linked are the sitting room and bedroom, each the site of conflict in active communication; a communication unmediated by the production of food. Dining room and kitchen are, as I have suggested, metonymically related; sitting room and bedroom, metaphorically so.

The relationship between this coded structure and that of the global geography of the series turns especially on the change in the relationships of sex-role and activity. Whereas in the world, man is the cultural producer and woman is the natural consumer, in the home woman is the culture producer and the man is the natural consumer. The threshold becomes not just the site for change of values, but the site of a fundamental transformation in social and cultural identity. (55) To speculate that
Harry and Joan's house (and then their flat) can be summarised as follows. The differences and similarities between it and its codes, and those of the structures of the whole will be immediately obvious.

Figure XI Domestic Geography

Dining Room

Male: Natural consumption: Public

Sitting Room
Male/Female
Culture/Nature
Public
Production?

Bedroom
Female/Male
Nature/Culture
Private
Consumption

Kitchen

Female: Cultural production: Private

A word or two of explanation is in order. As before, there are two orders of opposition, in this case that between kitchen and dining room, and then that between sitting room and bedroom. The kitchen is the private world of female cultural activity. It is Joan's territory par excellence: she is at home there, Harry is a guest. In the kitchen, Joan works, she transforms food and prepares meals. Only breakfast is eaten jointly by them there, all other meals, apart from Joan's lonely snacks (episode 2 and 5) are eaten in the dining room. It is private; the only strangers allowed in are women, (episode 4, Daniels' secretary). Opposed to the kitchen, and metonymically related to it obviously, is the dining room where men, often publicly and in the presence of women, naturally consume the food that has been prepared elsewhere. In the dining room Joan is the servant and the helper - Harry receives - whether he chooses to eat (4) or not (5).
what is true for this television series is true for life is tempting. We might avoid that temptation but only partly by suggesting that it is at least more clear on television.

Much has been written on fashion as a signifying system, the code almost non plus ultra for a culture so dominated by the visual, and one in which the finest distinctions of status can be expressed and recognised. (56) In everyday life our experience of the clothes we wear is a multi-sensual one; we can recognise colour and texture as well as cut and combination. Our judgement is informed in relation to time (last year's fashion) and place (not suitable for Ascot); to occasion and judgement of personality and natural aesthetic ("mutton dressed as lamb"). Distinctions of sex role, of expressions of exclusion from, or denial of, established degrees of status, are all expressible in the clothes we wear (or do not wear). As Marshall Sahlins (57) suggests our clothes are almost totemic in their relationship not just to the natural order of things (cloth, colour) but also in their emblematics. Culture is created and signified (indeed in the same process) at a level which is both individual and social, by the clothing industry.

The complexity and range of the codes of fashion are worth noting. In colour and in texture (black/white, silk/linen) and in both cut and combination (skirt/blouse, shirt/tie) a web of meaning is generated. The complete outfit, in so far as it aims for correctness or grammaticality (e.g. consistency in a current fashion of clothes and accessories) presents the perfect equilibrium of individual selection and cultural expectation. To produce a grammar of fashion would therefore be a tall order, not just in terms of the complexity of its levels but also in its instability; for the relation of a langue and parole is much less certain than that of natural language. Roland Barthes' attempts to
generate such a grammar depends on the descriptions that fashion magazines construct to distinguish one garment from another, not of the visibility of the fashions themselves; and Marshall Sahlins has also withdrawn, in an otherwise fascinating analysis, from the totality of the task. (58)

The problems of deciphering the code of fashion on television are on the one hand more simple, on the other hand not more so, than doing it within the culture at large. It is simpler because the code is less rich: not texture, and for some no colour, make the visual impression less full. On the other hand, the process by which fashion on television is created is the same as the one by which it is created in the world beyond, though the first is generally dependent on the second. In other words, the signifying of clothes on television is dependent on the general process of signifying in fashion, though as we have seen in terms of the dominant codes, likely to be more unambiguous in its meaning. (59)

I do not propose here, to explore in detail the intricacies of the code of fashion. The task, even for one series of programmes such as *Intimate Strangers*, would for obvious reasons be too enormous and would demand a study of its own. The point I wish to make however, and to support illustratively, is that fashion constitutes another lever of expression which in its most basic employment in a television series such as this, operates to support the dominant codes of place, sex-role and techno-economics. In practice, in the production of a television drama, a great deal of attention is given to the clothes and to the details of the environment; the effort to create a consistent verisimilitude is great.
Just as in the relation between action and place, where the judgements of appropriateness are so fundamental, so too in the relation of fashion and sex-role/place/economics, the same judgement is at work. Those who work wear working clothes, those who entertain likewise; women and men most obviously are distinguished by their appearance. The significance of this most recent excursion into banality is that it is by virtue of it, that the mediatory figures, as far as the action is concerned, can express their transitional or transformational function by the clothes they wear. Kate can, and does wear trousers, for example; Pat does too; both she and the PR lady in their separates (skirt and top) wear shirts. Joan more determinately perhaps, in terms of age and sex, always wears skirts. For her, significant narrative events are marked not by the detail of dress, but by her coats and by the change of hairstyle.

Harry's progress through the series is marked, in what may seem to be an obvious fashion, in terms of suit and striped shirt and tie (work) to jacket, trousers, soft collared shirts (no work), to open necked shirts and trousers (work in the shop). His outfit is clearly opposed to that of Tom Daniels in episode 4, who faces Harry's suit with shirt and tie but with sleeves rolled up. Joan's transformation into worker is marked by the replacement of her fur coat (worn on the trip to London), the most 'natural' of her outer garments, by that of a sheepskin, the skin of a domesticated animal.

The pertinent oppositions from which the code can be constructed are barely suggested here. Within the relative crudity of space and the basic elements of work and sex role, fashion articulates a subtle and often vital system of signification. It is vital not only because through it we can make judgements of status and action without actually knowing anything more than about the clothes we are seeing, but also because
given our understanding of basic distinctions of place and sex role
and so on, we can make judgements on the appropriateness of a particular
item of clothing or of a particular outfit. Whereas in the real world,
such a judgement generates a particular response in social action,
in the television narrative, such judgements are of functional
significance. Drama is created in, among other things, the relationship
of clothes, action and place; and in particular in the disharmony or
conflict within that relationship. To be wrongly dressed, just as to
act inappropriately, is significant not just on its own terms but as a
marker for the future course of the narrated action. Fashion then is
one, perhaps the most important visual marker in the overdetermination
of television’s drama and in the creation of verisimilitude.

I have less to say about the other codes, mostly because of their potential
complexity, but also because not enough information is given in the text of
Intimate Strangers. Names for example, just like each item of clothing,
though more interestingly, because less the result of conscious deliberation,
speak of and about characters. The names are coded if we wish to
look at them in that way, once again between male and female (and their medi-
ators); and there are those with natural and those with cultural
connotations. We have perceptions of names as strong or weak, those
of strangeness and familiarity, of tradition and novelty. Once again
the dimensions are many, and the fascination immense. In so far as
these, and other names speak to us, then they are coded. It is my
contention that naming too is a part of the overall, generally multi-
dimensional coding of the television narrative. Even if we neither
know nor care to think of a connection between lion and Lionel, the woman
eating seducer, and the biblical Daniel and Daniels the aggressive
businessman, the connections however superficial, can be and need to
be explored. Indeed the two slightly unwordly characters Harry and
Joan meet on holiday in the Lake District, introduce themselves as Lanson ('as in Champagne') and my wife Phoebe ('as in wave'), Lanson's own first name is Hector and their significance as representatives of some mythical past, opposed to the mundane reality of Paynter ('as in dingy'), is freely recognised within the text.

The acoustic and alimentary codes, so apparently dominant in the myths of South and North America are not so clearly represented here. The preparation of food seems no longer to have great significance as a part of transition between nature and culture. That boundary has moved beyond the culinary, and in a certain sense is now to be found around the back, represented both in the distinction between home and country, but also in a much more equivocal but powerful way between home and city, where the city appears as a culture beyond. The preparation and consumption of food therefore has much more to do with the reinforcement of sex roles than with this other vital mediation. Narratively it also functions to postpone the significant action and to provide an environment (social) where transformations occur, where deals are done, conflicts are generated or resolved and so on. Similarly there is little evidence for the elaborate acoustic coding which Claude Lévi-Strauss unearthed in his analysis of South American myths. Noise as such seems to be generated and therefore functionally important often when a significant transformation or mediation is undertaken (in Intimate Strangers journeys to and from London, especially those prior to and after seduction or near seduction), where it seems to signify danger or when there is a conflict in an otherwise harmonious arrangement of the different codes (again in Intimate Strangers, when Harry mows the lawn). Music, of course, is used conventionally to introduce and to close a particular narrative episode. In Intimate Strangers it accompanies the text only twice. Once when Harry and Joan go to the cinema and then it is on the
soundtrack of the film, and secondly when the P.R. lady puts on a record which might have accompanied her seduction of Harry. To talk of codes in this connection is probably premature, but nevertheless not theoretically incorrect.

One final point. In much of the discussion of codes above, the dichotomy of nature and culture appears often, and is seen to be illuminating in many ways and for most of the codes that have been disentangled. In one sense this seems, for a society like ours, to be an odd dichotomy with which to begin, and indeed one whose appositeness is open to question. It is, however, empirically, of great importance; its explanatory usefulness suggests the difference between what we take to be a part of nature and what we take to be part of culture is of continuing significance. That this is not entirely fanciful, nor not indeed simply the result of the arbitrary imposition of a method on to an otherwise unexplained piece of date, is supported very much in our ways of speech, and in particular in the metaphors and similes used, for example, in this series itself. Thus, as we have already noted, the city is a jungle, and in it men claw (episode 4) each other. In another context, machines become women (Harry's car), or if they are old, dinosaurs (episode 5); businesses are born (episode 4) and can or cannot be milked (episode 4). We can be as right as rain (episode 4) or of a sunny disposition; we rabbit on (episode 5) and we cannot teach old dogs new tricks (episode 5). People become transport (5) and refer to themselves, rather than their cars, as badly parked. These examples collected from two episodes of the series written by two different authors, are meant only to be suggestive. The significance of the metaphor, inter alia, but importantly, lies in its transgression of the culture/nature boundary. Machines become humans or animals, and the
supreme product of culture, the city, conspires in the same way, and is expressed in the same terms, as the jungle of old. (62)

Implicit and sometimes explicit in what has gone before, which has purported to be a discussion of the various levels according to which a television drama series is coded, has been an interpretation. The question of how we are to understand the message that these codes generate is not one, as I have already suggested, which will admit of an unambiguous answer. It is for this reason that I have avoided presenting a dictionary, a lexicon, as a key to the reading of a text such as Intimate Strangers. While it might be possible to generate something in the way suggested by A.J. Greimas or on the lines outlined by Jerrold Fodor and Jerry A. Katz in their early paper (63) it seemed, rather like a dictionary of dreams, to be of little general relevance. Much more useful then, hopefully, was an outline of the principles according to which a text such as this was constructed, the generation of a structure rather than a list of words.

The structure is then a key to the understanding of the message of the text. The garden, the city, the kitchen and the bedroom are in Levi-Straussian terms concrete categories, categories full of empirical reference, which the text takes from the world of experience and whose ordering in the text is a measure of our culture's capacity to understand itself. However, whatever is said about the message of the text in terms of a statement derived from its structuration, that message is never final and the structuring is never complete. (64) There is a space between the structure, however full and the totality of the text. It is in that space that any interpretation must find its way; given the relative unsophistication of the proposed basic structure, but also the relative unsophistication of the text, the interpretation is indeed a provisional one.
We can begin by saying that at one, important level the series is about Harry and Joan Paynter, their marriage and family relationships and about the way in which they both face, in these relationships, the implication of the events following Harry's heart attack. And if we being here, at the level of plot, then we can recognise the three problems with which the narrative has to deal; the problem of physical health, that of relationships - in particular that between husband and wife, and that of a man (and to a lesser extent, a woman) and his work.

