Supplement to *States and Markets*: an investigation of the 'knowledge structure' in the work of Susan Strange

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Submitted for the degree of PhD

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Abstract

In *States and Markets* Susan Strange identified a source of structural power called the knowledge structure. This thesis sets out to do two things. First it tries to work out the logical consequences of the notion that knowledge is a source of structural power. Second, it tries to test Strange's model for its explanatory power, by using it to construct historical narrative on the development of *tekhne*, *sophia*, and *nous* in antiquity.

On the question of the logical consequences for international political theory of the notion of 'knowledge as power', I argue that it radically undermines many of Strange's own assumptions about the nature of science, technology and ideology. The reason for this is that her assumptions derive from a discourse which has traditionally legitimised itself by excluding power from talk about its constitution. When Strange supplements the notion of knowledge-as-truth with the notion of knowledge-as-power, she obliges us to reconsider the Socratic question of knowledge-as-virtue, because we are confronted with our own agency.

That is why I have chosen the ancient world for a case study to test the explanatory power of Strange's multi-faceted model of the global political economy. By putting her model to work as a means to assimilate the wealth of archaeological and philological scholarship in this field, its heuristic value is demonstrated. It traces the first structuration of knowledge back to primary and secondary state formation in the Near East. Then it analyses the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as orally preserved norms for managing the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice in the wake of the collapse of bronze-age civilisation in the Mediterranean. It then accounts for the discovery of secular consciousness as the result of a novel interface between the oral and the written. The narrative culminates with the mediation of a communal crisis over the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice by Solon, which initiated the transformation of Prometheus from the crafty trickster depicted by Hesiod into the democratic revolutionary characterised by Aeschylus.

The thesis concludes with a theory of contribution based upon four points of consensus identified within the literature of International Political Economy.

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1: Introduction

This thesis is exactly what it says in the title. It is a supplement to *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*, by Susan Strange.

By supplement, I partly mean an offering which seeks to help preserve and promote the status of *States and Markets* both amongst scholars of international studies generally and amongst those within the IPE fraternity who are already familiar with Susan Strange's work. It deliberately focuses upon *States and Markets* in order to legitimate the view that it is worthy of being considered as a suitable basis for doctoral research. It attempts to provide support to those who have argued that *States and Markets* is Strange's defining book, one about which the rest of her work revolves[1]. It also seeks to persuade those who might be tempted to overlook *States and Markets* as merely an introductory student text to think again, for to overlook the book on such grounds would be to forget a crucial point about the life and work of Susan Strange.

The point is this: Susan Strange was a great international relations theorist but refused to package herself as such[2]. Like many other IR scholars of her generation, Susan Strange was often to be found thinking her hardest when engaged in communication with her students. This is something to remember and commemorate in an epoch which has imposed profound structural incentives to alienate research from education in the university. For Susan Strange, pedagogy was an integral part of her research. She embodied Humboldt's ideal of the university as a site dedicated to the inseparability of research and teaching. Her students experienced this. Word got around. And this is why so many new students began to flock to her WPE courses at the LSE from all corners of the globe. That is why *States and Markets* deserves the status of a classic text which will always demand further reading. *States and Markets* is Strange's defining

[1] Christopher May, *An Annotated Bibliography of Susan Strange's Academic Publications 1949-1999* (Third Edition, Bristol, UWE, 2001), p.24).
[2] Ronen Palan, 'Susan Strange 1923-1998: a great international relations theorist', *RIPE*, 6:2 Summer 1999, p.122.

book, around which the rest of her work revolves, precisely because she took the thought of her students just as seriously, if not more seriously, than the thought of her peers. This was yet another expression of her general iconoclasm which so many people found appealing but which other colleagues sometimes found trying. Her most important theoretical work was thus quietly hidden, with an ironic touch of humour that she perhaps knew the doyens of high theory would be sure to miss, under the cover of an 'introductory textbook'. But now that a second wave of very accomplished IPE introductory textbooks have found their way onto the reading lists, *States and Markets* has been liberated from its former role and is due for reappraisal. A window of opportunity has opened to adjust the way in which *States and Markets* has conventionally been read. This supplement to *States and Markets* is intended as a contribution to the promotion of such a reappraisal.

However, Susan Strange was interested in people who were interested in thinking for themselves in creative debate with others, not in attracting disciples or acolytes[3]. Therefore, this thesis aims to honour that memory by trying to supplement *States and Markets* in a second sense. This thesis deconstructs the text of *States and Markets,* and then applies the findings of this deconstruction to the reading and writing of historical narrative on the structuration of knowledge in early antiquity.

The deconstruction takes place in chapter two. By deconstruction I mean nothing more than a very close reading which takes a text apart and puts it back together again in order to know it intimately[4]. The motive behind this is a creative one based on the principle that the author never achieves full control over his or her text. A live text cannot achieve closure in the sense that it is never really a finished piece of work, always a piece of work in progress. And given

[3] This point comes across very strongly, along with the point above about the unity of pedagogy and research in her approach to the academic profession, in 'I Never Meant to Be An Academic', in *Authority and Markets: Susan Strange's Writings on International Political Economy*, edited by Roger Tooze & Christopher May. This article was originally published in J.Kruzel & J.N. Rosenau (eds), *Journeys Through World Politics.*

[4] Of course I am aware that many scholars have articulated much more sophisticated conceptions of deconstruction than outlined here. I comfort myself in the knowledge that Derrida deliberately laid countless elephant traps for those seeking to set themselves up as authorities on the correct or incorrect application of his work.

that the text is just a snapshot of thought in process, there is always something going on within it which is just beyond the author's reach, at the margins of his or her attention during the moments in which it was written. Therefore, when taking the text apart and putting it back together again, it is often worth paying special attention to minor metaphors, allegories, disparate contradictions and countless other marginal details which might reveal things in the text that other, more cursory readings, would not have revealed. Chapter two does precisely this and in the process begins to focus on the reasoning which led to the development of her conception of the 'knowledge structure'.

Three major themes emerge from our deconstruction of the way Strange attempts to unify the concepts of science, ideology and technology into a coherent subject of study in her thought about the world political economy of knowledge. Firstly, a dramatic tension becomes evident between the realist or instrumental conceptions of knowledge depicted in chapter six, and the more utopian side of Susan Strange which comes out so strongly in her desert island stories, and where she leaves it to her castaways to mediate between the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice. Secondly, a dramatic tension becomes evident between the dispassionate vision of a globally commodified knowledge structure sketched out in the latter half of chapter six and the passionate commitment in chapter two to the value of curiosity and wonder or the pursuit and love of knowledge as an end in itself. Thirdly, a critical appreciation of the historical contingency of our conceptions of science, ideology and technology becomes evident. The concepts we conventionally use to represent knowledge vacillate within the text. When words shift their meaning with increased velocity like it is often an indicator that a significant change in the structure of knowledge is taking place. And indeed, of the four primary structures of the world political economy Strange identified, she believed that it was the knowledge structure that was currently undergoing the most 'rapid and bewildering' change[5].

It is these three themes which drive and inspire the construction of a historical narrative about the structuration of knowledge in early antiquity in

[5] Susan Strange, *States and Markets*, p.113 & 132.

chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis. Our traditional assumptions about the semantic relations between the concepts of science, ideology and technology were forged when the modern university was sponsored and venerated primarily as a national institution for the production and reproduction of knowledge within the cultural life of the nation-state. But now these semantic relations are frequently being restructured in a world political economy where *The Retreat of the State* is just as evident inside the walls of the university as it is outside the walls of the university.

As Susan Strange argued, this radical change will require an equally radical revision of realist assumptions about the nature of international relations[6]. The very founding idea of the university within which IR as a discipline is sustained is a shipwreck, and some serious desert island thinking will have to be done by its remaining survivors. If it is true that the university is going to be driven by a mix of sticks and carrots through a combined but uneven process of transformation from a national institution into something which has to think much more like a cross between a TNC and an NGO, what kind of a community do we want this to be and what purposes should it have in mind?[7] If *Rival States and Rival Firms* are now increasingly looking toward the 'knowledge-based economy' in their pursuit of security and wealth, what room for manoeuvre does the university still have within the limits of the possible to reproduce the values of freedom and justice? And if the meanings of science, ideology and technology are in flux now that knowledge as a national public good provided for by state taxation is being challenged by a neo-liberal model of knowledge as a bundle of capital or consumer goods developed and reproduced for valorization within a global marketplace, what are the prospects for maintaining our passionate commitment to Strange's fifth value of wonder? And if the prospects for upholding Strange's fifth value are not great, does this mean that for the time

[6] *Ibid*, p.133.
[7] Slaughter & Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University.* Slaughter & Leslie, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State, and Higher Education.* Peter Jarvis, *Universities and Corporate Universities.* Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins.* Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace.*

being we can forget about the notion of the epistemic community as a potential source of enlightened agency in world affairs?[8]

This thesis does not attempt to answer these difficult questions, but it does set out to historicize them. A few words of explanation for the giant leaps into history that take place in chapters 3, 4 and 5 may be useful here.

Susan Strange's regular emphasis upon the need to cultivate a historical perspective on all the major questions of IPE was mainly inspired by her friend and colleague, Robert Cox. Back in 1986, some two years before the publication of *States and Markets*, Strange decided to devote an entire seminar to student discussion over what was arguably Cox's first seminal article, namely 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory'[9]. Amongst other things, this article argued that a consciousness of the past is the key ingredient which helps to distinguish the problem-solving theory of positivist variants of realism from critical theory, which seeks to protect and nurture reasoned grounds for hope that humanity retains an ability to transcend our existing world order. Two years later, in *States and Markets*, Strange argued that there was no way that the contemporary international political economy can be understood 'without making some effort to dig back to its roots, to peer behind the curtain of passing time to what went before'[10]. She argued that it was evident in the history of thought that perceptions of the past 'always have a powerful influence on perceptions of present problems and future solutions'. She also argued that the spell of the past stretches back 'not hundreds, but thousands of years' and that history should thus not be too narrowly or parochially be conceived in terms of space or time[11].

These arguments turned out to be more prophetic than either Robert Cox or Susan Strange could possibly have imagined, when the wall between Western

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[8] This thesis does not explicitly juxtapose Strange's conception of knowledge structure with Haas' notion of epistemic community. Susan Strange's relationship with regime theory is a complex one (more complex at any rate that one might surmise through a cursory reading of *Cave Hic Dragones!*) and is best dealt with as a study in its own right.
[9] Originally published by *Millennium*, vol.10, no.2 (Summer 1981).
[10] *States and Markets*, p.18.
[11] *Ibid*, p.18-19.

and Eastern Europe fell and the Cold War drew to a close, whereupon several scholars within IR attempted to supply the inevitable surge in demand for interpretations of the historical significance of world events. Depressingly, some scholars were willing to dredge up very narrow and parochial conceptions of history in their rush to construct a compelling perspective with some pretension to foreknowledge of the likely problems and solutions facing the 'New World Order'.

Robert Cox responded by proposing a counter discourse which would apply his historical conception of Critical Theory to the re-emergence of the term 'civilization'[12]. Combating the nascent hegemony of the new 'culture based realism' and working toward a civilizational pluralism that can bring a halt to the follies of global hegemonic oppression, Cox argued, will involve critical IPE in a comparative historical study of civilization formation, including research into past evidence of cross-fertilisation and coexistence[13].

Partly inspired by the work of Cox and Strange, younger scholars began to join in and develop the call to historicise IPE. Amin and Palan, for example called for research which seeks to place current issues in the world political economy in historical perspective[14]. They also refine this call and argue for certain criteria of historiographical judgement. For example this research, they argue, should eschew an approach which sees history merely as a quarry from which fundamental abstract laws of human nature and behaviour can be derived. Furthermore, historical grand narratives which assume there is some teleology which history must follow are also rejected. Rather, Amin and Palan call for narratives built upon the hypothesis that history proceeds through a process of multiple determinations. The historical turn which IPE requires, Amin and Palan argue, would involve narratives which use the study of the past to bring a human dynamic to the contemporary distinction between structure and agency, drawing

[12] Cox already had an angle on civilizational perspectives before Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' (*Foreign Affairs*, vol.72, no.3, 1993), but this article and Huntington's subsequent book clearly gave Cox's interest in civilizations added impetus.
[13] See chapters 8, 9 & 10 in *The Political Economy of a Plural World.* Also 'Civilizations in World Political Economy', in *New Political Economy*, vol.1, no.2, 1996, pp. 141-156.
[14] Amin & Palan, 'Editorial: the need to historicise IPE', *Review of International Political Economy*, vol.3, no.2, Summer 1996, p.209-215.

out the way societies evolve and change through the interactions which are taking place now, and which have taken place for millennia, between 'agents in institutions' and institutions in agents'.