With the model of myth elaborated by Claude Lévi-Strauss in mind we can then go on to ask, through the narrative, but beyond it, what it is that each manifest problem has to do with the society/acts as host to these stories. Is there, then, in any sense a significant problem, a significant contradiction, within the society which at this time one might expect popular texts such as this to explore? Most centrally, and quite obviously, there appear to be two. The first concerns the changing and often conflicting balance in the relationship between man and woman; and secondly and correlatively is the problem posited for both, in family and in marriage, by the changing demands of work in an industrialised and post-industrial society.

Both of these problems are real and vital. They are not the concoction of the media of mass communication but arise as a direct result of the inherent conflicts of industrial society and in particular an industrial society which still bows to the liberal democratic traditions of equality, fraternity and liberty. These problems are no less real than those of cross-cousin marriage which the Tsimshian Indians must face, above all because culture cannot and does not provide a simple solution. It cannot because there is no simple solution; but on the other hand it must, in a sense, because each individual in the society, as he moves through it, has to find a solution for himself.
In many ways, and predictably enough, the answers, or attempts at answers, which the text of *Intimate Strangers* presents, are conservative, but they are no less interesting for that. Despite his various trials, Harry remains master of the household. His position as culture-hero is restated in his plans to build their new house, and his cultural centrality is reaffirmed in the way that the various women who surround him continually act as mediators. The women are marginal beings, either threatening (Pat and P.R. lady) because they are outside marriage, or supportive (Joan) when she is contented within marriage. Their marginality is that of being closer to nature than man and in the likelihood that in a male dominated society and culture, women can be used to define those margins. Seduction and cure both involve negatively and positively an attempt to de-culture man, to bring him closer to nature. Correlatively these women who seduce or cure, define for man the limits of his world, the world of the masculine, the world preeminently of culture. For women the problem has different connotations. The clarity of this boundary has been eroded and to a significant degree women's naturalness is being denied in contemporary society; in her incorporation into masculine culture her traditional role and significance is being threatened.

The solution offered by *Intimate Strangers* is by no means conclusive. Firstly Joan is middle-aged, her children have grown up and so her particular solution only involves her relationship with Harry. Even that begins by her adjustment to his life. Her subsequent involvement as the buyer and seller of antiques is a very small move in the direction of serious cultural activity; she is still essentially a consumer, and still essentially a marginal being.
Harry's solution is more positive and involves a greater movement, although even this is deceptive. The denial of city-work, and the withdrawal to suburban work is accompanied, as we have seen, by a change in its quality. Harry is no longer a producer; and he too takes on women's work (literally — he replaces Mrs. Temple as the manager/owner of the bookshop). This denial and this move is articulated spatially in their move to live above the shop and in Joan's loss of her garden.

In every way therefore the narrative suggests withdrawal, a withdrawal above all from the extremes of city and garden, a withdrawal from nature and from super-nature and from the margins. It is in this withdrawal, it is suggested, in the comfort of a categorial closeness, that the particular problems of relationships at work in an industrial society can be solved. There are no other solutions, for not one relationship in the entire series is anything less than imperfect measured against the ideal which Harry and Joan believe they have achieved. But this solution in its withdrawal, is at the same time a refusal to attempt the solution. Work in terms of production is denied; women's naturalness is denied; it is in a real sense therefore, a petit bourgeois, not to say Victorian, solution to a contemporary problem. And in a sense the narrative in its last gasp acknowledges just that: Joan and Harry even in their expected retirement, look to re-establish at least one part of the loss. It is not too fanciful to see their final pacing in the empty field as a further attempt to find in the wilderness a new resolution of these central concerns, and maybe their disappearance in this wilderness, as we the audience fly higher, signifies that the narrative recognises that in reality the only solution is in death.
At this level of explanation the message is clear; indeed it is part of my contention that television's narratives are particularly constricted in their ambiguity and this ambiguity is not just a product of the sledgehammer of a method which has been brought to bear.

Intimate Strangers, by any account, is not the most simple of television narratives, compared to the Hollywood plots of city police or Californian private eyes, it is subtelty personified. But even here the structure of the text, both in its chronologic and in its logic, is clear and unambiguous. The narrative as a whole takes something from the folktale in the relative simplicity of its story and in its morphology, and something from myth in the structure of its context through the basic categories of concrete experience, and in the attempt to resolve a particular contradiction of the host society. It is therefore exclusively neither folktale, nor myth, but in its attenuation of these forms of narrative it demonstrates the continuity of their tradition and preserves the power in their communication.

The relationship, then, between the text and the context is one of a filter, and of a reconstitution of the social and cultural sediment. If our world and our experience of it, is complex and ambiguous and if we are uncertain or insecure in its order, then the television narrative, like all the popular narratives of old, attempts to restate the outlines of the experienced problems of the everyday world. It does so in ways which lock the apparent uniqueness of the moment to the substantial continuity of traditional narration. Its effectiveness and its power lies in this combination. Television, above all, is a machine for the reduction of the ambiguous and the uncertain. It is neither teacher nor priest. Rather it is a kind of cultural logician whose work consists in the continual and endless rearrangement of the elements in the contemporary manifestation of eternal dilemmas. Intimate Strangers was one, and by now probably a forgotten attempt to do just that.
Chapter 6. Footnotes and References

1. cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked, op. cit. p. 111. "...every myth is an organised totality; the development of the narrative throws light on an underlying structure which is independent of the relation between what comes before and what comes after."


3. cf. The Glasgow Media Group, Bad News op. cit.

4. cf. Edmund Leach, Genesis as Myth, op. cit. p. 35: "...if it really be the case that the message contained in a myth or a set of myths is communicated through the structure, then it would be astonishing if 2,000 years of intensive Biblical Scholarship had not gained some inkling of this fact. If, on the other hand, structural analysis of Biblical material were never to reveal 'messages' which are not in some degree already known, then we should have good grounds for supposing that the whole business is an accidental triviality." cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology Vol. 2. op. cit. p. 80: "...it is hopeless to expect a structural analysis to change our way of perceiving concrete social relations. It will only explain them better." and Marcel Détienne. The Gardens of Adonis. op. cit. 1977. p. 131. below.

5. Edmund Leach. op. cit.

6. Roland Barthes, Critical Essays. op. cit. p. 215. "Structuralism takes the real, decomposes it, then recomposes it; this appears to be little enough (which makes sure that the structuralist enterprise is 'meaningless', 'uninteresting', 'useless' etc.). Yet from another point of view, this 'little enough' is decisive, for between the two objects, or the two tenses of structuralist activity, there occurs something new, and what is new is nothing less than generally intelligible: the simulacrum is intellect added to object, and this addition has an anthropological value, in that it is man himself, his history, his situation, his freedom, and the very resistance which nature offers to his mind."

7. The Garden of Adonis. op. cit.

8. cf. Will Wright, Sixguns and Society. op. cit.


10. idem. The Story of Asdiwal op. cit. 13-14; 29; The Raw and the Cooked. 332.: "It would be naive to suppose that there is always and in all circumstances a simple correlation between mythological imagery and social structure...often also it is not sufficiently taken into account that the mythological system is relatively autonomous when compared with the other manifestations of the life and thought of the group..."


13. see footnote 156 in Chapter 2, above.


15. see especially Dan Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism.* op. cit.


29. see above Chapter 2.


32. op. cit.

33. *The Interpretation of Myth.* op. cit.


37. The distinction between nature and culture is not however just the concern of the techno-economic code, but underlies many of the distinctions to be made within many different codes.


40. This is a question of verisimilitude— and in film one of mise-en-scène— for a discussion of it in relation to literature see Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics.* *op. cit.* 137 ff.; and see *Communications* 11. 1968.


47. The point is that any theoretical position can generate an interpretation which should (can) be internally coherent. The Freudians do this of course rather well. cf. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment.* London. 1976.

48. This raises for me a troubling question: if the analyses offered by Lévi-Strauss and others are the result of a mediation of the alien by the contemporary, the former may, rather than be 'understood' therefore, be 'contaminated'. If the structure of a myth is actually the structure of contemporary thought imposed on a myth, then no demonstration of its applicability to contemporary stories will have any significance whatsoever. On the other hand, logocentrism, or ethnocentrism writ large, is unavoidable; we are, at least in our sociology, all literate now.


50. In episode 3, indeed, the past becomes a transcendental helper, though personified in a whole range of atavistic figures.


53. The linking of church, pub, hospital etc. is not as ambiguous as it may appear; each are locations in which cultural existence is transcended, broken through, as it were, in prayer, drink or sickness; each institution exists, contrary to marriage, to preserve some aspect of man's naturalness.


55. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage.* *op. cit.*


57. *op. cit.* p. 179 ff.

58. Bogatyrev *op. cit.* seems to push his analysis further however.

59. The problems, of course, begin with costume drama, and then this statement no longer holds so unequivocally.

60. from the O.E.D.

Painter ¹ (Paynter is a variant) 1. An artist who represents or depicts objects on a surface in colours; one who paints pictures. 2. A workman who coats or colours the surface of things (on woodwork, ironwork, etc.) with paint.

Painter ² (Paynter is a variant) 1. The rope or chain with which the shank and flukes of the anchor, when carried at the cathead, are confined to the ship's side. Now always shank-painter. 2. A rope attached to the bow of a boat, for making it fast to a ship, or a stake etc.

Painter ³ Name in some parts of N. America for the American panther or cougar.

61. *From Honey to Ashes.* *op. cit.*


64. cf. Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge. op. cit. 25.


CHAPTER VII

Television and Society

The argument is this. Television is a central cultural institution of our society. In its centrality it articulates the primary concerns of human existence and in ways which are themselves primary. These concerns, questions of life and death, of the familiar and the strange, of male and female, of nature and culture, are incorporated even into our own advanced culture through the messages that television communicates. The forms of that communication are themselves basic; they are simple and one supposes they are effective; they consist in the mythic narratives, part myth, part folktale, and in magic and ritual. Television is not sacred; nor is it profane in any strict sense of the term. But the emotions and the power of the sacred are preserved despite the secularisation of television's manifest content. Television's effectiveness consists in its ability to translate the unfamiliar into the familiar and to provide frameworks for making sense of the unintelligible. It articulates difference but preserves that difference. And while it transcends the boundary of the acceptable and the known and seeks continually to extend it, it nevertheless marks that boundary clearly and unambiguously. Within that boundary we are secure and through television we are always within it.

The boundary is both spatial and temporal. Both geography and history are in a certain sense annulled. Television is here, and it is now. Its images guarantee that and its content supports it. But it is its form, the logic of its narrative, which is the primary mechanism. And it is in its form that the continuity of culture,
its essential recursiveness, is preserved.\(^1\) This measure of persistence needs, of course, to be understood in the context of a society which in its own terms is rapidly changing and which is visibly the site and source of conflict. But its persistence is not therefore to be only understood as false or alien or arbitrary. Television's communication relates directly to the common sense experience of everyday existence and the validity of that experience is guaranteed by its persistence. The everyday world too, has its boundaries and within them practical activity, economic, social, political, symbolic is undertaken in the security of the familiar, the predictable and the expectation of reciprocity. The commonsense world has its strategies but not solutions; we learn to live with contingency but do not transcend it. Our language and behaviour are premised on judgements of appropriateness and as J.L. Austin acknowledges truth and falsity are no more than that.\(^2\)

It is the language of television, in its restriction, which presents and illuminates the coherence of the commonsense world and its judgements of the appropriate. The language of television, in particular through its narrative structure, narrowly defines the range of expression and the limits of response. It is then, like all ritual communication, an uneven dialogue - though not as some would wish to argue, a monologue.\(^3\) Participation is indirect, as is its community, but both are present and fundamental in preserving its culture. And that culture, a folk culture, is created and maintained as all folk cultures are, through the oral communication of, by definition, ephemeral messages. Television, pressured by its own time and space, of schedule, of novelty and visibility, presents its messages in irrecoverable and irreversible time.
But the recognition and the memory of these messages is guaranteed by the reversible time of its structure and by the accessibility of simple chronology.