In a subsequent article in the *Review of International Political Economy* Amoore Et Al have tried to explore and develop Amin and Palan's conceptions of what it might mean to address what they call the historical deficit in IPE[15]. They argued that our efforts to historicize IPE should move beyond a banal consensus that we should simply 'add history and stir'. Picking up on Amin and Palan's agenda for an IPE historiography which highlights the dynamic interplay between structure and agency, Amoore Et Al use Collingwood to advocate an emphasis upon the historicity of knowledge. By this they mean an ontological and epistemological priority on human consciousness: the idea of history being composed of countless reflective or purposive acts, as well as the unconscious or routine acts of timeless tradition. Historical enquiry under the banner of IPE should thus not just seek out what agents of the past did within the given structures of the possible, but also what they thought they were doing when they did it, including reflections upon their structural circumstances. It should also assimilate, Amoore Et Al argue, the point made by E.H. Carr, inspired by Croce, that the historian is part of history, existing at a point in time which will determine the questions and methods that he carries into his study of the past. Finally, Amoore Et Al express a normative preference for historical enquiry in IPE which focuses upon the conditions of transformative and emancipatory moments in historical experience.

Gathering together all the findings generated by our deconstruction of *States and Markets* then, plus those generated within the debate about the need to historicize IPE, we now have a unique package of questions and parameters to carry behind the curtain of the present to guide us in our exploration of the past.

The first question is: where to start? Given that the concept of civilization has re-emerged in hegemonic discourse and given that we are serious about

[15] Amoore, Dodgson, Germain, Gills, Langley & Watson, 'Paths to a historicized international political economy', *Review of International Political Economy*, vol.7, no.1, pp.53-71.

wishing to historicize IPE, we naturally have to start our historical narrative with the original causes of the emergence of civilization itself. This commences in chapter 3, entitled *tekhne*, which is a transliteration of an ancient Greek concept of knowledge used to denote an art, skill, or craft. Susan Strange's metaphor of the shipwreck and the desert island are used as a vehicle to beach IPE upon the origins of human complexity and structuration in antiquity. Her analytical framework of production, finance, security and knowledge is applied to help explain the process of primary state formation in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The structuration of knowledge during primary state formation is traced through sectoral studies of the development of craftsmanship in pottery, metallurgy, and writing.

In the account of early writing, a special emphasis is placed upon the archaeological discovery of its development as an economic or planning tool for the organization of complexity and as an instrument for the formation of property relations. This emphasis is important to the development of Strange's conception of the knowledge structure because of the dominant logocentric principle in the social sciences that writing was invented to represent speech. To reformulate an early point of Derrida's in Strangean terms, this logocentric principle is a major obstacle to understanding how knowledge interacts with security, production and finance. As the art of writing began to disseminate itself through all areas of the scribal mind, it is argued, human consciousness gradually became interiorised. With the arrival of the scribal priest, paradoxically, we find the first hints of a secularised consciousness which, in crisis situations, is capable of reflective or purposive acts such as those presented in the fictional tale of Sinuhe. Out of the art of writing the soliloquy begins to supplement the divine word and we begin to see the antecedents of history as Amoore Et Al conceive it.

Chapter 3 then moves on to utilize Strange's concept of secondary structures to marshal archaeological and philological accounts of secondary state formation and the dissemination of civilization to Anatolia, Syria-Palestine and the Mediterranean. The secondary structures of trade and transport are seen as crucial here. This is where the beauty of Strange's heuristic framework begins to pull ahead significantly against alternatives such as the one proffered by Michael

Mann, or indeed against core-periphery theory, which some archaeologists have also tried to apply to the ancient world. Her conception of primary and secondary structures can help us to investigate the dialectic between primary and secondary state formation in an empirical manner.

Partly in order to avoid the charge of wishing to re-inscribe a teleological grand narrative of human progress, and also because the dynamics of collapse are an important subject for world society to contemplate in their own right, Strange's framework is then used to assimilate various accounts of the onset of a severe contraction of complexity in the structures of everyday life in the Mediterranean, commonly known as a 'Dark Age', from about 1100 to 600 BC. This phase in the history of western civilization tends to resurface whenever it needs to seriously contemplate its own mortality, for example during the 20 years crisis that spawned the thought of Spengler and Toynbee. But we need to update these early 20th century Cassandra's with work that has improved our knowledge of this particular collapse considerably. My account uses Strange's framework to organise the work of those who have suggested social causes rather than those that look to natural causes such as meteorites, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and the like. In a nutshell the argument is that the theocratic kingship mode of deliberation and mediation was simply not up to the job of regulating the greatly increased complexity of civilization in the late Bronze Age, particularly when it came to decision making between father-son-brother god-kings over crisis situations to do with inter-theocratic governance. In other words the texts which cry out to us lamenting the collapse at the time are perfectly right. It was the gods that had failed.

Towards the end of chapter 3 there is also a digression on the question of how the early construction of gender relations was intertwined with the structuration of knowledge. As civilization developed there was an erosion of female power over knowledge with the movement of its arts, skills and crafts from village production to city workshops. The gradual descent of reproductive exchange into the institution of female slavery, where property in the ancient mind is often conceived as property in women was also, it is argued, a significant factor in the early gendering of knowledge. This digression is, of course,

important in its own right, in a world where we are all obliged to re-evaluate male and female identities. But it is also partly driven by the need to prepare some ground for the following chapter, where Homer's depiction of a conflict over property in women is portrayed as an orally preserved vehicle for normative mediation over the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice! Portraying the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as texts about the conscious mediation of security, wealth, freedom and justice would have looked a bit odd without first tackling the question of gender. Perhaps I should also warn that this digression kicks off with some old anglo-saxon words. Originally this too was partly inspired by Strange who, whenever confronted with the question of gender, was not one for the use of euphemistic academic jargon. I tried to ensure that it cannot come across as merely a gratuitous attempt to cause offence. But I must nevertheless take full responsibility for the way I have tried to use these old words to get straight to the point.

Chapter 4 is entitled *sophia*, which is a transliteration of an ancient Greek concept of knowledge used to denote the art, skill or craft of excellence in the pursuit of human values. Here our historical investigation into Susan Strange's concept of knowledge structure naturally begins to focus, as I have already intimated, upon the normative values of security, wealth, freedom and justice as outlined in *States and Markets*. The songs of Homer have traditionally been regarded as the foundation stone of Western civilization, and when the sophists in Athens began to pioneer the idea of higher education and research in the 5th century BC the study of *sophia* in music and tragedy lay at the very core of the curriculum. The reason for this, chapter 4 argues, is that Homer's songs were seen as an orally preserved means to knowledge about the mediation of the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice. Susan Strange' conception of knowledge structure also includes the means of human communication and the means of human memory or mnemonics. For this reason chapter 4 pays special attention to the work of people like Eric Havelock, Walter Ong and Jack Goody, who have done so much to enhance our understanding of how the transformation from oral to written means of communication and mnemonics has a propensity to restructure human consciousness.

The theme of oral and written means of communication and mnemonics persists in chapter 5, entitled *philosophia*, which is a transliteration of an ancient Greek concept for the value of wonder, curiosity and the love of knowledge. This chapter then, is an attempt to historicize Strange's fifth value. It is an attempt to resolve the dramatic tension in Strange's conception of knowledge structure identified in the deconstruction of *States and Markets* in chapter 2 by formally adding it to her intrinsic value order of security, wealth, freedom and justice. It tries to show how the dissemination of writing emancipated curiosity and wonder, and then demonstrate how *philosophia* actually began to have an impact upon the Athenian regulation of security, wealth, freedom and justice under the mediation of 'Solon the lawgiver'. Our study of the songs of Solon is the study of the formation of a political will which forms the normative origins of the concept of democracy in antiquity. This is perhaps the crowning glory of Susan Strange's particular approach to structural power. When Strange recognised structures she also immediately recognised the role of human agency within structure. There may be a limited choice of actions but there is still choice, and the history of these choices reinforces some structural elements while undermining others[16]. The reforms of Solon also mark the point of a human choice which initiated the transformation of Prometheus from the crafty trickster depicted in Hesiod to the democratic revolutionary depicted in Aeschylus. The god of curiosity and wonder was thus promoted within the Olympian pantheon of higher values, just as my historical narrative promotes Strange's fifth value into her intrinsic value order.

[16] Christopher May, 'A New Way of Seeing?: A Critical Evaluation of the Work of Susan Strange', a paper presented at the IPEG workshop: 'Engaging with the work of Susan Strange', Nottingham Trent University, Clifton Campus, Nottingham, November 3rd 2001, pg.7.

2: Reading States And Markets

(1.1) Desert Island Story

> 'It was a dark and stormy night. A ship was steaming laboriously through mountainous seas whipped by gale force winds. Suddenly there is a terrific explosion amidships. All the lights go out. Whatever the cause, it has wrecked the power system. On board there is panic. People rush about in all directions, shouting and screaming and bumping into one another. Everyone is trying to get to the lifeboats.'[1]

These are the opening sentences of *States and Markets*, by Susan Strange. Her book begins with a story about the survivors of a shipwreck who escape upon three lifeboats to a desert island and set up three different types of communities. One is a fortress society based upon a realist model, one is communistic based upon an idealist model, and the third is a market society based upon an economic model. On the third page, Strange invites us all to join in and finish the story. On the sixth page she writes:

> 'It is all up to the reader. My stories are like Lego, the little Danish-made building blocks that fit together in endless variation to make whatever you will. Like toys, you can learn something from them if you do not take them very seriously.'

When someone tells us not to take them too seriously, that is the time to prick up our ears and listen carefully to what they are saying. There are things afoot upon Strange's desert island that are more interesting than Lego.

On page three of the book, Strange writes that all stories tell us something about their author. If all stories tell us something about their author, was it not extraordinary that of all the stories available to choose from to begin a book about political economy, she chose one about a terrible shipwreck? Where on earth did this dramatic image spring from, and why? In the world at large shipwrecks can be horrific accidents, but in the world of writing there can be no such thing as an accident because the author has made it happen there on the page in black and white. Behind storytelling there are always reasons, and we are always at liberty to speculate about them.

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1 Susan Strange, *States And Markets* (London, Pinter, 1988), p.1. From here on all page references to this particular book shall appear within the text itself rather than in footnote format.

This chapter seeks out the cause of the terrible explosion amidships which prompted Strange to write such an unconventional opening to a textbook about the international political economy. Our hypothesis is that the striking image of the shipwreck is no mere accident. It found its way onto the opening paragraph because there is an explosion to be found at the heart of Strange's book. On board *States And Markets* there is panic. People rush about in all directions, shouting and screaming and bumping into one another. Everyone tries to find the lifeboats...

We shall return to Strange's desert island story. But let us begin with a brief summary of *States and Markets*, in order to fix the co-ordinates of the wreck within the book as a whole.

(1.2) A Selective Summary Of States And Markets

After the prologue and a few preparatory remarks about the nature of theory, Strange makes it clear that what her book is attempting to do is to suggest a way to synthesize the study of Politics, Economics and International Relations. A few words of explanation about the motive behind this may be useful.

Strange was one of a small band of scholars who became disenchanted with the way that the study of the world political economy during the 20th century has evolved into three separate disciplines. The reasons for this disenchantment are many and complex. For the sake of brevity two major reasons will be noted here.

First of all it has been argued that the polity and the economy overlap each other and influence each other in ways that social theory has failed to understand because of its disciplinary academic structure. It has been argued that the relationships between politics and economics have become poorly understood because of an academic division of labour where the study of the state has tended to become the preserve of Political Theory and the analysis of markets the domain of Economics.

If this were the only reason for the disenchantment then it could be interpreted as a simple call for the return of political economy to its 19th century roots. The second motive makes things a bit more complicated, for it has to do with the way the Academy has responded to the career of nationalism throughout the 20th century, which did not turn out quite how the 19th century political economists had hoped. The Liberals had

predicted that with the development of free trade and political democracy the burgeoning nationalisms of the 19th century would mature into a brotherhood of nations, whilst the Marxists were confident that with revolution the nation-state would wither away. They didn't and it didn't, as the First world War proved[2]. Undaunted by this setback, the Academy gave birth to a new discipline called International Relations[3]. Thus it came to pass that there were three academic disciplines in the study of the world political economy, each reacting to the phenomenon of nationalism and the nation-state in a slightly different way, according to their brief.

Those who took up the study of International Relations had perhaps the most difficult brief to master. As a discipline born into a period of 'never again' euphoria that often follows wars, it was originally intended that International Relations should help foster peace between nations. Under overwhelming pressure of circumstance, however, this never again euphoria mutated into a resolve to never again be caught napping thinking utopian thoughts[4]. 'So, history has treated our discipline and its high hopes with contempt? Very well then. We are finished with high hopes. From now on we shall see the world as it is, not as the utopians would like it to be. We shall take the world as we find it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions within which they are organised, as the given framework for action'[5]. Almost a whole generation of professional scholars collectively began to either label themselves or consent to themselves being labelled as 'realists'. And the telos of this realism was that the question of nationalism and the nation-state should be rewarded with the profound respect that it had so destructively earned.