Like commonsense, then, television translates history, political and social change, into manageable terms. For both, this translation is delayed and it is unquestioned. Marxism is correct. Television and commonsense do not enquire into why things should be as they are, only that they are so but have somehow to be lived with. It is tempting to ask on what other basis daily existence is possible - and television is indeed daily. But it is important to recognise that in this symbolic relationship with the everyday world television neither simply reflects nor defines, preserves nor changes what passes for commonsense knowledge and reflection. The relationship is a complex one and like the relationship between myth and the profane world in preliterate culture, its messages are neither distinct nor true to manifest experience.

Television is therefore, playful; it is both literally and metaphorically a game; but in its rule governed performance, the ending is both expected, pregiven and balanced.\(^{(4)}\) In this it compares to ritual. Many of our games are accompanied by ritual; many of our rituals are games. Television presents, and is, both. In its eternal flow\(^{(5)}\) and in its intention it aims at balance; an infinite pendulum of the positive and negative, approved and disapproved, expected and unexpected. In television the full range of human and not so human possibility is presented - only to be denied; a denial precisely by virtue of its presentation on television. Our heroes and anti-heroes have enough of us in them for us to recognise our identity\(^{(6)}\) but by their appearance on that screen, within the frame, that identity becomes estranged and in a
sense more attractive. In any event, like in myth, nothing in television is possible even though it is real; nothing is real even though it is possible.

Television then needs to be taken seriously. It is not an aberration of twentieth century society, an excrescence, or an irrelevance. It is, in its present form, which may not be its necessary form, the preeminent medium of centralised communication. It would be naive to suggest that it is the medium through which society communes with itself, for of course that society is neither homogenous nor free from conflict and contradiction. In it certain groups have access to the content of television and others are excluded, but the significance of this situation is perhaps not as obvious as it may seem and I will return to it.

II

In this context, what of the entirely modest contribution that the analysis of Intimate Strangers purports to be? Television drama takes up a substantial proportion of programme time and a drama series a substantial proportion of that. Drama, while not necessarily representative is certainly typical, and no television day goes by without its appearance, particularly in the afternoon. But despite this, the analysis of Intimate Strangers constitutes in no way a proof of the arguments offered about television here and in the rest of the thesis. Such a demonstration would need, were it ever to be possible, an altogether more comprehensive range of analysis. What it does do, I hope, is offer an illustration of the argument and make the formulation of hypotheses about television potentially more precise.
This enquiry has begun, and in a way, ended with a study of television's narrative structure. Such a structure gives any particular text, a programme in this case, its coherence and its identity. The levels at which it works seem significant: on the one hand its chronologic, the movement from beginning to end; on the other its logic, the synchronic pattern of system rather than text specific elements. The former reflects the structure of the folktale, the latter that of myth, though as I have argued there is no absolute distinction between the two, and most traditional oral texts are, like those on television, a mixture of both.

The narrative of *Intimate Strangers* would appear to be paradigmatic. There clearly is a coherent narrative chronologic and that chronologic seems to be accessible through the model of the folktale that Vladimir Propp and others present, but even in terms of an analysis which is less precise in its specification the folkloric quality of these programmes is obvious. A. Olrik's stipulation of the basic elements within the folktale has already been referred to; in it he suggests that a folktale consists of nine characteristics: 

- The beginning of a folktale is gentle and rarely the most important part of the tale; likewise the story extends beyond the climax until it reaches a point of equilibrium or stability; the story itself is full of repetition, often three fold, which is used to give it body.
- The number of people involved is also limited; rarely more than two are present in a scene at one time, and rarely active at the same time. Those that are, are often contrary, antagonistic to each other; the weakest will often turn out to be the strongest; the youngest often triumphs over the oldest. If two people appear in the same role they are presented as small and weak. But in any case both characterisation and plot structure is simple: "Only
such qualities as directly effect the story are mentioned; no clue is given that the persons in the tale have any real life outside." In every degree the folktale is a simple story, therefore extraneous detail, and variety for variety's sake, are excluded in an attempt to make the text as concentrated as possible.

In *Intimate Strangers* most of these elements find their place. The story indeed begins with a scene setting and ends with a perfect image of balance. There is much repetition, one episode after another fulfilling similar functions, and different characters, particularly the helpers or potential helpers following one another with consistent regularity and with often minimal narrative effect. The number and range of characters is limited, though perhaps not so much when compared with classic folktales, but the action is certainly centred on the hero who in this case appears in three manifestations, - Harry, Joan and the two of them together. Rarely, if ever, are one or the other of them out of shot. Other characters come and go, like thieves in the night; they are of no consequence in themselves, only means to/end, and are quickly forgotten. Harry, too, named but still Everyman, by virtue of his initial misfortune, has to triumph over adversity; and Joan too, by virtue, as it were, of Harry's success, also suffers before the eventual triumph. These are the common folk, and they are fighting an unnamed adversary.

Who then is the villain in *Intimate Strangers*? Why is he absent? The series, quite obviously, is not one of manifest conflict and physical violence. Villainy is not the prerogative of any one character, and the drama is therefore diffuse. The conflict has been internalised and generalised. In a sense one can say that no one is to blame for Harry's misfortune and no one will really help him except himself. And this is the bourgeois message of
independence in the face of unnamed and in any case ultimately irrelevan... of society and history which Roland Barthes for example, sees at the heart of the culture of contemporary capitalism. 10 Equally however, Harry's struggle is with society - a society which has excluded him by virtue of his triple lack; the message here is of one of discomfort, alienation perhaps, felt by those excluded and the choice is one that A.J. Greimas argues is essential to the Russian folktale, that between individual freedom and social respectability. 11 The irony, of course is that Harry's bid for freedom - 'to be his own man' (episode 6 and 7) - leads with the directness of a bullet straight to the heart of social acceptability.

In chapter 5 I suggested that the villain was fate, disembodied, beyond control, beyond history; it was chance, 'just one of those things', which brings Harry to his knees at the end of episode 1 and which inaugurates the narrative. Chance too, as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno argue (12) has its part to play in bourgeois culture - though as they fail to see, no more nor less, than in any other. In fact it is not chance, or not at least just chance, which generates the impetus for the story of Intimate Strangers, but it is a particular form of imbalance or extreme; Harry is working too hard; his involvement in the City takes him too far - beyond culture, to where culture becomes nature once again and is uncontrollable. It is the folktale's task to resolve that imbalance and to generate through its narrative progress not just the redemption of the initial lack or villainy but through that, the presentation of an ideal equilibrium. This much, at least, is what the chronologic effects. The Levi-Straussian formula, ian the Greimas/canonic structure are statements of just this, as is implicitly Propp's function W, the Wedding, and as such this drive for balance is as much a part of the myth as of the folktale. (13)
However, in the analysis presented in the thesis, the mythic narrative transcends the simple chronologic of the folktale. It breaks out of the presence of the text in two directions; firstly towards the society that acts as host to it and secondly towards the structure of mythic expression which has a much wider spatial and temporal relevance. Both movements are united in the concrete logic which is thereby no longer seen as being the exclusive prerogative of preliterate society.

I referred to the arguments of Marshall Sahlins in the introductory chapter. In advocating a pensée bourgeoise, he suggested that the way it was expressed was no less in terms of a logic of felt and lived categories as was any in primitive society. For him the significance of such an observation and indeed such a demonstration in the case of food and fashion, was to establish both a common logic and a distinct content within contemporary culture. This, indeed, is also my intention, and the narrative of Intimate Strangers supports it. It is a visible logic of place, sex and work through which the dilemmas of the strange, the contradictory and the appropriate are worked through, although in Intimate Strangers one set of cultural categories seem dominant - that between the country and the city. The characters which play within these categories are of course, perfectly contemporary, their actions limited by what in the world of lived relations they would be. But in the compression of the play that world becomes mythic; its concreteness suffused and defined by its eternal logic.

The analysis in chapter 6 has perhaps not been pursued far enough. To do so would be an enormous task, and would in any case need to take account not just of other television series, but of the manifestations of the codes of contemporary culture in other media.
Indeed, in order to make some sense of the little I have, I have had to assume much about the world at large. The result is a series of simple and, in effect, over-determined structures. At the level at which I have chosen to explore the texts there appears a world and a logic of remarkable simplicity. It neither seems to present the extraordinary complexity of American myth nor for example the sensitivity to space and time which the Kabyle and Berber appear to show in their practice, both mythic and profane. It is tempting to say either that the method itself is blinding, or that there is a deterioration of mythic structure in contemporary society, or that one text is not sufficient to suggest the full vitality of the system as a whole. I suppose that all three are partially correct though I am more inclined to suggest that the simple structure portrays a simple text and secondly that a simple text is only one among many in whose unity a more complex structure will be at work. Indeed the category of church (pub, hospital etc.) is one which is remarkably underpresented and underdeveloped in the series. Given a wider range of texts, it and the other structural units could be further broken down in a way similar to the one suggested for the domestic geography. In such a way and in the acknowledgement that each category will appear in more than one structural arrangement, then the structure as a whole will grow like a crystal, endlessly.

III

Can the function of television be discussed? It is in many ways difficult to do so. The history of studies of the mass media, particularly film, radio and television have been dominated by a concern with effect and with function. Current research can add to the basic stimulus and response model notions of two-step flow and gatekeepers, uses and
gratifications in the communication of a message; and in the awareness that 'who says what/to whom, model' is mediated by a culture and society whose complexity diffuses the previously assumed potency of the syringe. But despite this the direct influence of television on action, particularly on the action of children and adolescents is still a cause of academic and more broadly social concern.

It would be fair to say that Denis McQuail's conclusion in 1969 still holds:

"The assumption of great persuasive power of the mass media must be severely qualified. There is almost no evidence of the production of apathy or passivity by the mass media, nor of effects harmful to sociability and family life or likely to stimulate crime and violence. The assumption of unmediated contact between mass communicators and the individual has largely been demolished along with the image of an individualised and anomic audience situation." (22)

The mass media are therefore functional, as Paul Lazarsfeld noted as long ago as 1948. They offer no serious challenge to the dominant institutions of society and overall tend to support the status quo. None of this is intuitively surprising, and so the question no longer becomes why or what, but how. And it is here the problems begin. The search for answers has lead to a greater concern with the messages themselves and with the desire to relate the analysis of particular communicated texts to a theory of culture or ideology which will make sense of them. This is indeed the intention of this study, though in a sense still at one remove, for the notion of function however difficult it is to avoid, is still in many ways an insubstantial one. It assumes coherence, normality and consensus. It takes its measure from the persistence of institutions and while this has a certain validity (societies do cohere, action is norm governed, there is a degree of consensus, institutions persist), there is much in society, quite obviously, that is not like this.
Indeed, television, among the other mass media, is often given an analogous position to some functionalist theories in sociology; that it masks and mistakes the reality of the real world and generates by so doing, an atmosphere of misplaced and unjust security. (25) The correlation of television and the mythic does not, of itself, make the position much easier to resolve. J.S.R. Goodlad (26) for example, in his discussion of popular drama, takes the functionalist position with regard to both myth and drama much to heart; myth and ritual have cognitive, expressive and instrumental functions; they inform the members of a community about its social structure, they act as tension releases, they help to exercise social control, and they accurately reflect the real life experience of the community. Drama in general, and television drama in particular, does likewise; it draws attention to the social order by contrasting it with disorder, to a morality by contrasting it with immorality; it reinforces prevailing popular opinion and reflects norms; it is unlikely to be dysfunctional either in terms of its specific effects or in general narcotically; even escape, in so far as it is a valid category, is positive; it functions as a social lubricant. (27) Once again this seems both trivial and obvious on the one hand and empirically undemonstrable on the other. Just as there are myths and folktales which might appear to have no function, or to be positively antagonistic to existing structural arrangements, and Jack Zipes for example argues that the European folktales of feudal society were at least potentially a spur to rebellious action, (28) so too can one refer to television programmes, drama in particular, which might also be similarly excluded. They are, admittedly, few. (29)
No; as Max Weber admonishes, such arguments as these are of orientational use only. (30) One has to look at the mechanisms within the texts and to the relationship between institutions; one has to examine the ways in which meanings are generated and transmitted and to look at the symbolic structure of social existence.

I have, in the preceding chapters, suggested one way of proceeding. Much can be gained by an examination of the texts themselves and their structure. The nature of television's communication is restricted, and as such it both depends on and creates an audience of a particular kind; of course, composed of different individuals, with different needs and likely to respond differently, uniquely, to the messages they receive; but by the same token united through the reception of that message. This is the new folk, or rather by virtue of the persistence of the messages and in the way they are expressed, a resurgence of the folk. Television creates a national parochiality; traditional forms of sub-cultural experience and expression, the culture of the declining rural population of industrial societies, is on the one hand being destroyed by television, but on the other it is being preserved. Everything but the content remains and what is more it is no longer restricted to particular groups, but pertains and is relevant to the society as a whole.

At this point, loud screams come from stage left:

"Structuralism is the thought guaranteed by the State which thinks the present conditions of spectacular 'communication' as an absolute. Its method of studying the code of messages is itself nothing but the product, and the recognition, of a society where communication exists in the form of a cascade of hierarchic signals. Consequently it is not Structuralism which serves to prove the transhistorical validity of the society of the spectacle; it is on the contrary the society of the spectacle imposing itself as massive reality which serves to prove the cold dream of Structuralism." [31]

Perhaps. It is certainly the illusion of the common interest which since Marx and Engels [32] has been central to an understanding of myth
and ideology. And if even for Ernst Cassirer myth seems to roll up everything it touches into a unity, so to for Roland Barthes, this is also true of bourgeois ideology and its manifestations in mass mediated communication;

"Statistically, myth is on the right. There, it is essential; well-fed, sleek, expansive, garrulous, it invents itself ceaselessly. It takes hold of everything, all aspects of the law, of morality, of aesthetics, of diplomacy, of household equipment, of literature, of entertainment. Its expansion has the very dimensions of bourgeois ex-nomination. The bourgeoisie wants to keep reality without keeping the appearances; it is therefore the very negativity of bourgeois appearance, infinite like every negativity, which solicits myth infinitely." 34

For Barthes, of course, contemporary culture and its products are functional, and though he and Guy Debord, more spectacularly, see the continuity of myth, they nevertheless do not see its inevitability. That is the illusion; just as much as function is illusion if it is presumed to be necessary. Both I and Debord see contemporary culture as earthily transcendent; what distinguishes us is simply that what seems as a reasonable observation to me becomes the centre of his thunderous recriminations.

The issue, however, is a serious one and it needs more careful consideration. It consists, it seems to me, in two related aspects; firstly the question of the relationship between history and structure; and secondly that between ideology and culture. I can only give a few observations on both now.

IV

"...in each of us, in varying proportions, there is part of yesterday's man; it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet, we do not sense this man of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we are led to take no account of him, any more than we take account of his legitimate demands. Conversely, we are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because, being recent, they have not yet had time to settle in our own unconscious." 35
I discussed very briefly, in the opening chapter, that blindness which contemporary culture has to its own persistences and continuities, and I suggested that it was perhaps part of our own ideology to make change into something of a fetish. Indeed it is, but such an observation only makes an understanding of the perception of change even more difficult. What Emile Durkheim is suggesting above is that it is only immediate change, present history as it were, that is visible. Past history, the residue of previous experience and previous social change is buried in the unconscious. It is incorporated into our culture and constrains our action, perhaps through that incorporation. In a very real sense the everyday world is innocent of history, rather than blind to it.

And it is this, its coherence which makes the commonsense world as it is and correlatively which makes television its extension, its mouthpiece and its support. Television, however, dramatises innocence. History, both present and past, becomes visible but transposed. If all history is a rewriting, a narrative whose story ends with us and which we believe accordingly, then television is, in contemporary society, a major contributor to that rewriting.

In its rewriting, television, like myth, reissues the basic principles of classification. The history of historians is a chronology, in which events are linked through cause and effect and which are connected through time. For Lévi-Strauss that history is the 'myth' of contemporary societies, the fundamental principle of intellectual and institutional development. In this, contemporary societies - he calls them hot - differ fundamentally from those which seek by the institutions they give themselves, to annul the possible effects of historical factors on their equilibrium and continuity. Historical time in
primitive societies is replaced by a real time which is cyclical, passive and sacred.

"Mythical history thus presents the paradox of being both disjoined from and conjoined with the present. It is disjoined from it because the original ancestors were of a nature different from contemporary men; they were creators and these are imitators. It is conjoined with it because nothing has been going on since the appearance of the ancestors except events whose recurrence periodically effaces their particularity." (38)

The question then, is not so much whether this constitutes a misinterpretation of the primitive (for in part it must be), but whether and with what effect, such a sacred history does, or should disappear with literacy, technology, and class conflict. In a recent study of the Western, Will Wright argues that it does not; (39) history has replaced totemism as a classificatory system, and it has replaced myth as a mode of explanation of society. It has not, however, and probably cannot, replace myth as a ground for ordinary social actions; and for this reason modern myths are as structurally complicated and as socially important as the myths of primitive societies. I am inclined to agree. It is the everyday world, the world of core values and beliefs, the heart and generator of all that is sacred in society, which is relatively untouched by history. And everyday experience is still dominated, as it must be, by the cycle of days and weeks and years; not generally by evolution or cataclysm (or even cause and effect). It is not to say that the everyday world is without vision or memory; indeed it sees further, and remembers more than the specialist or the scholar allows. And it does so with one purpose in mind, its own maintenance.

The commonsense world is then a translation of history through structure into action. It is neither langue nor perole, but like myth in Lévi-Strauss's formulation, in its metalanguage, it is both at once.
And mythic narrative is similarly formed; the final text is itself the product of the mutual constraints of history and structure; of present and past events rewritten to satisfy curiosity and emotion.

The reworking of history which television undertakes, and of which it is an expression, is a strategy for the repression of uncertainty and change. But it is a necessary strategy, and not as Roland Barthes would have it an aspect of the 'irresponsibility of man'(...Bourgeois ideology continually transforms the products of history into essential types. Just as the cuttlefish squirts its ink in order to protect itself, it cannot rest until it has obscured the ceaseless making of the world, fixated this world into an object which can be for ever possessed, catalogued its riches, embalmed it, and injected into reality some purifying essence which will stop its transformation, its flight towards other forms of existence.(42) It seems perverse to suggest that it is the peculiar facility of bourgeois ideology to grapple with reality in this way, as if the existence of classes and their endemic conflict in some way calls the lie to the consistency (and the inevitability) of such attempts. Class may be the right world but it is, by itself, the wrong measure.

Despite the obvious connection between the institutions of the mass media and political structure of society, a connection which has economic, administrative and symbolic dimensions, an understanding of these institutions and of their products can not be vouchsafed to the many analyses which deny a full contribution to the continuities in human existence. If my argument seems to err in the other direction then it must be understood in this context.
Television, in its rearticulation of a folk culture is not therefore ideologically neutral - I'll come to that in a moment - and it does confirm the present. The present consists in community, though not a community of course, geographically united. Time and place are homogenised at one remove - mediated by television and common by virtue of television. But this community, both product and producer of television, has by virtue of the consistency and the constraint of core culture a genuineness no less for its mediation. The viability of contemporary culture and as it were the guarantee of the effectiveness of television's messages, is to be found in the nearly visible structure of the mythic. Through these structures, of narration and of ritual passage, all of us who watch television participate in a common and transcendent experience, though the notion of transcendence must be understood in a particular way. We need not be in a state of ecstasy for example. It is transcendent because through television we are involved in a double perceptual movement; the strange, the different, is made familiar as I have often noted; but also the familiarity of our everyday existence is made strange. And it is transcendent because the processes by which this occurs unites it with identical processes in the societies and cultures of whom we have very little knowledge.

The structures of the communication in television and in commonsense have therefore their own vitality and their own meaning. Through them the particularity of our historical experience is made intelligible to us, and through it, through all the various manifestations of the mythic, folktale, song, proverb, play and ritual, we live it.

In this sense therefore television does not deny history or naturalise it, but makes it bearable. And not just history, but the whole range of life experiences, in their contradictions and their uncertainties, which in fact make up the 'history' of individuals in society.
the exchange of meanings, an exchange contained but also made possible by these persistent structures, the individual is integrated into the social world. And what is more that social world, the place of that integration, is itself reproduced.

But that social world is no longer, if it ever was, a homogeneous consensual world of identity of interest and community of belief. And if television in the content and structure of its messages assumes or gives the impression that it is just such a world then it must become suspect. However, even in such a bland statement, a hornet's nest has been released. Let me quote illustratively, from the introduction to a recent reader to the field of mass communication studies:

"The central concern of this Reader with whole societies, their class structure and forms of class dominance and an exploration of the role of the media as ideological and signifying agencies within that whole. The concept of ideology is, therefore, of central concern. We would argue that dominant ideologies do not necessarily crudely and simply represent the interests of the ruling class but they always constitute the whole view of the world. As Hall suggests, "ideologies are one of the principal mechanisms which expand and amplify the dominance of certain class interests into a hegemonic formation" (Hall 1974 p.270). Most importantly, dominant ideologies are not mere reflections of the social conditions of a dominant class but represent the political relationship between the dominant and subordinated classed in a specific social formation."

To quarrel with such an assessment is to quarrel not just with a particular expression of historical materialism but is in a sense to quarrel with historical materialism per se. And although this thesis is implicitly just such a quarrel, the relationship between the two forms of argument needs, perhaps, a little further consideration. As I suggested in the introductory chapter the site of such a quarrel can be defined by the relationship between ideology and culture.
A number of elementary observations can profitably be made. First of all ideology is reflective whereas culture is constitutive. This distinction is, of course, an articulation of the materialism-idealism dichotomy; ideology is seen as being those values and beliefs and forms of expression which are determined, albeit in the last instance, by the economic and material forces of society and as such ideological forms therefore reflect the interests of those, who by virtue of their position in the economic and material structure of society, have most to gain by it. Culture, on the other hand, is seen as the precondition, in the realm of values and beliefs, of any activity in the world, including economic and material. Indeed, in an evolutionary model, such as that of Talcott Parsons, culture which is at the top of the cybernetic hierarchy gains its determining strength as societies become more complex and move away in their economic, social and political security from the limitation of having to satisfy basic survival needs. Culture is seen as superorganic as an operator as praxis as instrumental by those of otherwise very different persuasions who argue for a clear notion of culture.

Culture and ideology are also distinguished by their truth. Ideologies are false; they are false when measured against the reality of the world as it manifests itself in 'class, power, exploitation and interest'. Ideologies present the world in 'camera obscura' distorting, mystifying, manipulating, imaginary. The great challenge for a critique of contemporary, bourgeois society, is that unmasking which consists in the revelation of the noncoincidence between idea and reality and this holds even in the acknowledgement that ideology itself may be the site of contradiction and conflict.
The notion of culture avoids such a measurement. The question of truth does not arise, for in language or in symbol all meaning is a construction; and through that construction a world is created. All worlds are equivalent; and there is nothing objectively outside them. Or perhaps more accurately, the truth can consist either in the acknowledgement of the relativity of and in culture, or in the search for something approaching a universal logic or grammar.

The third dimension relates to the historical and spatial specificity of ideology and ideological formations. Even in the most advanced formulations, ideology consists in the manifestation of interest of a particular class in a particular society. And even in the acknowledgement of lag, as social structure changes so does ideology, in its dependence. It is this to which Louis Althusser refers when he argues, following Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* that ideology, despite its specificity, has no independent history.