By the time Susan Strange was sitting down to write *States and Markets* things had moved on, and many people had been suggesting for years that Realism was becoming an unrealistic response to contemporary realities. To be sure, they reasoned,

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[2] For the rise and fall of early Liberal cosmopolitanism see Isaiah Berlin, 'The Bent Twig: On Nationalism', in *The Crooked Timber Of Humanity*. As far as Marxism is concerned, after the break up of the Second International the Bolsheviks arguably kept their brand of cosmopolitanism alive for a while. But they fell into line too with the defeat of Trotsky and the rise of 'socialism in one country'. See Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Disarmed*. George Orwell's *Homage To Catalonia* provides an eye-witness account of just how empty the rhetoric of internationalism had become for the Soviet Union by the time of the Spanish civil war.

[3] The word 'Academy' here is used as a general term to denote the universities and higher education colleges characteristic of modernity.

[4] E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Years Crisis* is the classic work usually cited to highlight this mutation.

[5] See Robert Cox on 'problem solving theory' in: 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium*, Vol.10, no.2, Summer 1981, pp.126-55.

in its early days the discipline of International Relations had taken some hard knocks. But time marches on. The past compels us to nothing. Perhaps it was time for International Relations to exorcise some of the worst of its traumas?

Often this argument manifested itself in attention drawn to the fact that the sovereign independence of the nation-state depends upon at least two supplements, namely dependency and interdependency. Perhaps, it was argued, there was a need for International Relations to focus more attention upon these variables of international politics too.

It is only a small step from here to the conclusion that domestic politics and economics (that is to say those relations that exist within the confines of the nation-state) both interact with international society. So perhaps it was inevitable that sooner or later people like Susan Strange would attempt to rewire the study of Politics, Economics, and International Relations in order to form an integrated circuit, a coherent whole[6]. On the one hand we have relations between politics and economics. On the other hand we have relations between the domestic and the international. What about a discipline that attempts to synthesise the lot, assimilating our 20th century experience of the nation-state system (carefully documented by International Relations) into our 19th century models of political economy? This is the discipline which Susan Strange and her colleagues were attempting to found. *States And Markets* was written as part of a contribution to its founding.

Strange was also sensitive to the demands for a 'normative approach' that became increasingly insistent in the field of international political theory over the past

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[6] For the sake of brevity the account here has been simplified. Even during the heyday of classical Liberalism and Marxism there was always an undercurrent of Mercantilism and this tradition persists in the development of IPE (see for example Robert Gilpin, in *The Political Economy of International Relations*). For a more comprehensive accounts of the development of IPE see: Martin Staniland, *What Is Political Economy?*; also Roger Tooze, 'Perspectives and Theory: a Consumers' Guide', in *Paths to International Political Economy*, edited by Susan Strange; Roger Tooze, 'In Search Of Political Economy', *Political Studies* (1984) XXXII, p.637-646. The classic article citied is Susan Strange, 'International Economics and International Relations: A Case of Mutual Neglect', *International Affairs* 46 no.2 April 1970. Another is: Richard Cooper, *The Economics of Interdependence* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1968). Useful surveys are: Craig Murphy & Douglas Nelson, 'International Political Economy: A tale of two heterodoxies', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol.3, October 2001, pp.393-412; Peter Katzenstein & Robert Keohane & Stephen Krasner, 'International Organization and the Study of World Politics', *International Organization*, 52, 4, Autumn 1998, pp.645-685; Robert Denemark & Robert O'Brien, 'Contesting the Canon: international political economy at UK and US universities', *Review of International Political Economy*, 4:1, Spring 1997, pp.214-238.

couple of decades and which were also, in part, a concomitant reaction against the telos of Realism[7]. Strange begins her attempted synthesis of Politics, Economics and International Relations by trying to identify some of the basic values which human beings seek through social organisation. A typology of four 'basic human values' are listed, namely: wealth, security, freedom and justice (p.17). Each society, she asserted, provides some measure of each of these human values, however unequally they may be shared amongst their members. Thus all societies have to produce wealth for their citizens. All societies have to provide some form of security from harm, pain, or misfortune. Likewise, all societies are built around some conception of freedom and justice, however questionable these conceptions of freedom and justice may be to us.

The next step Strange makes is to argue that different societies, while producing some of each of these four values, give a different order of priority to them. Societies thus differ from each other in the proportions of each value that they achieve for their subjects. Each system of political economy will manifest a different mix in the proportional weight given to the aforementioned values of wealth, security, freedom and justice. What decides the nature of the mix, Strange argued, are questions of power. Who has the power to make key decisions over the relative merits of different values and organise society accordingly? From what sources are these decisive powers derived? And for whose ends are these decisions made, or who benefits? In this way, Strange aimed to marry positivist and normative trends in social theory.

Strange then makes a distinction between two types of power in any given political economy: structural power and relational power:

> 'Relational power is the power of A to get B to do something that they would not otherwise do. Structural power on the other hand is the power to shape and determine the structures of the global political economy within which other states or agents have to operate.' (p.24)

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[7] 'The belief that we should firmly and unequivocally bring values back into the analysis of international political economy is now shared by many scholars in the field.' Susan Strange, 'Structures, Values and Risk in the Study of the International Political Economy', in *Perspectives On Political Economy*, Edited by R.J. Barry Jones. A seminal example of the trend which Strange was responding to is Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*. A later sample is: Mark Hoffman, 'Normative Approaches', in *International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory*, Edited by Margot Light and A.G.R. Groom. Subsequent invaluable surveys are provided by Chris Brown, *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches* and his subsequent *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice*.

By 'structure' Strange means something within which things can happen and changes take place without affecting the structure itself. So for example, we could say that a businessman who has the power to determine the management structure of a company has structural power. Whilst a line manager whose task is to work within that given management structure only has relational power, he only has power over people 'down the line', within the overall structure of the firm. Having made this distinction, Strange argued that it was structural rather than relational power that was becoming more crucial in determining outcomes in the world political economy, and for this reason it was to the analysis of structural power that she dedicated the four main chapters of her book.

The next part of Strange's argument is that structural power in the world political economy is to be found not in a single structure but in 'four separate distinguishable but related structures (p.26). Unlike some varieties of Marxism or Liberalism, which tend to see the structure of production and exchange as being the universal source of structural power in the political economy, the Strangeian approach admits that one structure may be dominant in a particular case, but denies that any one structure is dominant universally over space and time. No one power structure is always already more important than the other three. These four interacting sources of primary structural power are the security structure, the production structure, the financial structure, and the knowledge structure.

Strange defines the security structure as the framework of power created via the provision of security to people from common dangers to their well being, such as human violence or the threat of violence. Such security, Strange argues, is one of the most basic human needs. In return for the supply of security, its benefactors derive power over those whom they allegedly protect. The protected will be willing to sacrifice a certain amount of wealth, justice, status and freedom for their protection. The relative desire for security in humans produces a proportional will to domination by anybody who possesses the means to provide it. The analysis of the security structure, Strange implies, is the traditional habitat of Realist theories of international politics.

The production structure, Strange argues, is the structure by which wealth is produced and distributed in a political economy. It is the sum of all the arrangements determining what is produced, by whom and for whom, by what method and on what terms. Those who control the means of production and distribution of goods and

services are in a position of structural power. They determine what wealth is produced, how wealth is produced, under what terms wealth is produced and how that wealth is distributed. The relative desire for wealth produces in humans a proportional will to domination by those who control the means by which it is created and divided. The analysis of relations of production, Strange implies, is the traditional habitat of classical liberal theories of political economy, together with Liberalism's rebellious offshoot, Marxism.

The financial structure Strange defines as the sum of all arrangements governing the availability of credit, plus all the factors determining the terms on which different currencies are exchanged. Strange justifies the concept of the financial structure, to be considered as separate and distinct from the notion of the production structure, by arguing that credit and money are signifiers of wealth regulated by authorities that are largely independent of those who control the production of wealth itself. Indeed the very value of paper money and credit is that they are signifiers and have no inherent wealth value in themselves. They are just scraps of paper, or pixels on computer screens, and thus exist independently of real wealth. Credit can thus be created when authorities want to expand demand, or be made to disappear when they want to constrain it. It can also be much more readily and rapidly exchanged than real wealth.

Lastly, Strange presents as a legitimate area of study within the boundaries of political economy a source of structural power which she calls the knowledge structure. The power derived from the knowledge structure, Strange argues, is the one that has been most overlooked and underrated. It is no less important than the other three sources of power in international political economy, but it is much less well understood. Analysis of the knowledge structure is thus far less advanced and has far more yawning gaps waiting to be filled than analyses of the other structures (p.115). For Strange, the knowledge structure comprises the relations under which knowledge is produced, how it is stored, and who communicates it, by what means, to whom and on what terms. It includes what is believed and generally accepted as understood. People with power in the knowledge structure are those who are in a position to determine what knowledge should be produced, are engaged in the accumulation of more of it, entrusted with its storage and reproduction, and in control of the channels by which it is communicated (p.115 & 117). Strange thought that scholars in Philosophy, Psychology and Linguistics had a better grasp of some of the concepts necessary to an understanding of power

derived from the knowledge structure by virtue of the fact that they have been grappling with them for much longer than students of International Relations, Politics or Economics.

Most citations of *States And Markets* tend to focus upon the four primary structures of power in the world political economy summarised above. But there is a third part of Strange's book, sometimes overlooked, where she turns her attention to what she calls the 'secondary power structures'. One reason why this part of *States And Markets* has drawn less attention is precisely because of the secondary status prescribed for the 'secondary power structures'. The 'primary power structures' are naturally the ones that tend to draw our attention in the narrative. Another reason may be the rather open-ended list of secondary power structures that Strange envisages. Strange devoted the four chapters of part three to transport, trade, energy and welfare. But she cautions that her choice:

> 'is a bit arbitrary in that it would be equally logical to include some other secondary structures. For instance, there would be a chapter on international law, except that there is no lack of good descriptive and analytical works by specialists in the field. There could also be a chapter on the world food system... But this too has an extensive literature.' (p.135)

Arbitrary and open-ended lists can be disconcerting for readers, because it means that they are being asked to think for themselves. If we want to know about the power structures of international law or of food, we are simply expected to put *States And Markets* down and conduct our own trawl through the specialist literature. Nor is there any attempt to produce a prescribed list. What other secondary power structures could there be? We are left stranded with a pretty strong hint that her list is not meant to be exclusive.

It would seem admissible to ask what the reasoning process was that enabled Strange to distinguish her primary power structures from her secondary power structures. To my knowledge the criteria for the distinction between primary and secondary structures were never made explicit in a rigorous fashion, but her brief introduction to part three does describe the nature of the hierarchy in the following way:

> 'The common feature of secondary structures is firstly that, although they are frameworks within which choices are made on the basis of value preferences, they are also secondary to the primary structures of

> security, production, finance and knowledge, which play a large part in shaping the secondary structures'. (p.135)

The secondary structures are important in their own right, but dependant in the sense that they are shaped by the four primary structures. One way to try to understand the distinction Strange was making would be to trace the career of 'welfare' in the evolution of her thought, because the question of whether the structure for the provision of welfare is primary or secondary would appear to be one that Strange had some trouble with herself[8]. In an article published back in 1986, welfare is one of the primary power structures[9]. By 1988, with the publication of *States And Markets*, we find that welfare has been relegated to a secondary status.

The shift from the former to the latter status of welfare can partly be explained by the prevailing intellectual climate of the times. In the early eighties many western national welfare systems were still generally taken for granted, the Marshall Plan was still seen as a paradigm example of aid as power, and recent calls for a new international economic order culminating in *The Brandt Report* had lent a certain legitimacy to those who took international welfare seriously. In such an environment it would have seemed appropriate to see welfare as a primary source of structural power 'because it is politically important and sensitive'[10]. But as the eighties wore on it became increasingly clear, both on the left of the political spectrum as well as the right, just how dependant welfare was upon developments in the production structure, the security structure, the financial structure and the knowledge structure. The chapter devoted to welfare in *States And Markets* reflects this intellectual demotion with just about every sentence.

The other three chapters of part three are devoted to transport, trade and energy. As with welfare, Strange tried to show how these secondary structures were defined and shaped according to the imperatives determined by her four primary structures. However, we now intend to abandon our summary of *States And Markets* and recall the curious image of the shipwreck.

(1.3) Political Economy On The Verge Of Deconstruction

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[8] For this point I am grateful for a verbal suggestion from Eric Helleiner.

[9] Strange, 'Structures, Values and Risk in the Study of the International Political Economy', in R.J. Barry Jones, *Perspectives On Political Economy*, p.217-18.

States And Markets made no great claims for itself. It was subtitled 'An Introduction to International Political Economy'. The blurb on the flyleaf advertises its contents 'as an ideal introductory text'. This humble objective is reinforced in the opening lines of chapter one, where the book identifies itself as an 'unconventional textbook'. Furthermore, the general style of address adopted throughout the book evokes the kind of discourse one might expect between scholar and student rather than the scholar amongst peers.