'Ideology, then, is for Marx an imaginary assemblage (bricolage), a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the 'day's residues' from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete material individuals materially producing their existence. It is on this basis that ideology has no history in the *German Ideology* since its history is outside it, where the only existing history is the history of concrete individuals.'

Culture is in a certain sense also outside history, and Althusser's distinction between ideologies, specific forms of ideology, and the generic concept of ideology, mirrors the distinction I wish to draw between ideology and culture. Culture is something that all men produce by virtue of their humanity: symbolic and material, it consists in the carving out of an order from nature, and in the preservation of that order against the exigencies of nature and other culture. It is, more or less, systemic; and it is, as I have said, what unites man rather than what divides him. Those who study culture tend towards considerations of the universal. Those who study ideology, Althusser perhaps apart, tend towards the concrete, the historical and the specific. For these the universal is itself an ideological category.
In their explanation, ideology and culture also differ. The study of ideology, quite obviously now, involves a reduction, though in a particular direction, and perhaps in the last instance, to the material structure and productive forces of society. Ideas, beliefs and values are always dependent on, and in a significant degree determined by, the base; a study of ideology, of, in capitalism, the culture of the bourgeoisie, must always leave the realm of ideas for a more firm footing.

Those who study culture can equally be involved in a reduction; through the analysis of symbolic coherence, of structure and of pattern, the semiologists and structuralists reduce the manifest complexity of belief and action to an abstraction. For them, as for Karl Popper, in his notion of World III, culture has an autonomy and a significant independence from material forces. This is sufficient, at least centrally, for them to ignore culture's relationship with, and dependence on, the equal complexity of social relations.

If ideology is bourgeois, as it is tautologically, in a Marxist view of contemporary culture, that culture is elsewhere open to many other forms of classification: mass, popular, elite; professional, applied and amateur; refined, mediocre, brutal; traditional and modern, and so on.

Finally, and correlatively, ideologies are about power. In its reflection and in its preservation an ideology is a manifesta-
tion of a society of social, economic and political inequality.

The notion of hegemony introduced and discussed by Antonio Gramsci is central to this perception of ideology. Gwyn A. Williams summarizes it in this way:

'By hegemony, Gramsci seems to mean a socio-political situation, in his terminology a 'moment', in which the philosophy and practice of a society fuse and are in equilibrium; an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religion and political principles, and all social relations particularly in their intellectual and moral connotation. An element of direction and control, not necessarily conscious, is implied. This hegemony corresponds to state power conceived in strict Marxist terms in the dictatorship of a class.'

The notion of hegemony, which in its cultural dimension is akin to a Marxian conscience collective - a blanketing culture in which all individuals (in their identity) find their representations and touchstones ready to hand, and which in its political dimension, has much in common with Max Weber's discussion of authority, and the central significance of the mechanisms involved in the creation and preservation of legitimation; this notion of hegemony has been, despite its difficulty, of great influence in contemporary Marxist studies, and the distinction between hegemony and domination seems to be reflected in Althusser's own distinction between repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus. The notion of hegemony, also, it would appear, is the source of the notion of the relatively autonomous, wherein various levels of social experience, (formations), most significantly the ideological, are conceived of as being sufficient unto themselves, though still to be understood, finally, in the framework of a much mediated economy and a much weakened impression of the class structure.
Ideology is, in the notion of hegemony, that dimension of culture which is political and which has political significance. Not all culture, however, is political (not all politics is cultured), and we could well do here with the equivalent of Max Weber's discrimination in the realm of the economic, between the economically determined, the economically relevant and the economic. Clearly the reduction of contemporary culture to the ideological in this sense is a mistake. On the other hand, not so to reduce it, inevitably brings with it all the problems faced currently in the sociology of knowledge, within and without Marxism.

The following statement from Stuart Hall is only meaningful if it is assumed that culture and ideology are in essence, the same, and that political culture is the site of the albeit leaky, domination of one world view by another: 'the overall intention of "effective communication" must, certainly, be to "win the consent" of the audience to the preferred reading, and hence to get him to decode within the hegemonic framework. Even when decodings are not made, through a "perfect transmission", within the hegemonic framework, the great range of decodings will tend to be negotiations within the dominant codes - giving them a more situational inflexion - rather than systematically decoding them in a counter - hegemonic way.'

We can grant that there is no guarantee in the communication of any message that it will be received in the intended way and we can grant also that the nature of the codes of a particular message will restrict the nature of the response, indeed I have already argued as much, but we do not need to accept that there
is such a thing as an unambiguous preferred reading or that the effect of a mass communicated message is necessarily skewed in favour of the producer of that message.  

The television message, in this case, is not necessarily then, the site of a collision of competing definitions of reality, or in its capacity to exclude, the site of a triumph over the alternative or the unacceptable. It is rather the site of a collusion and that between the demands of the moment expressed through a given political structure and the demands of the persistent expressed through the culture as a whole. The former, in a real sense, is dependent on the latter.

Narrative provides the motor for this blending and articulation. Through narrative and in particular through the mythic narratives I have been discussing in this thesis, the possibility for effective ideological communication is dependent on the presence and pre-existence of other, perhaps universal, forms of communication. What is more, this communication, the communication through structure and affect, which is restricted in its codes, could well betray rather than only modestly support the messages that are transmitted on its back.

Participation in the culture of television, a participation in which we are all involved, involves us, in turn, in a folk culture which is the very reverse of the one which has up to now supported the dominant institutions of our society. The crisis of capitalism; sometimes seen in terms of a withdrawal of legitimation, can in part be understood as the result of the resurgence, through television,
of the oral and mythic - a resurgence which transforms the significance of everyday experience and in a sense universalises it.

The translation of particular and specialist types of knowledge, just as the presentation of the novel and the extraordinary in a familiar form, may well involve, among those who receive its message, both challenge and withdrawal. In television and in its narratives, culture comes to the people, but in a way which both transforms that culture and establishes popular authority over it. The forms of that transformation are those that have persisted by virtue of a persistence of core culture, of a limited range of solutions to identical problems expressed directly and ephemerally. The re-assertion of these forms must alter the balance in political and social structure and make the dominance of, and by, the literary harder to achieve. Rather than be a blindfold for the uninitiated, television, in its contribution to culture, may make its novitiates progressively less easy to govern; the forms of its perceptual order contradicting rather than supporting the values of its supposed controllers. Beneath the manifestation of ideology, with its stress towards the maintenance of the status quo, lies the hidden myth, which in the communication of its narratives, undermines it. That the source of this challenge is in the deepest sense cultural makes it no less significant.
Chapter 7. Footnotes and References


4. cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. op. cit. p. 30: "All games are defined by a set of rules which in practice allow the playing of any number of matches. Ritual which is also 'played' is on the other hand, like a favoured instance of a game, remembered from among the possible ones because it is the only one which results in a particular type of equilibrium between the two sides. The transposition is readily seen in the case of the Gohuku Gama of New Guinea, who have learnt football but who will play, several days running, as many matches as are necessary for both sides to reach the same score. (Read 429). This is treating a game as a ritual. (Reference to K.E. Read, *Leadership and Consensus in a New Guinea Society*. *American Anthropologist*. 61. No. 3. 1959.); Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*. op. cit.


7. It is, of course, though not always without a good measure of hysteria; see for example some of the papers in Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White, *Mass Culture*. The Popular Arts in America. New York. 1957.


9. ibid.


13. see Chapter 4 above.


op. cit. p. 94: "When a change in the economic system brought about a change in costume, it did not eliminate the opposition of village versus city; that opposition sought new ways of expressing itself and found them in the forms of the new styles."

16. It is indeed a beginning only. Further work not just on drama but on the narrative structure (broadly conceived) of documentary, and also on the relationship between the post-literate oral culture of television and the pro-literate oral culture of societies that often have television foisted on them would be ways of extending the range of questions and deepening some of the answers.


18. cf. Varda Leymore, Hidden Myth. London. 1974. p. 154: "That advertising structure is simpler than that of myth is but a reflection of the fact that advertising is a degenerated form of myth. For one thing it is poorer in detail, and for another it lacks, particularly in static advertising, the temporal dimension. cf. Lévi-Strauss, The Origin of Table Manners. op. cit. p. 129-131.

19. See footnote 2, Chapter 1.

20. ibid.

21. ibid.


25. Roland Barthes, Mythologies. op. cit.; see also Stuart Hall, Culture, The Media and the Ideological Effect. op. cit.


29. Cathy Come Home is the classic and perhaps almost a unique example.


32. The German Ideology. op. cit. 66.


34. Mythologies. op. cit. 148.


41. Mythologies. op. cit. p. 151.

42. ibid. p. 155.


46. cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. op. cit. and his note on the 'habitus' p. 85: "The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can, if one wishes, call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence."; see also Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*. op. cit. I don't believe that this 'reproduction' is simple, nor is it unequivocal.


48. A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn. op. cit. p. 181: "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements for further action." 184. "But culture is not behaviour...Part of culture consists in norms for or standards of behaviour. Still another part consists in ideologies justifying or rationalising certain selected ways of behaviour."


56. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*. op. cit. 41: "If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina from their physical life-process."


59. Clifford Geertz, op. cit. p. 212: "It is not truth that varies with social, psychological and cultural contexts but the symbols we construct in our uniquely effective attempts to grasp it."; cf. A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn. op. cit. p. 174 ff.


61. Louis Althusser. op. cit. 151.


68. Louis Althusser, Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. op. cit.


70. Stuart Hall, op. cit.

71. cf. Stuart Hall, Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse. op. cit.; Frank Parkin, Class Inequality and the Political Order. London. 1972, esp. p. 81 where he distinguishes between dominant, subordinate and radical value systems.

Appendix 1

Analysis of Episode 6 of Intimate Strangers in terms of Christian Metz's "Grande Syntagmatique"

TIME (minutes and seconds)

00.00 00.30 CREDITS
00.30 1. Sequence
Early morning. Joan and Harry. Continuity of action; immediately before and after the act of eating breakfast.
02.35 (Not entirely unproblematical: conceivably two scenes.)
02.35 2. Scene
Harry's arrival at work: a continuous action, despite Harry's disappearance from the image, and continuous in time: his reappearance is anticipated. A separation in space (inside/outside) but the continuity of time and action indicates a scene.
04.57 3. Alternating Syntagm (2: Telephone)(1)
The conversation between Joan and Kenyon: uneven but distinct. The slight extension of attention to Joan at the end does not disqualify the categorisation or indicate a separate segment.
06.30 4. Scene
07.40 Harry and Foster at work.
07.40 5. Scene
10.57 Harry and Joan at dinner.
10.57 6. Scene
12.44 Harry and Joan in the bedroom.
12.44 7. Alternating Syntagm (1: Chase)
Joan at home. Harry and Kenyon discuss the plans. The link is a comparative one. While there is only one alternation, the juxtaposition of Joan (minimum action/natural) and Harry (maximum action/cultural) suggests we should take this as one segment.
14.24 8. Scene
15.22 Kate and Joan.
15.22 9. Connected Syntagm (Scene 2) (3)
Harry's drive and minor accident. Cut to Joan and Kate awaiting him inside the house. Harry enters and new (inter-) action develops: but separation and linking action and space (inside/outside).
END OF PART ONE

19.44 10. Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)
Joan in garden: finishes work. Comes inside and meets Kate and Harry. Again continuity of time, but linked separation of action and space.

21.10 11. Scene
Joan at Church. More than one shot. Clearly a separate segment.

21.57 12. Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)
Harry and Kate begin their row. Joan arrives outside the house. Stops and listens. Back inside for Joan's entrance. This is a borderline Scene/Connected Syntagm - the dependence is on the significance of Joan's arrival as a separate action (and indeed separate place: outside/inside again).