Some eight years after publication, Strange felt it necessary to reinforce the point that *States And Markets* had not been written with any pretension to setting the world alight with knowledge about knowledge. She declares that the book was targeted for a particular audience with very specific aims and objectives in mind:

> '*States and Markets* was expressly written for the graduate students I was used to teaching at the London School of Economics. They came from a variety of cultural, linguistic and disciplinary backgrounds and their time for absorbing new ideas was limited. My conscious aim was to help them develop their own ideas by providing a framework which constructively joined Politics to Economics in a transnational context. It was an anti-text-book text for master's students. '[11]

This reflection came in response to an article by Chris May, within which *States and Markets* enjoyed the sort of critical appraisal that one might expect for a major contribution to international political theory, as if it were her 'defining book, one about which the rest of her work revolves'[12]. Amongst other things, May argued that the inclusion of knowledge as one of the primary variables of structural power in the study of international political economy would be an important step forward, but opens a 'Pandora's box' of theoretical questions that Strange has not attempted to answer.

Strange's response was that *States and Markets* had not been written to be read as if it were a major theoretical treatise. Her response to May suggests someone who

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[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Susan Strange, 'A Reply to Chris May', *Global Society*, vol.10, No.3, (1996) pp.303-5. In reply to Chris May, 'Strange Fruit: Susan Strange's theory of Structural Power in the International Political Economy', *Global Society*, Vol.10, No.2 (1996), pp. 167-189.

[12] Christopher May, 'Strange Fruit: Susan Strange's theory of Structural Power in the International Political Economy', *Global Society*, Vol.10, No.2 (1996), pp.167-189. May's quote regarding the status of *States and Markets* within her work as a whole is from Christopher May & Margaret Law, *An Annotated Bibliography of Susan Strange's Academic Writings on International*

has become mildly impatient with those who will insist upon giving her 'unconventional textbook' more time than she thinks it deserves. After all, the text merely:

> 'aimed to introduce the basic values of security, wealth, justice and freedom - but with minimal ideological bias, giving implicit priority neither to the objectives of economic growth (wealth creation) nor to order (stability and security from war). And it aimed to be short enough not to overburden the limited time available during a one year course. Thus, it was not possible to go too far into the philosophical implications of subjective perceptions in the belief system and the prevailing value-preferences that were, I argued, one part of the knowledge structure.'[13]

To find higher level analyses of the role of knowledge as a source of structural power in the world political economy, to find scholarship produced by Strange that envisages knowledge as a primary source of structural power intended for consumption by peers rather than consumption by students, Chris May was advised to consult her later works, namely *Rival States, Rival Firms*, and then *The Retreat of the State*.

But what if Christopher May was on to something? What if *States And Markets* turns out to mean more than what Susan Strange actually meant to say? What if a text that masquerades as an 'unconventional textbook' can somehow manage to hit the nail on the head and fire the imagination in a way that the more rarefied texts fail to do? What is partly at stake here is the status that we attach to communication between scholar and student versus the status we attach to the communication between scholar and scholar in the reproduction of knowledge. Perhaps, just perhaps, there are exceptional circumstances where it may be appropriate for the latter to doff his cap to the former?

In the first paragraph of *States And Markets* we are presented with a terrific explosion amidships. The premise of this thesis is that there is also an explosion hidden in the middle of *States And Markets*. In chapter six, Strange presents as a legitimate area of study within the boundaries of IPE a source of power which she calls the knowledge structure. This structure is of equal importance, Strange argues, to the security structure, the production structure and the financial structure in the world political economy. By trying to graft onto IPE an awareness of knowledge as power, by making it of equal

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Political Economy 1949-1995 (Department of International Studies at Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, 1996).

status to production, security and finance, Strange has taken a fateful step. The addition of knowledge to the analysis of power means that *States And Markets*, currently subtitled 'An Introduction to International Political Economy', might be more accurately subtitled: 'An Introduction to the Deconstruction of International Political Economy'.

The authorities are bound to demand an inquiry into the matter. Who was responsible for this terrible explosion? Was it Jacques Derrida, that infamous old villain of deconstruction? No, it could not have been Derrida this time. For nowhere can his entry be found in the ship's register, the bibliography, so he could not have been on board ship at the time. What about Baudrillard, Barthes, Foucault, Habermas, Popper, Cherry, Innis, Hamelink, Jervis, Melody, Mulkay, O'Brien, Sauvant, Smith, Bell, Stonier or Williams? All these names are mentioned in her bibliography, have written about knowledge as power, and must therefore share some of the responsibility for what happened. But as usual in this sort of inquiry, there is always a need for a scapegoat, one person upon whom the great and the good can pin the majority of the blame. The members of the inquiry take a traditional attitude about this. In their wisdom they decide that Strange is ultimately the person who has to be made responsible. She was the author supposed to have been in charge of the book at the time it was written.

Back on board ship in the midst of the disaster members of the crew may come along and try to calm people down. After all, they might say, the belief that knowledge is power is hardly new or controversial. It was the desire for power and the thirst for knowledge about power that gave rise to scholarly tomes about politics and economics in the first place. And anyway ordinary people in their everyday wisdom have always recognised that knowledge is power (p.115). But amidst such appeals for calm:

> 'The deck begins slowly to tilt to one side. The explosion must have torn a whole in the side. Panic gets worse. Some of the lifeboats, clumsily handled, get stuck in the davits.' (p.1)

The inquiry must also discover why the lifeboats got stuck in those davits. If you should ever ask a political economist about the question of knowledge as power, you may see him pause for a second whilst he tries to assess exactly what this means for him and his discipline; then he invariably scrambles into one of three available lifeboats: science;

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[13] *Ibid.*

ideology; or technology[14]. Science is the word that offers rescue for those who do not want to have to think too much about the question of epistemology. Ideology is the word that offers rescue for those who do not want to think too much about what is other. Technology is the word that offers rescue for those who do not want to have to think too much about a world of gadgets that have become too complex to comprehend.

People are not generally encouraged to think of science, ideology and technology as being part of the same structure called knowledge. The question of knowledge is too huge, so people usually prefer to apply the strategy of divide and rule. The question of knowledge is thus broken down by difference: science is different from ideology; ideology is different from technology; and technology is different from science. The stability of definition of these three words relies upon their differences from each other. But Strange's notion of knowledge structure throws the three words back together in a way which challenges us to see these differences as relationships. As long as questions about knowledge as power are dealt with in an ad hoc fashion, the relationships between the three concepts do not seem to matter very much. They remain just differences upon which we rely to guide us away from having to think too much about the question of knowledge as power. But once Strange starts to glue them together into a knowledge structure, their relations become unstable and *States And Markets* totters over the verge of deconstruction. Let us examine the text carefully to see what is meant by this assertion.

(1.4) Science and Ideology

As far as the disciplines of Economics, Politics and International Relations are concerned, of the three concepts commonly found to deal with the question of knowledge, science appears to be the appellation which they aspire to have applied to themselves. Science is apparently what they would most like to be. Scientific knowledge is held to be special and privileged in some way, so there is quite a lot at stake in the game of classifying what is science from what is non-science. Where science is held to be privileged it is generally assumed that there is some kind of

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[14] People sometimes jump into a fourth lifeboat called 'information'. But usually this word is used to theorize about the transformation of knowledge under the impact of a new technology, such as the computer, or the fibre optic cable. Here we shall therefore assume that 'information' falls under the category of 'technology'.

epistemology or method which grounds it as a superior form of knowledge in terms of truth.

In contrast, ideology is the appellation of knowledge which social theorists least aspire to have applied to themselves. Like halitosis, ideology is what the other person has[15]. It is a word for the object to be examined, not for the subject who is doing the examining. Ideological knowledge is held to be underprivileged in some way, and thus there is a lot at stake in determining what is ideology from what is not ideology. Where ideology is held to be underprivileged it is usually deemed to be knowledge which has no epistemology, no method which grounds its claim to the superior status of truth. Often this is held to be because it comprises subjective values which properly belong to the private individual and thus lie beyond the reach of reason, epistemology or method. Ideology is therefore congenitally prone to mere opinion, prejudice, error, or even the barefaced lie.

Between the play of these two opposites there can be found a certain amount of vacillation. There are some, for example, who like to challenge the privileged status of science and treat it as an ideology[16]. Then there are those who try to strip ideology of some of its pejorative connotations, and prefer to use it as a descriptive term which recognises all knowledge to be in some sense ideological, part of a 'total ideology'[17]. Then there are those who try to characterise their own ideology as an instrument or sometimes even as a science of political struggle[18]. Despite this confusion we may observe that the hierarchical relationship between the two words remains dominant. No matter how hard many people try to change the terminology, in the general economy of understanding science remains the privileged and ideology the underprivileged knowledge. The acid test is the label people are prepared to tolerate being applied to themselves. For example, there are economic, political or social 'Science Departments'

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[15] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, p.2.

[16] For example: Stanley Aronowitz, *Science As Power*; Claude Alvares, 'Science', in *The Development Dictionary* edited by Wolfgang Sachs.

[17] Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* is probably the most influential text which inspired the notion of ideology as the 'sociology of knowledge'. This approach has often been called 'relativism' by its critics. A robust defence can be found in Barnes and Bloor, 'Relativism, Rationalism and the Sociology of Knowledge', in *Rationality and Relativism* edited by Hollis and Lukes.

[18] Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* contains the classic example of this. But Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony in the *Prison Notebooks* is perhaps the authority which the 'ideology as weapon of political struggle' genre would be prepared to identify with nowadays.

in abundance, but it would be hard for even the most die-hard adherent of the sociology of knowledge to find an 'Ideology Department' anywhere[19].

Let us now observe how the hierarchical tension between science and ideology works itself into Strange's prose. In *States and Markets*, science makes its first appearance upon page eleven (under the heading 'Theory in social science'), where a distinction is drawn between the natural and the social sciences. The natural sciences may aspire to predict whereas the social sciences should not try to do so. According to Strange, Economics is the social science which has most notably aspired to predict: 'But its record of success is so abysmal that it should make all those who seek to emulate the economists and to borrow from them try something else'. Strange follows Popper by noting that to try to predict in society can become much the same as trying to prescribe, which should be a matter of public choice and not left to 'irresponsible academic theorists'[20]. Then we are informed that many problems of social science stem from an 'inferiority complex' towards the natural scientists and that political economists have an inferiority complex with regard to the 'the apparent rigour of economic 'science'. Rigour (for the benefit of those unaccustomed to the rhetoric of Economics) is the word that economists often like to substitute for epistemology. Upon page twelve we are told that the title 'social science' is only justifiably used to remind us that although our subject lies closer to our emotions than 'the origin of rocks or the composition of molecules' we must nevertheless 'still try to preserve a 'scientific' attitude to our studies'.

Something rather alarming happens to science between page eleven and twelve of *States And Markets*. For no apparent reason, it starts to appear within inverted commas, as if to denote that Strange no longer trusts it entirely. Strange wants us to preserve the 'scientific' attitude in our studies, but in the same sentence she always already places the word under suspicion by marking it out. Nor is this an isolated event, for it happens again upon page sixteen where the social 'scientist' also becomes a suspect. A brief survey of chapter one reveals the use of these inverted commas to be quite consistent. They occur whenever she wants to draw attention to a word's contingency, its value context, or its dubious use by others. In philosophy this kind of thing might be called putting 'science' under erasure, where a word is used to

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[19] One wonders how successful Sidney and Beatrice would have been if they had tried to found the 'London School of Economics and Political Ideology'.

demonstrate its normal function within a narrative but at the same time is singled out for special observation and confined between two davit-like marks[21]. But why has Strange chosen to do this to science? What lies between page eleven and twelve that has made her put science under erasure?

Turning the page from eleven to twelve and from twelve back to eleven, it would appear that the two culprits who have conceived the inverted commas around science are value judgements and risk assessments. The full sentence that straddles pages eleven and twelve reads:

> 'He or she [the theorist] need not necessarily apply theory to policy-making, since policy-making necessarily involves value judgements and risk assessments that are exogenous to theory and that are better made by practical policy-makers than by irresponsible academic theorists.'

It is important to make sure that Strange's attitude towards value and risk is not misconstrued here. She was not trying to say that they are exogenous in the sense that they are not important. Quite the contrary. Otherwise the 'four basic human values' of wealth, security, freedom and justice would not have been at the core of her analysis of power in world society. What she does argue for is an awareness of values in order to avoid the risk of ideological contamination of scientific theory. Thus, in an article published before *States And Markets*, Strange argues that the consideration of values is:

> 'necessary to avoid the snare of ideology...The main aim, in my opinion, is to make the study of international political economy value-sensitive, not to make it value-laden.'[22]

The world exogenous to science is envisaged as one driven by ideological conflict between values. The task of social theory, as Strange conceives it, is that of trying to establish an 'epistemological break' between science and ideology[23]. The critique of existing theories is that they do not, in Strange's opinion, make this break:

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[20] Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*. Note the subtle difference in meaning between the words prediction (speech), and prescription (writing), that opens up upon page 11 of *States And Markets*.

[21] Except that of course in philosophy the erasure is marked out more clearly by the placement of a cross.

[22] Susan Strange 'Structures, Values and Risk in the Study of the International Political Economy', *op cit*, p.210.

[23] Strange acknowledges her debt to Althusserian Marxism on p.216, *Ibid.*

> 'all we have, so far, are competing doctrines-sets of normative ideas about the goals to which state policy should be directed and how politics and economics (or more accurately, states and markets) ought to be related to one another. This is enough to satisfy ideologues who have already made up their minds.' (p.16)

But it does not satisfy Susan Strange the social scientist, so she sets off in search of a structural analysis that 'breaks down the dividing walls between the ideologues' (p.17). She wants a framework of analysis for the diagnosis of the human condition 'as it is', with value and risk left out, which opens up room for choice. Value and risk become exogenous matters for policy makers who are in control of the levers of power because:

> 'the choices are subjective. Each individual must decide for himself or herself; and those at the top in any society will seldom agree with those at the bottom of the heap about the most desirable goals, in terms of values, of public policy and social and economic arrangements. Moreover, even the possibility of reaching agreement as a result of logical, rational argument among those who regard themselves as impartial bystanders is an illusion. Argument and reason are not going to settle differences of view. For each of us carries from his or her birth - or rather perhaps from the moment of conception and the fusion of genes - a temperamental predisposition in favour of certain values and a corresponding antipathy to certain of their opposites. Culture, education and personal experience may cause us to suppress or to modify - even, very occasionally, to change our innate predispositions or antipathies. But in my experience argument seldom does'.[24]

The sudden conception of those inverted commas around science at the turn of page eleven to twelve can thus be explained. It is an example of what we might call 'ideology critique coming home to roost'. Strange has become sceptical about the claims of social science because she believes she has found an area where rational argument is an illusion and where reason can never hope to settle things. This discovery is deeply shocking, but we may still 'try to preserve a 'scientific' attitude' by expelling the monstrosity beyond the boundaries of 'science', which the inverted commas now represent. From now on, science will have to accept quotation marks because it cannot do without the exogenous other called ideology, where the idols of passions, emotions, goals, values, risks, culture, education and genes have to be banished.

The relationship between science and ideology thus becomes one of subject and object. There is no point in science talking to ideology because rational argument with it is an illusion and no amount of reasoning with it can ever hope to settle anything. But science retains the right to talk about ideology, because it has made an epistemological

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[24] *Ibid*, p.212. Alistair Macintyre called this ethical position 'emotivism'. See *After Virtue*.

break from it which grounds its subjectivity. Social science may talk about ideology because that is part of its business: to become value-sensitive, unlike ideology, whose business is to stay value-laden.

This is how in the very same chapter Strange finds it valid to isolate four basic human values of wealth, security, freedom and justice as being objective and self-evident. Drawing from the values held dear by the disciplines she is trying to weave together, an intrinsic value order is proposed in which values lose their emotive content and become scientific, like 'the origin of rocks or the composition of molecules'. Thus the basic human values are like:

> 'the chemical elements of hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and nitrogen. Combined in different proportions they will give quite different chemical compounds.' (p.17)

Within this intrinsic value order there is freedom for societies to choose the value mix that they want, but there is a degree of trade-off between them. The choice of wealth, for example, will be made at the expense of some sacrifice in justice. That's life. These truths are self-evident. They make up part of our objective reality. The arrangements that each society decides to make 'are not divinely ordained' but are the outcome of human decisions. The basic natural chemical elements of wealth, security, freedom and justice with which a society makes up these arrangements *are* divinely ordained, however, and there is nothing we can do about it. They are fixed by nature as the eternal sources of value which determine our being[25].

Cave! hic dragones. Value judgements and risk assessments, having been made exogenous to Strange's structural method of analysis upon page eleven to twelve, have hidden themselves like stowaways within chapter six. According to the very first paragraph of chapter six, the knowledge structure comprehends what is believed and the moral conclusions and principles derived from these beliefs (p.115). Value and risk, our two trouble-makers, are not prepared to remain excluded and threaten to explode Strange's intrinsic value order. Little can stop them from carrying out this threat because argument and reason have already been ruled out: 'for each of us carries from his or her birth, or rather perhaps from the moment of conception and the fusion of genes, a

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[25] My interpretation of Strange's 'intrinsic value order' is indebted to William Connolly's study of 'intrinsic moral orders', in *The Augustinian Imperative: A Reflection On The Politics Of Morality.*

temperamental predisposition in favour of certain values and a corresponding personal antipathy to certain of their opposites'.

We can only watch with grim resignation as the catastrophe of chapter six unfolds. First we learn that deciding who has power in the knowledge structure can only be a matter of subjective value judgement (p.116). Then comes the revelation that basic human values can change over time and that societies may redirect themselves toward new goals (p.116). Just in case the full significance of this had escaped us, next we are given a concrete historical example in the transition from medieval Christendom to the modern scientific state. This example finds security, wealth, freedom and justice not to be natural elements like hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and nitrogen after all. They are values with a genealogy suspiciously linked to the development of states and markets (p.119-23). In other words they are a social construction and not part of any intrinsic value order. Finally we are told that science, far from being in the business of trying to establish an epistemological break from ideology, is actually responsible for most of its production (p.123-25). Strange's structural analysis of knowledge in chapter six has thus blown a hole through her reason for structural analysis in the first place.

Science, being stuck in the davit-like commas upon page twelve, cannot escape the sinking ship. If everyone on board had been prepared for this sort of emergency, the scientific lifeboat might not have got stuck in the davits. Alas they were not:

> 'Well aware of my own limitations, I have made no reference in the course of this brief survey of the knowledge structures of the international political economy to the active debates conducted by philosophers, especially in Europe, on the nature of knowledge, or the relation between power and communication systems or on the role of ideology in defining the goals of knowledge and thus determining in some degree the findings of social science. Such debates are not on the whole conducted in a language easily understood by me or, I imagine, by most of my readers. (p.132)

Strange reveals with uncanny accuracy the wisdom and the tragedy of western thought. Philosophy becomes a forgotten old sea chest full of mouldy manuscripts from a bygone era, each with a cautionary tale to tell about the folly of knowledge. This chest is still lying around somewhere, but lies unopened. Apparently, it has a history that goes back at least to 'Nietzsche, Hegel and Weber, and some would say to Plato and Aristotle'. Other authors like Habermas, Foucault, Popper and Lukacs are also mentioned, but these old men appear unable, Strange suggests, to write in a language easily understood by most of her readers. The quaint notion of philosophy as the eternal conversation of

humanity where all ages speak on equal terms is thus rendered obsolete. Strange turns this wrinkly ideal into an ironic reproach with the remark that philosophy contains only 'debates that remain largely unresolved'.

(1.5) Ideology and Technology

Some doubt has been expressed as to whether the distinction between ideology and science in *States And Markets* is a stable one if we compare and contrast its theory of knowledge structure with its epistemology. What does appear to remain consistent about the use of the word ideology, however, is that it is an appellation of knowledge which has to do with ideas of value, needs, ends or goals. These perceived values, needs, ends or goals may or may not be valid ones and we may or may not hold them in common. But there is little doubt as far as Strange's text is concerned that everybody has them. This definition of ideology would therefore seem to stand a fair chance of getting away safely from its davits, and into our consciousness, well before *States And Markets* sinks back into the bookshelf from whence it came.

In contrast technology is an appellation of knowledge used to define the instruments, tools and skills that people use to fulfil these values, needs, ends or goals. Technology may thus be distinguished from ideology by the separation of means from ends. Technology is the material means by which we achieve ideological ends. We could argue for ever and a day about ends, but if we were to come to some sort of consensus about them the question of fulfilment would become a technical one of the most efficient or rational means. Thus if technology is defined as 'know-how', ideology might be defined as 'know-why'. As is the case with science and ideology, the relationship between ideology and technology is meant to be a hierarchical one. But in this case ideology is supposed to be top dog. Technology is the supplement to ideology. Means are supposed to serve ends.

In the play between these two opposites can there be found a good deal of vacillation. There are people, for example, who have turned this hierarchy on its head by saying that the ideological ends of society are determined by its technological means[26]. Then there are those who argue that technological change has made ideology

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[26] This is one possible reading of Marx's 'materialist conception of history', the classic source for which may be found in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. After so many battles of exegesis there is little point in trying to find 'the true Marx', but this has been

obsolete, so that what used to lead to ideological conflict over values, goals or ends have become technological problems for which professional experts can offer technical solutions[27]. Then there are those who characterise modern technology as the dominant ideology of western society. They say that what used to be thought of as means have taken over and become ends in themselves. And thus, they argue, our know-how has overcome our ability to know-why, possibly with disastrous consequences[28]. Amid this confusion we may observe that the basically hierarchical relationship between the two words remains dominant. No matter how scholarly the reputation of those who question this hierarchy, in the general economy of understanding ideologies comprise the ends of society and technology the means.

Let us trace the hierarchical tension between ideology and technology as it works itself into Strange's prose. If we scour *States And Markets* for references to technology we find that it makes its debut appearance upon page nine. The reader is told that he may decide that technological change is going too fast and needs to be slowed down because it has become a major threat to the human condition[29]. Or he may look forward to a brave new world in which technology solves many of the problems of the human condition. It is up to the reader to choose what to think. Along with science and ideology, technology makes its second appearance upon page eleven. In a section which is supposed to be dedicated to positive assumptions about theory, Strange suddenly turns negative about the term 'information revolution'. To show that this term is not good theory Strange postulates a distinction between technological and social change:

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one of the most influential interpretations. A robust defence of this 'technological determinist' reading can be found in Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, and in Heilbroner, 'Do Machines Make History?' in *Technology and Culture*, edited by M. Kranzenberg and W.H. Davenport.

[27] This is the 'end of ideology thesis'. See: Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*; or Robert Lane, 'The Decline of Politics and Ideology in a Knowledgeable Society', *American Sociological Review*, 31 (1966), p.644-60. Alistair Macintyre tried to call a halt to such talk with: 'The End of the End of Ideology', in *Against The Self Images Of The Age*. He failed, because the end of ideology thesis has been recycled many times since the heady sixties in various permutations. Francis Fukuyama's notion of 'The End of History?' *The National Interest*, Volume 16, Summer 1989, is a more recent example.

[28] This approach is characteristic in diverse ways of: Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*; Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*; Ivan Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*; and the early Habermas in *Toward A Rational Society* and *Legitimation Crisis*.

[29] Strange actually writes 'because small is beautiful'. But this is clearly a rather flippant reference to E.F. Schumacher's argument that current technological developments have become a threat to the human condition. See his *Small Is Beautiful*, chapter 10.

> 'While it notes rapid technological change, it does not postulate a clear causal connection, supported by logic or evidence, between that technological change and social change - change in political or economic relationships so great as to result in a redistribution of power and/or wealth.' (p.11)

Strange is taking a swipe here at a popular form of social commentary sometimes pejoratively called futurology, which may be defined as the practice of making extravagant claims about the likely social impact of a new technology. Strange is dubious about the changes heralded by the term 'information revolution', and suspects they are just novel technological means of striving for the old-fashioned social ends of security, wealth, freedom and justice. Technology may change, but as far as Strange can see the basic ends of society remain the same, or change by some logic independent of technology.

Ostensibly this brief aside over the term 'information revolution' exists on page eleven simply to provide an example of poor social theory which is descriptive, in contrast with good theory which tries to explain a puzzle or a paradox. But a closer reading reveals that Strange returns frequently to the theme of 'information revolution' later on, in chapter six. At the beginning of her chapter on the knowledge structure a list of authors are cited (O'Brien, 1983; Stonier, 1983; Bell, 1974; Wriston, 1986) who all suggest there are revolutionary implications behind rapid changes in information technologies such as 'sophisticated computer systems', 'orbital earth satellites', 'electronic data flows' and the 'digitalisation of language'. Strange elaborates upon the point she made earlier on page eleven:

> 'Yet much of the informed explanations of these technical changes, astonishing and almost miraculous as they seem, do not go beyond telling us what the technology is doing and how it is done. They assert that we are in the midst of a 'revolution' but do not explain in what ways this revolution is going to change human relations, how it is going to shift power or redirect the efforts of human societies to new goals.' (p.116)

This is what would demonstrate a revolution 'in the sense in which the term is commonly used in social science'. Strange notes that at the moment opinions differ. Some argue that changes in information technologies are shifting power relationships and redirecting societies to new goals. Others argue that the 'system itself has not fundamentally changed' (p.117). Strange herself declares an open mind. She 'does not claim to know for sure who is right'. But she does claim that clear thinking about the debate will be helped by the structural analysis suggested in her book.