24.54 13. Descriptive Syntagm
Narratively both time and action are insignificant, though clearly not exorcised completely. Possibly Parallel - depending precisely on a subjective determination of the passage of time. She looks up at the window: cut to

25.09 Harry asleep. An indication of simultaneity.

25.09 14. Scene
25.45 Joan and Harry and Kate in the Kitchen.

25.45 15. Scene
27.07 Harry and Foster and Kenyon. The deal is agreed.

27.07 16. Scene
27.21 Dale, the apprentice, makes his plan.

27.21 17. Scene
27.33 Harry, Kenyon and Foster sign.

27.33 18 Connected Syntagm (Scene 2)

28.26 Almost certainly a continuity of time.

28.26 19. Scene
37.17 Joan and Harry have it out.

END OF PART TWO
20. Sequence
Harry wakes up alone. Sees the empty bed. Cut to Joan walking alone in the garden: Harry appears, dressed, behind her. Then continuity of time, space and action. Basically continuity of action but a break in time.

21. Scene
Harry, Joan and Kate discuss the plans.

22. Episodic Sequence
A series of related but uncompleted actions summarisable under the heading 'Past'.

23. Scene
Harry and Joan in the garden. The break from 22 is indicated by their coming together, and their subsequent interaction. End Credits.

Footnotes:
(1) In two cases, this being one, it was found empirically necessary to refine the Metzian classification. Here, two different types of alternation are recognised, the one exemplified by the telephone conversation, the other, the alternation described by Metz, exemplified by the chase. Very simply what distinguishes them is their different quality of time and action: in the one, the telephone conversation, time is sequential during the action and actions within the alternation are linked but separate; in the chase there is a clear indication of simultaneity of time - the police car and the getaway car are moving closer together - while the action is cumulative; it is likely that the two will meet.

(2) The natural/cultural distinction is not one that intrudes or should intrude at this level of analysis; it is drawn upon here simply in order to specify or reinforce the nature of the contrast and the unity of the segment.
Footnotes (continued)

(3) The second refinement occurs in the gap between the scene and the sequence. Here, using similar criteria of space, time and action, one can distinguish the connected syntagm from the scene. The latter defines a simple unity of space, time and action; the connected syntagm defines an autonomous segment in which a continuity of time holds together two spatially separate but linked actions. The paradigm is an articulation of inside/outside actions.
Appendix 2 Vladimir Propp's Narrative Functions

(Abridged from Morphology of the Folktale pp. 149-155)

Preparatory Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>α</td>
<td>initial situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>absention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γ</td>
<td>interdiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δ</td>
<td>violation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε</td>
<td>reconnaissance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>information received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>η</td>
<td>deceit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ</td>
<td>submission to deceit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Villainy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Lack/insufficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mediation, the connective incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B²</td>
<td>dispatch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B³</td>
<td>release: departure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B⁴</td>
<td>announcement of misfortune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Consent to counteraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Departure: dispatch of the hero from home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The first function of the donor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Reaction of the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The acquisition of a magical agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Transference to a designated place, guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>The hero struggles with the villain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Victory over the villain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Branding or marking the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>The liquidation of misfortune or lack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Return of the hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>Pursuit of the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs</td>
<td>Rescue of the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>Unrecognized arrival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Claims of a false hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Difficult task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Solution (resolution) of the difficult task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Recognition of the hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Exposure of the false hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Transfiguration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
U Punishment of the false hero or villain.
W Wedding and accession to the throne.
E connectives.

The 31 functions exclude α and E and count A and a as one. Apart from B, which is a diffuse category, all functions have been noted only by their main headings in the Morphology of the Folktale. These are the classifications which accord Propp’s analysis its generality; within each of these individual functions there may be as many as 19 variations which, of course, will be significantly more specific to the Russian folktakes Propp used for his analysis.
**Appendix 3. A.J. Greimas' Structural Model of the Narrative**

*(from Semantique Structurale p. 203)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propp's functions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$P$</td>
<td>Departure: it is not clear of whom $^*$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A$</td>
<td>The contract broken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_1$</td>
<td>Knowledge (recognition) denied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_2$</td>
<td>Power denied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_3$</td>
<td>Object denied. (Lack) (Villainy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>Arrival $^*$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_1$</td>
<td>Agreement to act: a new contract. $^*$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P$</td>
<td>Departure of the hero $^*$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_2$</td>
<td>The Qualifying test: $A_2$: contract. $^*$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_2$</td>
<td>$F_2$ combat, non $c_2$ result (help: power).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non $c_2$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$d$</td>
<td>Rapid journey: the arrival of the hero at the place of combat. $^*$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non $p_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_1$</td>
<td>The Main Test: the contract already entered into ($A_1$ above). $F_1$: combat $c_1$ branding (potential recognition) non $c_3$: receipt of object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$c_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non $c_3$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$d$</td>
<td>Rapid return and pursuit $^*$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non $p_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_3$</td>
<td>The Glorifying Test: $A_3$: contract $^*$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_3$</td>
<td>$F_3$: combat: non $c_1$ recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non $c_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_2$</td>
<td>Power regained (transformation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_3$</td>
<td>Object regained (wedding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration $A$</td>
<td>A new contract (with society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non $c_3$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Footnotes to Appendix 3

This table belies the very real difficulty of making the two sets of functions correlate. Some of the problems are discussed by A.J. Greimas himself; others result from his insufficient or ambiguous consideration.

*1. Propp's β involves the absenting of the elders. It is one of the preparatory functions which are by no means mandatory to the narrative. It is not clear why Greimas should accept an opening journey here, except to balance the p structure. But since this function is repeated, its significance, structurally, is not clear.

*2. There is no equivalent function in Propp's morphology.

*3. As Greimas notes (Semantique Structurale 1970, Propp's treatment of the three tests is uneven. Strictly there is no function in this test for the equivalent of Greimas' F (affrontement/reussite) Propp talks of D (the first function of the donor) and E (the reaction of the hero). These two functions are assimilated into A, the contract in Greimas' formulation.

*4. Here the contract A₁ clearly has been established. The main test consists in the contract and victory (F₁ = H.I), and resolution - liquidation of the lack (non c₃ = K).

*5. F₁ an unexplained function.

*6. Similar to *3 above. In Greimas' view: 1. Propp only identifies half of his function A., failing to recognize the response of the hero to the setting of the task (M), and 2. Propp identifies only half of function F₃, ignoring the combat and identifying only the success. (N).
Appendix 4. Series Morphology (following Vladimir Propp)

1. α the initial situation: Joan and Harry established.
   γ the implicit violation of a prohibition. Harry's 'failure'
   δ revealed as a result of his heart attack.
   a The heart attack.

2. B Information about Harry's recovery and its implications.
   C Harry's consent to counteract.
   D Harry with Bob, and to a lesser extent Joan,
   E as potential helper/opposers.
   ↑ Harry's journey to the city.
   F- His failure.
   ↓ His return.
   (K- ) His lack of a job (cultural health) reaffirmed.

3. (C) Harry and Joan together agree to act to find social and physical health
   ↑ Their journey to the Lake District.
   D Involved with the Léons, Ruskin, the Church,
   E the ghost of Peter, of Donald Campbell etc. and
   F with each other as potential helpers/opposers
   (K) Their lack of relationship, Harry's lack of job.
   ↓ Their return.

4. C Harry's task: to find a job.
   ↑ His departure to the City.
   D His involvement with various potential helpers/opposers
   E (the publisher, the printer, the banker, Joan)
   F in his search for employment.
   ↓ His return home.....
   (K-) empty handed.

5. (C) Harry's desire) to do his job well.
   ↑ His departure from home to work.
   D Pat, as the potential helper/opposer, and his
   E failure to find help outside the marriage.
   F-
   (K-) His lack of cultural and social health restated.
   (Ψ) An implicit return.
(Episodes 2-5 manifest, at their most simple but also their most basic, a similar morphology and function in the series as a whole).

6. (A/a) The lack of a good job, and Foster's threats.
   C Harry's need to do well is reluctantly accepted.
   ↑ His departure from home.
   D)(H His involvement with Kenyon and potential helpers/opposers: his involvement with Foster as a neo-villain. Successful.
   M His involvement with the apprentice Dale, and
   N his failure to achieve final recognition. Harry is beaten and his job has gone.
   ↓ His return home.
   U As false-hero, he is punished.
   W- As failed hero, his marriage is threatened.
      A new initial situation. A second narrative begins.

7. B Information about the project.
   C Harry's acceptance of the task.
   ↑ Movement of home.
   B Information about Joan's lack, her house and her garden.
   (C) Joan's begrudging acceptance of the problem.
   D Joan (and Harry's) involvement with her friends, the potential buyer of the house, Bob, as potential helper/opposer. All fail.
   E)
   F- (K-) The lack, principally Joan's, remains.
   ↓

8. B Harry despatches Joan to the city.
   C Joan agrees to go.
   ↑ She goes.
   D Her involvement with Lionel as potential helper/opposer (actual seducer). An ambiguous result.
   E)
   F- ↓ Her return home.
   K- The lack remains.
   (e) Joan is unrecognized: her involvements unannounced.
   C She consents to go.
   ↑ She goes.
   D The doctor gives advice.
   E (H) Joan accepts the advice and as a result...
   F (I) She gains some confidence: reinforced by her
       involvement with Harry's young friends.
   ↓ She returns home.
   K The lack in the relationship liquidated.
   (W) Intimations of the "wedding" in their love-making.

10. ↑ Harry and Joan's departure and return from London to
     ↓ buy a double bed.
     M) Their testing as family leaders by Matt and Judith.
     N) This success and the recognition of it.

11. ↑ Harry and Joan's departure to Portsmouth.
     M) Joan's involvement with the sale and their joint involvement
     N) with the old sailor. Each, although differently, leads to...
     Q) their recognition of their own success and achievement.
     ↓ Their return home.

12. ↑ Harry's departure to the City.
     M) His involvement with the tycoon, with Bob, but
     N) above all with the P.R. lady.
     ↓ His return.
     Q) Their mutual recognition.

13. (Q) The implicit restatement of their success.
    (U) The 'punishment' of the "villain", Bob.
    T Their transformation: in clothes, in spirit.
    W The anniversary party (wedding) and their new house.
Appendix 5

Series: Structure (following Greimas)

\[ \text{A} \]
The negative statement of the initial situation: the implicit breaking of a contract (essentially but not exclusively with each other).

\[ \bar{c}_3 \]
The lack: loss of health.

\[ (\bar{c}_1) \]
Loss of identity and of confidence (self-knowledge)

\[ (\bar{c}_2) \]
Loss of power, ability to act.

\[ A_1 \]
Harry's consent to act.

\[ A_2 \]
His involvements with various helpers/opposers.

\[ F_2 \]
The qualifying tests.

\[ \text{non } c_2 - \]
His failures.

\[ \text{non } c_2 (+) \]
His own, momentary success (Episode 6)

\[ F_1 \]
His job success.

\[ \text{non } c_3 \]
The redemption of lack as a result: contract, job test.

\[ A_3 \]
The involvement with apprentice Dale

\[ F_3 \]
His reaction.

\[ \text{non } c_1 - \]
His failure to achieve the confirmation of his heroic status.

\[ \bar{c}_1 \]
The general failure re-established. \( \bar{c}_1 \) the non recognition of his heroic status (Harry as anti-hero); \( C_2 \rightarrow \bar{c}_2 \) His failure to act becomes his powerlessness; \( C_3 \rightarrow \bar{c}_3 \) His failure at work reaffirms and over determines his total failure as a man.

\[ A_1 \]
Harry and Joan begin again.

\[ A_2 \]
Harry and Joan are involved in their various Qualifying encounters with helpers/opposers.

\[ F_2 \]
Their final success in gaining the right help/advice.

\[ (F_1) \]
The success in their relationship.

\[ \text{non } c_3 \]
The fruits of that success.

\[ (C_1) \]
Their mutual recognition: a success: rediscovery of each other.

\[ A_3 \]
Their various tests, both jointly and separately Glorifying which establish and confirm their heroic status

\[ F_3 \]
That recognition of heroic status

\[ \text{non } c_1 \]
Their transfiguration/transformation.

\[ C_2 \]
Marriage and Building.

\[ A_1 \]
The new contract.
Appendix 6

Analysis of the Morphology of Episode 6 using
the categories of Vladimir Propp

1. δγ DEF (-)/a The opening sequence. Harry's surreptitious early morning drink is already a violation, δ, of a warning, γ, implicit in Joan's look. Joan's offer of breakfast and lunch, D, is rejected, and this rejection, E, involves a denial of Joan's support and/or understanding, F-. This 'DEF' sequence of testing, of which there will be many examples, does in this case as a whole indicate the nature of the lack, a, of relationship. Its identification here in fact demands knowledge of the series, knowledge which makes it more explicit than it otherwise would be.