As we read further it becomes increasingly clear that although she thinks the term 'information revolution' reflects poor theory, those who have used it have made a deep impression upon her. In fact, there are some grounds for suspicion that these are the very people who have persuaded her to dedicate a whole chapter to knowledge and give it equal status to the chapters on security, production and finance. Strange does not appear to like the term 'information revolution' much, but there seems to be something about it which makes it almost impossible to put down:

> 'What is debatable today is whether... changes of a political character (i.e. affecting the who-gets-what and the locus of power and the allocation of values) are taking place as a result of what is loosely described as the 'information revolution'; or whether, after all, these changes are only technological, and therefore of the same order and moving in the same direction as those that have characterised the last two hundred years.' (p.123)

What appears to be at stake in her curiously persistent interest in the term 'information revolution' is partly the relationship between ideology and technology. A part of Strange seems to want to keep technology out of politics and defend the traditional claim that technology is an apolitical force, which can be used for good or evil depending on who is in control. Changes in technology which are 'only technological' are those which follow from the pursuit of values, so that technological means serve ideological ends. Technology is different to ideology in that it is value-neutral, and thus cannot by itself engender 'changes of a political character':

> 'Structural analysis suggests that technological changes do not necessarily change power structures. They do so only if accompanied by changes in the basic belief systems which underpin or support the political and economic arrangements acceptable to society.' (p.123)

But paradoxically *States And Markets* reveals another side to Strange, who seems to be wondering aloud if technological means have actually become ideological ends. We do not have to look very hard to find a counter-discourse in *States And Markets* that turns the pursuit of technological means into an end in itself.

In chapter two, entitled 'power in the world economy', we are informed that over the past four or five decades we have been living in a 'high technology age'. Our means are elevated to a position in our culture whereby they begin to define the age in

which we live. Technology has become 'high' as opposed to 'low' because modern societies have learnt to esteem its gifts highly as means to power:

> 'the knowledge most sought after for the acquisition of relational power and to reinforce other kinds of structural power (i.e. in security matters, in production and in finance) is technology.' (p.31)

Technology is thus sought after as a means to achieve given values in security, production and finance. However, in a move redolent of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the concept of power has been added to the relationship between ideology and technology. To achieve ends in a high technology age requires technological means of power over others who might have competitive ends (i.e. ideologies) at heart. What is interesting here is that the traditional distinction between ideology and technology is still in place; technology is still sought 'for the acquisition of' ends. Nevertheless, an elementary politics of technology has already started to take shape. Certain new technologies which many deem to be totally innocent of any ideological content are beginning to look quite political:

> 'The advanced technologies of new materials, new products, new systems of changing plants and animals, new systems of collecting, storing and retrieving information - all these open doors to both structural power and relational power.' (p.31)

Technology as a source of domination. On page eleven Strange has criticised those who use the term 'information revolution' yet do not show a clear causal connection between technological change and social change. On page thirty one she makes it quite clear that she thinks this causal connection is power. In chapters three, four and five, Strange intimates how various technologies are put to work as means to power. In chapter three, on security, she makes the obvious but necessary point that technology can be a means of domination through the construction of powerful weaponry (p.46)[30]. In the fourth chapter, on the production structure, Strange makes the point that states and companies need to keep in the 'forefront of certain advanced technologies' in order to 'lower the costs of production and remain competitive in world markets' (pages 65, 76, 78, 81 and 83). Life is much the same in the financial structure: 'all the big banks have been quick to use available technology to improve their competitive position in international foreign exchange and capital markets' (p.129).

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[30] Compelling recent affirmations of this from two very different perspectives can be found in Arquilla & Ronfeldt, *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age,* and James Der Derian, *Virtuous War.*

By identifying the causal connection between ideology and technology as power, Strange has opened a cognitive door to the possibility of a reversal in the relationship between means and ends. Let us see now, was ideology supposed to be a technology or was technology meant to be an ideology? With power playing the role of go-between, Strange is going to find it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the two, simply because one person's technology of domination logically becomes another person's ideology of subjugation. Each new 'advanced technology' that enters the scene will thus come wrapped within the question '*cui bono?*'. Who reaps the benefits and who pays? This is why Strange cannot let go of the term 'information revolution' in spite of the fact that she thinks it is poor theory. 'Information revolution' has become a troublesome sign of aporia hovering over the word technology because 'clear thinking about it' in the guise of 'structural analysis' is threatening to upset her intrinsic value order:

> 'Cui bono? Who gets the benefits and who pays? Who gets the new opportunities to acquire wealth or power, security or the freedom to choose? And who has imposed on them new risks of being denied these things?' (p.117)

Blink and you could miss the subtle change which occurs here in Strange's ruminations about the social impact of the 'information revolution' upon fundamental beliefs about the human condition. In chapter one an intrinsic value order was proposed suggesting we start by thinking about the basic human values that humans seek through social organisation. These were listed as wealth, security, freedom and justice. In chapter six we find that justice has fallen away and been displaced by power. We all want justice but you have to have the power to get it.

Now we can begin to attempt a deeper explanation for the sudden intrusion of the term 'information revolution' on page eleven in Strange's discussion about 'The Conflict of Values and Theories'. Recent developments in technology subtly lead Strange to question her own epistemological beliefs about the relationship between ideology and technology. Her 'basic human values' thus came into conflict with her theory of society. On the one hand the term 'information revolution' was poor social theory because it surrenders human values to determination by technology without any valid 'causal connection'. On the other hand structural analysis leads her to the irresistible conclusion that this was what was actually happening in the world political economy. In Strange's opinion justice appears to be the first casualty of this reversal,

but security, freedom, wealth and justice were all put into the same 'ideology' lifeboat together. The three remaining values have just seen what has happened to justice. They begin to look to each other in fear and trepidation. Which one is next for the chop?

In the final pages of her chapter on the knowledge structure Strange begins to draw conclusions. It is argued there is enough evidence to suggest that competition between states is 'becoming a competition for leadership in the knowledge structure'. So how is this leadership to be attained? Through the achievement of a superior sensitivity to 'value and risk' perhaps? Or possibly by greater awareness of the rules needed to be able to bring about peaceful changes in 'basic belief systems'? Here Strange's previous confidence in the sovereignty of ideology over technology appears to falter slightly:

> 'Today the competition is for a place at the 'leading edge' (as the jargon has it) of advanced technology. This is the means both to military superiority and to economic prosperity, invulnerability and dominance.' (p.133)

Our intrinsic value order is changing fast! We were just getting used to the idea of losing justice. But now security, wealth and freedom have also fallen prey to military superiority, economic prosperity and invulnerability. Strange has come to the conclusion that where the causal connection between ideology and technology is power, the pursuit of technology will become an end in itself and transform the values it was supposed to serve. Security has become military superiority. Wealth has become economic prosperity. Freedom has become invulnerability and dominance. People who resist this inexorable process of modernisation merely risk falling behind in the competition for a place at its 'cutting edge' (as the jargon has it). The ideology lifeboat, being trapped in the davit-like commas surrounding the term 'information revolution', cannot escape the sinking ship. And so it comes to pass that security, wealth, freedom and justice are all lost beneath 'the stormy water' (p.1).

It remains to be found what is so special about the term 'information revolution' that leads Strange to re-evaluate her intrinsic value order so drastically, rather than some other technological development that might perhaps have offered a more respectable historiography. The social revolutions involved in the transitions from wood, to coal, to oil, to nuclear and solar energy conversion, for example, are also technical changes that have attracted a great deal of interest from many historians of various political persuasions, whose findings would appear to be of particular salience

with regard to Strange's special interest in the metaphor of 'power'[31]. Yet in spite of the fact that Strange demonstrates she is well aware of these factors in chapters seven and nine, their technological aspects do not make much impact upon her theory of the knowledge structure[32]. It is only with the term 'information revolution' that she begins to consider the mercantilisation of knowledge, with its attendant implications, as a problem for her epistemology and for her 'basic human values'.

Perhaps one explanation why the term 'information revolution' has taken on special significance for Strange is that it brings the notion of 'technology as means to power' back home to roost in the Academy[33]. The word information is close enough to words like science and knowledge to set alarm bells ringing at the sight of the phrase 'information revolution':

> 'There is a semantic question here which is puzzling but not really very important. Is there a difference between knowledge and information? For many purposes the two terms are interchangeable.' (p.118)

But if a semantic question is puzzling but not really very important then why did we have to ask it in the first place? This is a puzzle in itself if we are scrupulously trying to follow Strange's epistemological advice that good theory is that which seeks to explain a puzzle or a paradox (p.11). And so we turn to our third dialectic...

(1.6) Science and Technology

Some doubt has been expressed as to whether the relationship between ideology and technology is stable in *States And Markets* if we compare its structural theory of knowledge as power with its official epistemology. What does seem to remain consistent about the word technology, however, insofar as it is used in the text, is that it has to do with the means of human agency. There may be some confusion over whether in a 'high technology age' the means become ends in themselves, or have changed human ends beyond recognition. But as far as *States And Markets* is concerned there is

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[31] See for example R.A. Buchanan, *The Power of the Machine: The Impact of Technology from 1700 to the Present.* Buchanan puts energy at the core of his archaeology of technology as power.
[32] For her references to technology in transport see chapter 7, pages 137, 140, 142, 149, 151, 153, 156 and 158. For her references to technology in energy see chapter 9, pages 187, 188, 190, 194, 195, 198, 199, 201, 204 and 205.
[33] See note 2 above.

little doubt that technology has to do with human agency in its use of instruments, tools and skills upon nature or upon other people. Technology is practice.

By contrast, science is an appellation of knowledge which is often held to be autonomous from both ends and means. We have already seen how science is supposed to be different to ideology. But science is also traditionally distinguished from technology, this time by the separation of theory and practice. The purpose of science is to produce theory about the world that corresponds with reality and contributes to human understanding, whereas the aim of technology is the practical application of this theory in correspondence with human needs. The human motivation for science is held to serve something rather enigmatic, often called curiosity, or wonder, whereas the human motivation for technology is to serve something rather more pragmatic which is called interest. As an advertising blurb once put it, technology is 'the appliance of science'[34]. Therefore, if technology may be defined as 'know-how', science may be defined as the 'know-what'. Science is theory.

As we have seen with science and ideology and with ideology and technology, the relationship between science and technology is usually cast as a hierarchical one. As far as science and technology are concerned, science is often thought to be at its best when playing the role of top dog[35]. It is not envisaged as a wholly one-sided relationship. Theory does inform practice and practice does inform theory. Furthermore, in an abstract sense, many scientists do of course dedicate their work to the highest interests of humanity. But in the concrete everyday world of science it is curiosity, not necessity, that is supposed to be the mother of invention[36]. Theory achieves its scientific autonomy from the technological world of ends and means by being driven instead by curiosity. The official line of the scientific community is that if scientists are left to satisfy their own independent curiosity and are doing their job properly, technology is the supplement to science. For example, the scientist feels fortunate when he is doing scientific 'research', free from the immediate obligation to produce applications. He often feels unfortunate if he is reduced to technological 'development'. When lobbying civil servants and politicians about 'science policy', scientists often petition that 'pure' or 'basic' research should not be neglected, because it is the essential

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[34] Quoted by John Street, *Poltics and Technology*, p.8.

[35] See for example the ruminations of Lewis Wolpert, 'Technology is not Science', in *The Unnatural Nature Of Science*, p.25-35.

source of that which is 'applied'. The 'authority/market bargain' struck at the outset of modernity was that if scientists could be left to their own devices and given state licence to satisfy their curiosity, there would be a 'spin-off' for *both* the national *and* the universal human interest. To challenge this authority/market bargain and put technology before science will, the scientist often warns, risk killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

In the play between the two words science and technology there can be found a certain amount of vacillation. There are some, for example, who are so anxious to turn science toward technical applications and make science look useful that in the end they turn the hierarchy on its head, so that science is seen to be a mere supplement to technology[37]. Then there are those who say that scientific curiosity has always operated from within a technological sensorium and always involved technological practice upon nature, so that from an empirical perspective science was always already the supplement of technology anyway[38]. Then there are those who put forward the view that the difference between science and technology is little more than a shield to protect many scientists from having to face up to the material consequences of their theoretical actions[39].

In spite of all this confusion we may observe that as far as the rhetoric is concerned, the hierarchical relationship of science over technology remains dominant. No matter how intimate the relationship between science and technology may become, in the general economy of understanding science is not technology, and is somehow judged to be more meritorious than technology. The acid test is how people prefer to think of themselves. So, for example, if research within the Academy has been commissioned by government, business or industry, or when its intellectual fruits are bought and sold wholesale for exclusive right to their technical application, great pains

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[36] Herbert J. Muller, *The Children of Frankenstein: A Primer on Modern Technology and Human Values*, p.130.

[37] For example, see Kristin Shrader-Frechette, 'Adam Smith and Alma Mater: Technology and the Threat to Academic Freedom', in Paul T. Durbin (Ed), *Europe, America, and Technology: Philosophical Perspectives*, p.175-189.

[38] For example see Don Ihde, *Technology and the Lifeworld.* Also Joseph Rouse, *Knowledge and Power: Toward A Political Philosophy Of Science.*

[39] Stanley Aronowitz, *Science As Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society.* Also J.R. Ravetz, *The Merger of Knowledge with Power: essays in critical science.*

are taken to reassure everybody that scientific integrity has not been compromised in any way whatsoever[40].

Let us now observe the hierarchical tension between science and technology as it works itself into Strange's prose. To find her most favourite assumptions of difference between science and technology we have to return back to pages eleven and twelve of *States And Markets*, where Strange makes her epistemological pledges. Running our fingers down the page we read once more the lines:

> 'By contrast, the common use of the term 'information revolution' does not usually reflect good theory. While it notes rapid technological change it does not postulate a clear and causal connection, supported by logic or evidence, between that technological change and social change.' (p.11)

Now we are told twice here that the term 'information revolution' notes technological change. It does not denote scientific change. Information takes the form of a technology. We have already observed that Strange is making a point about the relationship between ideology and technology. Upon a second reading, however, we can see that she is also affirming a well known and generally accepted distinction between information technology and science. Strange has already described science as theory by which people seek to understand and explain a puzzle or a paradox, whereas the simple accumulation of facts, data or information are mere technical operations which do not in themselves have anything to do with science (p.10-11). Science may assist in the generation of information and information can be used as means to develop scientific theory. But information could just as easily be used as means for some other purpose in business, administration, or war. Therefore, an 'information revolution' would not by itself do anything to 'advance our understanding' or, in other words, promote science.

That is one epistemological distinction Susan Strange makes between science and technology. The second epistemological mark of difference lies further down page eleven in the space between 'explanatory theory' and 'policy prescription'. Strange argues it is a matter of choice whether the theorist decides to stick with explanatory theory or goes on to try to apply this theory to policy-making. In other words, scientific

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[40] Slaughter & Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University*. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*. Peter Jarvis, *Universities and Corporate Universities*. Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace*.

explanatory theory does not feel under any compulsion to get involved with the technical business of policy prescription:

> 'As to prescription, that is a matter of choice. Whether the theorist chooses to proceed from explanatory theory to policy prescription is up to him or her. He or she need not necessarily apply theory to policy-making, since policy-making necessarily involves value judgements and risk assessments that are exogenous to theory and that are better made by practical policy-makers than by irresponsible academic theorists.' (p.11-12)

If we leave the ideological issue of value judgements and risk assessments to one side (as they have already been dealt with in a previous section), notice how science steps away from the burden of technological agency.

To think of Politics, Economics, and International Relations in terms of technological applications may seem odd because social theory is more used to thinking of technology in terms of machine tools, capital goods, industrial processes, or men in white coats. Even so, 'policy prescription' conforms to the definition of technology in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Technical experts also come in grey suits. Policy-making is the practical craft of the political or economic artisan, the technocrat who carries out policy by the systematic application of theory. The scientific theorist, on the other hand, is attracted by a more patrician, contemplative mode of existence. The scientific mission is not to make policies or plan how to bring them about, but to understand and explain, motivated by simple curiosity:

> 'Of course there will always be those who want (or feel they ought) to come up at the end of their analytical work with moral exhortations or with more specific normative prescriptions; and they are perfectly free to do so whether it is more order, more justice, more free trade and efficiency or just more brotherly love that they value and advocate. But there are those like myself who do not always (or even very often) feel any such compulsion but are mostly motivated by unsatisfied curiosity about the endless whys of the international system.' [41]

Strange wishes to distance her science from both ideological ends and technological means through the simple pursuit of curiosity. But in the salad days of Enlightenment the pursuit of curiosity was seen as a political project. So we could argue that what Strange has really done is to add a fifth value to her intrinsic value order of security,

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[41] 'Structures, Values and Risk...' *op cit*, p.210.

wealth, freedom and justice. Strange has taken a solemn oath of allegiance to the value of curiosity as an end in itself.

For Strange then, science is in the strictest and best sense a glorious entertainment, and it is to this sense of unsatisfied curiosity that Strange seeks to appeal in an open address to her students on page nine[42]. She declares *States And Markets* not to be 'a conventional textbook' or a technical manual telling people what they should know and do. To justify this declaration Strange invokes a classic clause hidden away in the small print of the 'authority/market bargain' that Enlightenment once struck with its state patrons:

> 'I believe profoundly that the function of higher education is to open minds, not to close them. The best teachers are not those who create in their own image a crowd of uncritical acolytes and followers, obediently parroting whatever they say or write.' (p.9)

Immanuel Kant would have approved. His most precious heirloom appears to be in safe hands here. Strange is trying to suggest a way to think about the world political economy which encourages us to choose what to think for ourselves. She wants us to develop our own ideas through independent reading, discussion and 'disciplined thinking'[43]. She is making a direct appeal to hunger for emancipation from tutelage, or from the inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. In other words, she has placed a wager upon a human trait called curiosity, the desire to find out for oneself. We call this activity of independent reading, discussion and disciplined thinking 'theory'. Page nine of *States And Markets* may therefore be read as a cordial invitation to indulge in theory, which is (as she quotes) defined by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as: 'a supposition explaining something, especially one based on principles independent of the phenomenon to be explained'.

Strange's critique of much of the literature of contemporary international political economy is that she thinks it not to be supposition explaining things based on principles independent of the phenomenon to be explained. She feels that it has been 'too much dominated by the sheer weight of American academics' whose theory is

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[42] Jacques Barzun, *Science: The Glorious Entertainment*, (quoted in) Herbert J.Muller, *op cit*, p.130.

[43] 'Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another'. Immanuel Kant, 'Essay on Enlightenment', quoted by Mary Midgley in *Science As Salvation*, p.65.

driven less by curiosity than by the technical logistics of the American national interest. 'Scholars who accept this definition of the subject thus become the servants of state bureaucracies, not independent thinkers or critics' (p.13).

It can only be curiosity that drove Professor Strange to write chapter six on the knowledge structure. We can be sure of that. But what everyone is bound to find curious is that her profound belief in the purpose of higher education and research does not appear to cut much ice when it comes to writing about the knowledge structure. Towards the middle of the book, for some reason or other, theory driven by curiosity seems to abdicate its primary place in the order of things to technology driven by interest. Now why on earth does this happen? If one's belief in the value of curiosity is so profound, then surely one ought to be able to show empirical evidence for its existence when it comes to writing about the knowledge structure.

To find empirical evidence of the existence of curiosity in the world political economy, the first place one might expect to find it is in the transition from the traditional to the modern age during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. This is when, as the story goes, curiosity as an end it itself achieved some of its greatest moments of glory. Those were the days when, as legend has it, curiosity as an end in itself really felt like it was on the up, not just down on its uppers. In search of curiosity we therefore turn first to Strange's narrative of the transition from 'Medieval Christendom' to the 'scientific state' on pages 119 to 123.

Sadly, within these pages the news is not good for curiosity. The transition from Christianity to science, we learn, was all about the replacement of one knowledge structure by another in terms of power and of authority:

> 'whereas in the old structure, both the state and the market - the economy - had to some degree acknowledged the Church as master, in the new one it was the state - and beneath the state, the market economy - that were the masters. Science was the servant of both.' (p.121-22)

The authority of scientific reason thus came to rest not upon its commitment to curiosity as an end in itself but upon its ability to serve the interests of the state and its merchants. The Enlightenment challenge to the authority of the Church was useful to loosen the religious constraints upon the 'political behaviour of rulers or the economic behaviour of merchants and traders' (p.121). The founding of the British Royal Society for the Advancement of Science and the French Academie Francaise apparently had

very little to do with the search for explanations independent of the phenomena to be explained and everything to do with the importance of scientific inquiry for advancing the wealth and power of the state (p.121). To the same end, rather than for the purpose of opening minds, the state took over from the Church responsibility for enlarging the education system, sponsoring the development of universities and schools (p.121). A major effect of the 'scientific revolution', apparently, was to consolidate state power over the individual and to increase the disparity of wealth and power between the rich and poor. Meanwhile, scientific research into modern techniques of communication was really all about making a contribution to the development of Western imperialism (p.122).

Having failed to find empirical evidence of curiosity as an end in itself in the transition from medieval Christendom toward the scientific state, let us not despair. Let us turn instead to Strange's depiction of more recent developments in the evolution of the knowledge structure. Intimations of the possibility of a world view that is not bound by the mastery of state and market do begin to appear between pages 124 and 126, but for Strange this appears to be not so much a case of the emancipation of science, more the emancipation from science itself:

> 'At all events, the tide of support for an alternative knowledge structure such as characterised the latter periods of the Church's dominance may be seen today turning against the scientific state. In flower power, Band Aid, organic farming, vegetarianism, acupuncture and alternative medicine, we may detect a common thread often more emotional than rational - questioning the basic beliefs of the dominant knowledge structure, just as the early scientists and religious Protestants questioned the basic beliefs and authority of medieval Christendom.' (p.124)

Without the tutelage of the state or the market, it seems, curiosity often becomes more emotional than rational and puts itself in danger of losing its scientific status.

As we approach the middle of the book, science vacillates over the question of motivation. Strange digresses into a well-researched test case of 20th century relationships between science and technology, the Manhattan Project, where the most prestigious science of them all, the prince of subjects, was used with devastating effect in warfare. Strange presents us with two alternative accounts of this episode in the evolution of the knowledge structure. The first is that the Manhattan Project represents a shift to a more asymmetric power structure where the United States, as an emerging hegemon, could call upon the services of a team of multinational scientists to serve its

aims. The second is that science ultimately remained true to the cosmopolitan value of curiosity as an end in itself throughout the whole affair, initially by recognising the legitimacy of the war against a radically incurious Fascism, then by passing on the results of their research to other states when it looked like they might be misused.

On page 126, Strange notes that some potentially important groups involved in the production of knowledge are questioning the supremacy of the state in their value systems. The scientists:

> 'seem to be developing a kind of secular-ecumenical movement that rates scientific truth and progress above the narrow interests of any one nation.' (p.126)

On the other hand, Strange feels it would be rash to draw any final conclusions about a permanent change in the locus of power derived from the knowledge structure. Because opposition to the nation-state system is itself divided and:

> 'The environmentalists are often as much anti-science as anti-state. The scientists still believe in material progress and technical advance, in the existence of scientific solutions to economic and even political problems. They want to go forward, whereas the organic food enthusiasts, the advocates of natural childbirth, clean air and clean water, alternative medicine and alternative lifestyles want to go back, to reverse and not just to halt scientific progress.' (p.126)

Something rather odd has just happened to our motivation for science. Our epistemology ruled that the purpose of science was to satisfy a cosmopolitan curiosity, not for technical reasons of state policy making or policy prescription. But now we learn that it is about technical progress and advance, and about finding scientific solutions to economic or even political problems. Those who are merely curious about the endless whys of the international system, such as why food is not organic, why childbirth is not natural, or why there is no clean air or water, have suddenly become 'anti-science'[44].

On page 126 then, the study of international political economy has plunged into an abyss of doubt about the legitimation of science itself. Science driven by curiosity appears to have abdicated its primary place in the order of things and has become

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[44] Reasoned arguments for natural childbirth can be found in *Sensitive Midwifery*, by Caroline Flint. Also Sheila Kitzinger, *Giving Birth: how it really feels*. For more scientific arguments for natural childbirth: Michel Odent, *The Scientification of Love*.

instead technics driven by interest. Under such circumstances, Strange reasons, it is unlikely that states will lose structural power to other sources of authority, such as 'some amorphous international network of scientists'. The consequences of the supremacy of technology over science become clear throughout the remaining pages of the chapter. The history of the knowledge structure turns into a catalogue of technical innovations. Knowledge becomes 'information'. People who participate in the knowledge structure become 'knowledge workers'.

Thus we are in a situation where on page nine Strange has put her money on the value of curiosity. But in chapter six she describes a knowledge structure which does not appear to be a healthy environment for its propagation. We arrive at a place in the engine room of knowledge where two loose ends of the Western subject meet, as it were, causing an explosive short circuit. The ship, with one last shuddering lurch, sinks beneath the stormy water. Curiously, in her desert island story Strange has done exactly what she accuses the gloomy environmentalists of wanting to do. She has reversed centuries of western 'material progress and technical advance', and plonked the shipwrecked survivors on an island with organic food, natural childbirth, clean air and water. It looks as if they are going to have to rapidly develop some alternative lifestyles and probably also some form of rudimentary alternative medicine. How on earth are they going to cope?

3: *Tekhne*

(2.1) Desert Island Story

> 'They have no idea where in the wide ocean they are. Water's getting short when, well into the third night adrift, they hear breakers. Miraculously escaping the reef, they land exhausted on a beach, and all fall asleep on the sand, happy to be alive.' *States and Markets* p.1

Marx once remarked that political economists have 'always been fond of Robinson Crusoe stories'[1]. They are not alone. Images of the wreck and the desert island have long held a firm grip upon the western imagination. Now Susan Strange has left us with yet another shipwreck, yet another desert island to add to our textual archipelago. There is a literary term for this genre. After Crusoe, it was called the *Robinsonade*. The distinguishing marks of a *Robinsonade* are as follows.