2. B⁴CaC This segment is concerned above all with Harry's lack of work, a. His response to the idle works, to open his letters, to ring the bursar and to take a drink, is indicated by C, consent to counteraction. The main problem concerns the identity of B⁴ and of C, both of which refer to the provision of information, the former of information about the lack (lack of noise indicating lack of work); the latter of information about a villain. While, given the alternatives provided by Propp, the labelling is less arbitrary than it might be, in general the introduction of information into the narrative is not well handled. Indeed this is of some significance for contemporary narratives which seem to rely, in their complexity, on the transmission of information of one sort or another as a fundamental part of the storytelling. The second problem concerns the presence of the villain. In Intimate Strangers a villain as such rarely appears, though functions which, according to Propp, demand the presence of one are clearly identifiable. In this case the villain is Foster.
A segment involved in the provision of information. Kenyon tells Joan that he might have work for Harry (the is relevant to a:work) but also sows seeds of doubt in Joan's mind about Harry's recent trip to London (a:relationship).

(δ) indicates the continuing violation of the warning not to drink. Foster now reveals himself as a functionally complex figure: in one sense it is clear that here he acts as a dispatcher, defining the task for Harry and supporting that definition with threats (hence Propp's B^2), but maintains his position as at least an implicit villain, precisely because he has it in his power to thwart Harry's progress (by giving him the sack). C indicates Harry's consent to counteraction and indicates a more or less catch-all category (also concerned with the transmission of information) which Propp calls a connective - in this case the ringing of the phone and Harry's recognition of Kenyon's voice.

(δ) drink. Two tests are involved here, both of which are incomplete. The first is the alienating test, basically a repetition of the one in 1; the other is Harry's subterfuge over his trip to London. Joan is upset but her denial of support and/or her acceptance of Harry's story is still left open (to 6). (F+/-) indicates therefore an incomplete but complex conclusion. (Strictly F has to do with the provision or denial of a magical agent. Clearly in this context it is legitimate to demystify it slightly. We are concerned with the provision or denial of help with regard to the liquidation of the initial lack.)
6. F/E(εξ)F-/A(a) A difficult and complex scene involving deception and the receipt of information. Joan comes close to villainy: F/E indicates Joan's response to Harry's drunkenness; her provision of help, E, is at the same time her reaction, F, to the challenge of Harry's lie. (εξ) indicates the nature of this response, i.e. E(εξ), reconnaissance and receipt of information. F-/ indicates her negative reaction and the implicit denial of support for Harry (a). So, in all, this segment is both a summary and a clear statement of the lack in their relationship (a) overdetermined, as it were, by Harry's past villainy and Joan's present villainy, A.

7. (F-) DE Joan is alone in the garden. Her solitude is to be seen as a reaffirmation of her implicit denial of Harry in 6, as well as a general statement about the lack of relationship. DE indicates Kenyon's promise of a contract which is his first function as a donor: Harry responds, E. The conclusion remains to be stated. Hence, even in a 'static' Proppian analysis we can recognise in the DE→F sequence the dynamic possibility DE, definition (F) and the necessity of this interrelation. There is a sense in which D and E need to be completed (see below) and it is this necessity which provides one aspect of the dynamic in the narrative.

8. D ε Joan and Kate: D indicates Kate's first function as donor (of a drink specifically), and we are aware, as she becomes aware, of the equivocality of the gift; ε: Joan provides Kate with the information (and reminds us of the implications of Harry's situation).
Harry's altercation with the wheelbarrow is heavily symbolic, but otherwise narratively neutral. It provides in addition specific information about Harry's drunken state. The first EF indicates Harry's generally positive response to Kate's bottle, and the fragile interaction, F, which results. The second DEF (not+/not-) involves Harry's and Kate's confrontation over her income, F (not+/not-) suggests a central and open result that there is more to come, in other words that the offer/acceptance of the magical agent (support/understanding) is still held in abeyance.

END OF PART ONE

The suspense with regard to the resolution of the test in 9, maintained by a narratively neutral segment, providing only very general information: it is Sunday, Joan works separately and goes to church separately, Kate and Harry, the contestants in unfinished business, remain.

Re-emphasis of Joan's separation.

A complex segment; the DEF test involves Harry and Kate, the final negativity of F(-) being reinforced by Joan's appearance and involvement. Strictly both Harry and Kate act as separate donors: Harry of information, accepted by Kate as helpful in the pursuit of her particular tasks; and this in turn leads to the providing of information (about her relationship with Bob) which Harry finds objectionable. In both cases then, the first function of the donor is the provision of information. The end result is the denial of support for Harry, and his increasing isolation - he is getting further away and further away, it would seem, from the liquidation of lack (a: relationship) and the denial of help by Kate only adds another dimension (see 14).
13. (a) A connecting segment emphasising lack of relationships (a: relationship).

14. (D)EF This concerns the neutralisation of 12, but of a limited kind. Harry apologises and has Kate's support in his pursuit of lack (a: work), but it is not a major event for the narrative, and Kate remains a fairly equivocal helper. (D): Harry's apology; E: Kate's friendly response; F: support for Harry: a 'magical agent' to take with him on his search.

15. (δ)F/H F in relation to DE in segment 7 above. H indicates the struggle with the villain - the beginning of the main test with reference to the lack, a: work. A multi-functionality is involved. Kenyon agrees to the deal, F, and in so doing offers Harry the key to the eradication of the threat of the sack. It becomes part of the main test and the struggle with the villain because Foster is now all that separates him from achieving the fulfilment of the task. (δ) once again refers to the drinking prohibition.

16. B⁴ Dale's announcement of his yet unspecified villainy. (Dale is Foster's apprentice - villainy at one remove indicates perhaps a recognition of the problem of villain/dispatcher.)

17. IK The liquidation, apparently, of the lack, K, by virtue of Harry's victory, I, over the villain.

18. MN-/Q-U-/a Propp indicates that in the narrative there usually follows a further test, once the main test (with reference to the stated lack) has been completed. This test involves the hero once again, and involves, often, the necessity to prove his rightful title to the object of the search. It is possible, though
Propp does not indicate the possibility, that the hero can fail in this test. Here Harry fails. M, the difficult task (how to deal with the explosion). N(-), Harry's negative resolution (he attacks the apprentice). MN implicate Q(-) the (non)-recognition of the hero and U(-) the (non)-punishment of the false hero or villain. Harry goes unrecognised and he is punished as though he were a villain - by the very punishment which negates the previous success: his lack (of work) is reaffirmed.

19. The major scene of the episode and the series. 

DE(-)F(-)/ Its analysis depends partially on its place in the series which makes the categorisation suggested fairly safe. As a result of the negativity of 18, Harry returns home. He reports (E) what happened. What follows is a final (qualifying) test for Harry from Joan - the test which has as its source his trip to London. This test fails; Harry responds negatively; they are still separated; no magic. DE(-)F(-); this test however is magnified in its narrative significance. The failure, F(-), explains what is at stake (ie the lack - a:relationship). H and I indicates the intensity of the struggle, the main test with regard to lack though without a clearly defined villain (is it Harry? Is it Joan, is it circumstance?). As a result the lack is unliquidated, K(-). Harry is unrecognised, Q(-) and the wedding which should follow a successful outcome is transferred to its near opposite, W(-), the threat of a split - in other words a re-emphasis of the initial lack (a: relationship). We can follow Propp here, in identifying the end of a move, which by virtue of its negativity indicates that a new move is to follow.

END OF PART TWO
If, as seems reasonable, the final function in 19 is W(-), then the first part of the series' narrative is complete, and indeed within the episode itself there is a clear break. There is no clear break like this in any other episode, and for this structural reason, as well as more obvious ones to do with context, Episode Six is seen to be pivotal. announces a new situation, and a new move. In the early explanation and discussion of the situation the following preparatory functions can be identified: \( \beta \) absention (of Joan); \( \epsilon \) reconnaissance (by Harry to find Joan); \( \zeta \) information received by Harry about Joan (and vice-versa). What follows is the statement of the problem: the lack (a:relationship); its discussion \( B \) (what Propp calls the mediating incident); and \( C \) their joint consent to counteraction.

Harry and Joan test Kate, in search of support. They get it.

This episodic sequence serves a basically connective function - memories, the past symbolised (incidentally an example of a complex signifier with a simple signified).

A further connective - this time looking, with trepidation, to the future.
Appendix 7

Analysis of the Structure of Episode 6 using the categories of A.J. Greimas

A
The drink. Symbolic of, and essentially a summary of Harry's relations with the world. Also a specific violation of a specific prohibition.

A_2
F_2 (C_3)
non C_2(-)

The failure in the relationship. Harry is denied the power to affect his circumstances. He remains without support.

(P_1)

C_1

Departure.

At work. The reconnaissance and receipt of information.

C_3

Announcement of lack/villainy.

A_1
The acceptance of the challenge by Harry (A_1) - not yet a new contract, strictly.

A_2 F_2 (C_1)
C_2(?) non C_3

A question of double functionality. A_2 F_2 non c_2 indicates a repetition of the first qualifying test, with the same result. That and the diary incident imply that Joan, momentarily, plays the villain. In other words, the link, recognised equally in the Proppian analysis, of reconnaissance, deceit and villainy.

A_2 F_2 non c_2

Kenyon. A successful encounter. It is through Kenyon's intercession that Harry is given the power to transform his position.

A_2 F_2 non c_2(+/-)

Kate's complex, but ultimately neutral involvement in what is only another qualifying test.

F_1 non C_3
Combat and victory: the liquidation of the lack. The contract for the printing has been signed, but ...
The glorifying test: to establish the hero's rightful title. Harry fails it. He is not recognised (he becomes momentarily the villain) - and with the result (non $c_3(-)$) the lack is reinstated (no work - no relationship).

He arrives home (in the dark).

The hero is unrecognised. The double functionality again. Joan and Harry's first confrontation is in the nature of both the last qualifying test (the generation of power in the relationship) and also a second main test, associated with the lack of relationship. The associated with this lack is implicit (i.e. he has not stated his willingness to undertake the reparation of the relationship). It is assumed that he wants to.

The branding: 'the failure' not removed.

His revelation as a non-hero (without power).

His 'negative' marriage: his punishment.

The lack not liquidated.

The violation of all the norms of responsible manhood. We have now reached a new reaffirmation of an initial situation of alienation (a social heart attack).

Next morning: Harry's departure.

He seeks out Joan: and they question each other (knowledge).

They reveal the nature of the lack (goods/desire).

They discover to some extent, the existence of their own inadequacy (power).
The contract presented.

The first joint qualifying test for Kate. Support given. They are encouraged to press ahead.
Appendix 8

Morphology of Episodes 1 - 13 (excluding 6)

Episode 1

A. Morphology

\[ \alpha \]
Joan and Harry at home (and at work).

\[ \uparrow \]
Harry's departure.

\[ \gamma \]
Harry's delegation of the job to his junior at the office.

\[ \delta \]
Announcement by lawyer of the loss of holiday home.

\[ (C) \]
Harry's decision to find an alternative holiday.

\[ D \]
Request for support for his plans from Joan.

\[ E \]
A failure

\[ F \]
Kate's help; more successful, though not immediately.

\[ \dots \]
Joan's involvement: and the final acceptance of the holiday plans

\[ K \]
Holiday agreed: lack liquidated.

\[ B_{4} \]
Information from work that something is wrong.

\[ G \]
Harry's rapid departure.

\[ F \]
The failure of Harry's delegate.

\[ H/M \]
A test for an object (the remedy of the potential loss) and for a restatement of Harry's heroic position.

\[ (K) (Q)^+ \]
Neither are conclusive.

\[ Pr. \]
The first journey to meet the train.

\[ T- \]
The Heart Attack.

\[ a (A) \]
Lack - villainy. A loss of health. Why?

B. Acting Units (Actants)

Hero: Harry.

Help/Opponents: Joan, Kate. Junior at work.

Villain: ?

Object of Search: 'holiday' : redemption of failure at work.
Episode 2

A. Morphology

Harry is in hospital.
The doctor informs Joan about Harry's condition and
specifies the dos and don'ts of recovery. The lack
at this stage is his health.

Harry comes home.

His determination not to be considered an invalid and
to recover quickly.

The ambiguous and inconsistent help from the family.

Matt and Joan row about the seriousness of the affair.

The lack of work discussed in the garden.

The company accountant, Bob, as helper. In
his planning for Harry's return to work, he
villainously consults the doctor.

Harry's departure to work.

Harry's failure at work: the job is a non-
job. The lack of work remains.

Unrecognised. He is not a hero. There is no
glorifying test.

B. Acting Units

Hero: Harry.
Helper/Opponents: The family (Joan, Kate, Judith and Matt). Bob.
Villain: (Bob).
Object of Search: Health (which becomes) Job.
Episode 12

A. Morphology

α Initial situation: on holiday.
β Their (departure and) arrival.
γ ζ a Jane's prohibition: she tells Harry not to lift the case, (lack of health) and they row about his eating cream cakes.
δ Harry's walk through Coniston. He discovers the presence of Ruskin.
ε The past exumed in the recollection of Peter, Joan's dead brother.
ζ Harry's exercises: his acceptance of the need to do them, although equivocal.
θ The lack of health forgotten, or at least transformed into a social health. A series of 'encounters' with 'memories of the past': Ruskin, Peter (Joan's brother), Donald Campbell, Christ, etc.
η The involvement with the Lansons: an encounter which generates momentary closeness between Joan and Harry.
θ Information received by Harry about Joan's deception.
μ Joan becomes the villain momentarily as Harry argues with her about the implications of his heart attack; the content is work and health; the substance is their lack of relationship.
ν They return home.

B. Acting Units

Hero: Harry: Harry and Joan.
Helper/Opposer: The Lansons, Ruskin, Peter, Campbell, Christ.
Villain: Joan.
Object of search: 'health', particularly social health.
Episode 4

A. Morphology

α

At home.

ζ /a

Information (letter and Joan's conversation with Judith: lack of a job: lack of money.

the first of a series of encounters with potential helpers: this one is the Banker. The difficulty

is averted.

D

The publisher, Mancroft. This leads to his

meeting with Daniels.

F

Daniels is helper but also since he holds the key to Harry's cultural success, a potential villain.

This first encounter is therefore doubly

functional. Moderate success leads to a second test.

The journey to the City to see

The moneylender. Harry's failure to borrow the

necessary capital.

ψ

His return and meeting with Paul on the train.

K-

Lack liquidated. 

Harry's double failure.

Q-

Hero nonrecognised ) Daniels calls off the deal.

(C)

His weak counteraction.

B. Acting Units

Hero: 

Harry.

Helper/Opponents: 

Banker: Mancroft: Daniels: Moneylender.

Villain: 

Daniels.

Object of search: 

Cultural health, a job.
Episode 5

A. **Morphology**

   a. The lack specified. Full understanding of it depends partly on previous acquaintance with the series.

   f
   ↑
   Journey to work.

   (a) The lack of relationships at home (mirrored in the row of Judith and Matt).

   D
   E
   necessary support.

   F

   B
   H
   Foster as despatcher but also as villain and therefore:
   in the context of work, and the lack of orders, the

   (1) failure to produce work is a serious failure: Foster's
   opposition is fundamental.

   D
   H
   E
   also a villain. Harry's involvement with her therefore
   doubly functional lack and qualifying but also a main test:
   the main test (1) and (2), two

   K
   o
   M
   He finds Pat and she attacks him, and then

   N
   leaves herself.

   Q

   T/Ex
   Harry is left dejected.

B. **Acting Units** (Actants)

   Hero: Harry.

   Helper/Opponent: the Family. Pat.

   Villain: Poster. Pat.

   Dispatcher: Joan. Foster.

   Object of search: Harry.
Episode 6

For fuller analysis see Appendix 6.
Episode 2

A. **Morphology**

α
Harry and Joan at home.

ζ/a
Information about the lack and the possible plan.

η/(c)
Harry and Joan leave. Itself a consent to counteraction.

B
The first contact with Mrs Temple, owner of the bookshop. Information and planning.

D
Joan and Harry in their mutual testing about the sale of the house and the sale of the car.

E
Joan's confrontation (3 in all) with her friend Marilyn. Joan's activities predominate in the narrative: they are increasingly negative.

F
Harry successfully sells the car: money is gained towards the successful completion of the transaction of moving.

D
The abortive sale of the house. Diana is potential helper - but in the failure suggests a serious threat to Joan's existence.

E
Harry's work is the shop but most significantly his attempt to get his pension early. It fails

H
His return

M
Harry and Joan's confrontation at the house.

I/N
Doubly functional: a serious test for Joan, but following the actual failure of the house sale, her identity is at stake. She fails both. His world is empty.

K
They return

B. **Acting Units (Actants)**

**Hero:**
Joan: Harry

**Helper/Opponent:**
Mrs. Temple: the buyer of the car: the buyer of the house, Marilyn.

**Villain:**
(Harry).

**Dispatcher:**
Harry.

**Object of search:**
Money: a new life.
Episode 8

A. Morphology

\[ \alpha \] Harry and Joan at home.

\[ B/a \] Harry's despatch of Joan reveals the lack.

\[ \uparrow/c \] Her departure signals her consent to counteraction.

\[ K \] The effective purchase of clothes. The immediate lack redeemed without a struggle.

This simple move complete.

\[ \varepsilon \] The meeting with Lionel. Information about each other transferred.

\[ \zeta \] Lionel's deceit and Joan's deception through lunch and afterwards.

\[ \eta \] Villainy: Joan is seduced.

\[ \theta \] The subsequent incident with Lionel doubly functional. He is her helper, but also her opponent (as seducer.)

\[ \kappa^{+} \] The result is ambiguous: she has found something of herself, but at a price.

\[ \psi \] Joan returns home.

\[ o \] Unrecognized.

\[ M \] Joan's failure to tell Harry what happened leads to a denial of her status as hero (or even anti-hero).

\[ N \] The lack remains: she is punished and untransformed.

B. Acting Units

Hero: Joan.

Helper/Opponent: Lionel.

Villain (seducer): Lionel.

Dispatcher: Harry.

Object of search: : Joan: Joan and Harry.
Episode 9

A. Morphology

α  Harry and Joan at home.
D  Joan's various tests: with Harry, with Marion, at the
E  a  Saleroom etc. all amounting to a statement of her
F  a  lack, her failure.
B 2  That failure is recognized by Harry and leads to his
D  dispatch of Joan.
E  (H)  The visit to the doctor: Joan receives help (of a
F  sort) in her struggle with herself.
J  She goes to the hairdresser: a mark of potential/
D  actual success/determination.
E  (H)  Her dinner with Harry; of similar functional
F  significance to her involvement with the doctor.
D  (H)  Harry is helper: she struggles with herself.
E  (I)  The narrative develops: her meeting with the
F  young people suggests her increasingly successful
struggle
H  M  Harry and Joan together: the villain (Joan) from her test
I  N  is the joint recognition of their heroic status.
K  The lack is the relationship liquidated.
Q  The mark recognized: though ironically in her nakedness,
T  a nakedness symbolic of her transformation.
W  They kiss.

B. Acting Units

Hero:  Joan
Villain:  Joan.
Dispatcher:  Harry.
Object of search:  Harry and Joan: Joan.
Episode 10

A. Morphology

(The morphology of Episode 10 is presented in two columns: it reflects the conflict within the narrative and the clarity with which two narrative threads are presented).

Joan and Harry decide to go to London and buy a bed.

Information is received about Judith's and Matt's marriage and its tensions.

Harry and Joan try and help, but fail. The lack defined.

Information about Judith's pregnancy.

Joan tells Judith to inform Matt.

Joan and Harry go to London. They buy their bed. They enjoy their time together: as heroes.

Judith consults her doctor about abortion. He refuses.

Joan and Harry return to find Judith waiting with the news of their broken marriage. They successfully intercede. The lack (Judith and Matt's marriage) is decreased.

Judith and Matt together again.

B. Acting Units (Actants)

Hero: (Joan and Harry). Judith (and Matt).

Helper/Opponent: Joan and Harry: (Judith and Matt).

Villain: No-one clearly defined as such.

Object of search: Marriage.
Episode 12

A. Morphology

Harry and Joan leave for London and Remembrance Sunday.

They remember their past together.

Their lost past: their surplus of memories.

Harry suggests that Joan sells antiques.

They meet Harry's friends in the pub again.

They go to the party.

The praise of their friends: and the mirror image of the arguing couple.

Joan's first encounter with the saleroom.

Joan and Harry's encounter with the old sailor: the past ressurected again. A slightly ambiguous encounter.

Joan buys her first antiques.

The lack: her confidence: her cultural identity redeemed.

The praise of the boys who carry her purchases to the car, and of Harry.

They return home.

B. Acting Units (Actants)

- Hero: Harry and Joan: Joan.
- Helper/Opponent: Their friends, the old sailor.
- Villain: None.
- Dispatcher: Harry.
- Object of search: Joan's cultural identity
Episode 12

A. Morphology

1. The departure of Joan and Harry to see accountant.
2. They meet old colleague and obtain and receive information about Harry's old firm.
3. Help, advice and information from the accountant.
5. Return home.
6. Information from Bob leading to Harry's consent to counteraction.
7. He goes to London.
8. The involvement with Ramsey Bennett, and the offer of a job: the first stage of his struggle with himself.
9. The involvement with Anna (The P.R. lady) a similar struggle, though it develops beyond the initial interaction.
10. The perfume on his shirt.
11. His success: her denial of Anne is an assertion of his own completeness.
12. Return.
13. Initially unrecognized.
14. The struggle, through Joan, with himself: (F) the rejection of the job. His basic status manifest, especially in his understanding of Joan's information about her liaison with Lionel.
15. They kiss.

B. Acting Units. (Actants)

Hero: Harry.
Helper/Opponent: Joan: the accountant: R.B. Anna.
Villain: (seducer) Anna.
Object of search: Harry: Joan and Harry.
Episode 13

A. Morphology

ζ  Information received about Harry's serious illness.

B.C. Harry and Joan agree to go and see what can be done.

(There is no distinct lack, rather a surplus to be defended... the
subsequent tests are weak narratively).

↑ Their departure.

D The test with the past, symbolised by Harry's

E B₂ mother, and her death (β₂)

F The burden of the past liquidated.

D Harry's visit to the doctor; a warning but a

E K recognition of his health, (natural health).

F Harry and Joan: Bob and Kate: (cultural health) working

E separately and together; the establishment of family life.

F K (Social health). The bungalow.

Q Their joint recognition of their heroic status and their

T triumph. The bungalow and its planning. The

W wedding.

B/C The openness to the future.

B. Acting Units (Actants)

Hero: Harry and Joan.

Helper/Opponent: Harry's mother (part). Kate and Bob. "The famil;

Object of search: Harry and Joan.