First comes an apocalyptic break with modernity in the form of a wreck, where all the trappings of western civilization are made to 'sink beneath the stormy water'. Next comes an idyllic encounter with primordial nature as the survivors set out to explore the margins of their desert island paradise. Here they discover a forgotten lifeworld hitherto overlooked by Western reason, hence left uncharted, undisturbed:

> 'In the morning, they explore the shore of their desert island. They find fresh water, coconut palms and fish in the lagoon.' (p.1)

Gradually, a drama begins to unfold about how the survivors manage to rebuild their lives upon the blank slate that is their desert island. Like many other stories that have stood the test of time, this one is fertile soil for the propagation of questions. The desert island is a favourite spot for modernity when it wants to get away from it all and find some time to reflect and take stock. So what would happen to us if we were to be shipwrecked on a desert island? How would we live and what would become of us? What baggage of knowledge from the past would we choose to take with us? What baggage would we most like to leave behind? And what baggage would we probably bring along with us without even being conscious of it?

Strange's tale develops a rather postmodern twist in that it fragments into three parts. Her island is not experienced by its new inhabitants as a rational whole or unified

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[1] Karl Marx, *Capital* (volume 1), translated by Ben Fowkes, p.169.

subject like in *Robinson Crusoe* for example, or *The Swiss Family Robinson.* Instead, her desert island story splits into treblethink. Three different lifeboats land upon the same island separately, so that as far as each group of survivors know they are the only people alive on the island. It comes to pass that three incommensurable societies evolve upon the same island out of the same wreckage of modernity: incommensurable simply in the sense that they originally develop without any knowledge of each other's existence. In the beginning they are not even an anarchical society. They are simply states without relations.

Martin, a ship's officer, assumes command of the group of survivors from the first lifeboat. Exploring the hills of the island behind he finds some alien human footprints. Like his famous forebear Crusoe, this discovery makes a dramatic impression upon Martin. Being a realist, he decides it is prudent to prepare for the worst:

> '"Friends", he says, "we may be in danger. We must cut down some trees and build a stockade. We must fashion some spears, organize a watch and send out some patrols"'. (*States and Markets*, p.1)

Some dissent is expressed at Martin's battle plans by two lovers and a mother. But the three former crew members are so 'used to taking orders from Martin' that his speech carries force within the group, and gradually everybody else also gets used to the idea of doing as they are told.

The second lifeboat consists of a band of young students who, in their three days and nights at sea together, talk endlessly about what they should do if they ever find land. They are idealists. They decide that it would be a good idea to organise a commune:

> 'To each according to their needs, from each according to their ability. Equality in taking decisions; the same rules for everybody'. (*States and Markets,* p.2.)

Things seem to go well at first, but after a few days the problems arrive. First of all, there are the two lovers, Bob and Betty, who don't pull their weight and who keep on wandering off to the woods. Secondly, nobody is prepared to take on the task of building and maintaining a latrine, so the camp starts to get a bit smelly. And then thirdly, there is Joe, who seems to think he has secured some sort of exclusive right to ownership of the means of production. Even so, in spite of all these problems, everyone still seems to think the commune was a good idea.

The third lifeboat is a rather more mixed society with old people, mothers, children and crew. A budding anthropologist would probably choose this group as the most promising subject for his doctoral thesis. They appear to be building a primitive kinship system based around the totem of a bag of old nails:

> 'To begin with everyone will be given an equal share of nails and they can be used to buy or sell fish, coconuts, fruit and personal services.' (*States and Markets* p.2.)

This kinship system has its teething troubles. Fish seem to be held in higher regard than fruit, coconuts and personal services. This is true to such an extent that kinship relations become rather asymmetrical. Odd behaviour, our young anthropologist might ponder, for many of the crew, who are so used to living long periods of life at sea. Still, at least everyone is sheltered, fed and able to manage.

(2.2) Primary power structures and primary state formation

We have seen how Strange's desert island story postulates the possibility of three communities developing autonomously, in complete ignorance of each other. This story happens to be analogous to the way many archaeologists have perceived the emergence of the first four known civilizations[2]. Four primary civilizations emerge out of the rubble of pre-history. One sprang to life in China on the banks of the Yellow River. Another grew upon the Indus in what is currently Pakistan. A third civilization was Mesopotamia, probably the eldest of the four, which germinated out of the silt accumulated by the Tigris and the Euphrates. The fourth civilization to emerge out of the silt was Egypt upon the river Nile. As with Strange's castaways, each of these civilizations are thought to have developed autonomously, in complete ignorance of each other.

The reader of *States And Markets* who finds it hard to credit just how close Strange's castaways are to these events happening so many thousands of years ago might

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[2] Just as there tend to be realist or structuralist accounts of contemporary international relations, prehistorians have developed 'isolationist' or 'diffusionist' paradigms about the origins of civilization. For example, an isolationist position might stress the 'autochthonous origins' of Greek civilization, tending to deny 'oriental' influences, whilst the most extreme diffusionist position would argue that all civilizations sprang from a single source. For the international political and economic provenance of these positions see Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge, CUP, 1989). This case study seeks to use Strange's model to assimilate the best of both traditions, stressing the interplay between internal and external forces.

find it useful to consider how they might survive in practical terms. If Strange's islanders cannot plug themselves back into modernity soon, all three groups face the prospect of a giant leap back in time. The first group start out with nothing except the lifeboat which saved their lives. The second group has a toolbox containing a saw and an axe, and the third group has a bag of nails, all probably made out of steel forged via the Bessemer process, which means they remain children of the industrial revolution for a while at least. But even steel wears out after prolonged use. Joe's toolbox will probably last long enough for the islanders to realise how precious this metal can be, but they are not going to find it easy to muster all the skills and resources necessary to smelt and work it. Unless the *tekhne* of metallurgy can be reproduced Strange's islanders will find themselves falling back into a Neolithic existence. In fact, we can already see the Neolithic beginning to reassert itself upon the very first page of *States And Markets*, where Martin's group resorts to the fashioning of spears. The security structure Martin envisages would appear to be a rather pathetic affair of sticks and stones. Later on in the story there is also evidence of hunting and fishing, the gathering of fruit and nuts, some basic agriculture and a hint of animal husbandry. Such is the structure of everyday life which beckons the first generation of Strange's islanders. Their plight provides us with a fitting allegory for western philosophies of international relations and political economy, because such was the lifestyle of many communities living on the European continent when its Mediteranean fringe first established regular communications with Near Eastern civilization during the Bronze-Age.

Civilization is one of those words which modernity finds hard to pin down[3]. This is largely because of the normative qualities it has acquired since first minted. It was first introduced into the English language during the Renaissance from the Latin root *civis*, meaning citizen, a member of a city[4]. Its early use carries a strong sense of belonging to and identification with large scale communities that have achieved high levels of sophistication, order and co-operation. Perhaps above all it carried a strong sense of value for acheivement in the fields of craftsmanship, art and thought. This positive sense of the word shone brightest during the heyday of the Enlightenment, with the semantic help of its ugly siblings: barbarism and savagery. During the Romantic backlash against many enthusiasms of the Enlightenment, however, this positive sense

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[3] Robert W. Cox, 'Civilizations in World Political Economy', *New Political Economy,* Vol.1, No.2, 1996, p.143.

[4] Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, p.57-60.

of civilization was eclipsed by rather more negative connotations, which might be summed up as a sense of nostalgia for what the civilized have lost, combined with a sense of alienation from what they have gained. We are still haunted by this romantic sense of the word more than we know. Our habit of playing out utopian theories upon imaginary desert islands is one symptom. Latterly the word has become even more complicated, as people are sensitized to the displays of hypocrisy which often surround it. The word's days of innocence are long gone. Consequently, many scholars today find it hard to use the word normatively without an ironic sense of embarrassment about the gangsters who have left their fingerprints upon it.

If we leave the normative properties of the word to one side for the moment, and concentrate instead upon its structural aspects, we could use Strange's work to describe the first civilizations as those human societies where we can see the first identifiable signs of a production structure, a security structure, a financial structure and a knowledge structure. The key ingredient here is complexity[5]. Civilization appears where social organization has become elaborate enough for us to be able to distinguish between four primary sources of structural power. Civilization vanishes beyond the point where it makes heuristic sense to discriminate between them. Beyond this point society achieves that sublime simplicity where it makes more sense to make use of anthropological modes of explanation.

(2.3) Production

Strange's desert island castaways do not appear to be particularly enthused by the *tekhne* of agriculture. Meg, from the first group, thinks it would be quite nice to start a garden, but there is no indication that she receives support for her plans. The second group seems content to gather and fish. The third group does consider whether to grow crops and also encounter a wild goat, but the idea of domestication does not appear to be taken up with any great enthusiasm. This half-heartedness is quite understandable. Agriculture is hard work. Hunter-gathering was the good life. Hobbes has been proved

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[5] Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, p.22-38. Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness In The Breakdown Of The Bicameral Mind*, p.139.

wrong about that one. Anthropologists can still find pockets of wilderness where the last remaining representatives of the hunter-gathering lifestyle live peaceably to a ripe old age, arguably amongst the happiest, healthiest humans alive on our planet[6]. The only problem with the hunter-gathering lifestyle is that it is extensive. The flora and fauna of a desert island simply cannot support a hunter-gathering lifestyle for long. That is why so many islands were left deserted by humans in prehistory in the first place[7]. This is the real scenario for potential conflict between the three groups of castaways. We are told that the third group of castaways give priority to the value of wealth. Do they know what this word means? If we take on board what the biologists tell us about desert island ecosystems our counsel to the castaways must be that they have no time to lose. Without agriculture all three groups will soon discover the meaning of wealth in absolute terms.

The prevailing theory of the neolithic revolution is that it was a response to the desert island problem writ large. It took many millennia and many mammal extinctions before population pressure eventually forced humans to consider the question of wealth for the first time. One answer to this problem was conflict; violence to obtain control over dwindling resources. The second answer was to persuade nature to become more productive. Some of the first experiments with agriculture are thought to have been pioneered in the foothills of the mountain ranges of the fertile crescent, from about 10,000 BC, where there was a wide belt of sufficient rainfall for 'dry-farming', but where communities could fall back upon hunter-gathering when the crops failed[8]. As the wild grasses and game became scarce people began to learn to reproduce them artificially to supplement their diet. The acquisition of knowledge about agriculture was a slow business, a process of trial and error, but after 6000 BC the harvests, flocks and herds had become reliable enough for some communities to try opening up new areas for cultivation.

One such area was southern Mesopotamia. The first settlers in these waterlands would have been hunters and gatherers. Fish, game and water buffalo could be found along the rivers and lagoons together with fruit from trees such as the date palm, but there was not enough rain there for dry farming. We do not know precisely how it happened, but the practice of agriculture migrated from the hills to the meandering streams of the alluvial floodplains. It had been realised that the gentle gradient could be

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[6] Jeremy Rifkin, *Entropy: A New World View*, p.73-75.
[7] Clive Gamble, *Timewalkers: The Prehistory of Global Colonization*, p.233-240.

used to dig transverse trenches to divert water in order to compensate for the lack of rainfall[9]. The use of the plough now became useful for breaking up the heavier sod. Once the idea of irrigation had taken hold the fertility of the alluvium produced yields far in excess of those harvested in the hills. The increased yields coupled with the abundance of fish, game and fruit had two consequences. Firstly, the area of land needed to feed a given community was reduced, which meant that settlements could huddle closer together and develop structured relationships with each other more easily[10]. Secondly, wealth in the form of large agricultural surpluses could be consistently produced and stored in communal granaries[11].

Taken together these two developments worked to sponsor a multiplication in the division of labour. Favourably placed villages in Mesopotamia became the nuclei around which specialised functions could cluster, providing services to surrounding villages. These nuclei became centres for what Gordon Childe once called an 'urban revolution'[12]. Since Childe's day it has become conventional to qualify both the heavy emphasis upon 'river valley' cultures and his use of the word 'revolution'. We now know that towns existed at Catal Huyuk and Jericho for example, from as early as 7000 BC. Excavations in the future will probably uncover many other impressive settlements contemporary with these outside the river valley areas. Furthermore, it has become apparent that neolithic villages were capable of supporting more craft specialisation than had previously been thought[13]. Nevertheless, the old theory that the density of settlement furnished by the Mesopotamian alluvium sponsored unprecedented changes in human organization and in the organization of human knowledge is one of the few to have withstood the many floods of revisionism which have swept across archaeological thought in recent decades. During the fourth millennium BC a complex settlement structure developed in southern Mesopotamia, forming a hierarchy of two, three and then four tiers. At the apex of this hierarchy stood the prototypes of the first cities, absorbing the agricultural surplus from the second, third and fourth tiers of settlement. The city used the surplus to release some of its population from lives tied to the soil. Thus released from the black earth, many of these urbanites were able to concentrate their labour power upon the further development of specialised crafts. This settlement

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[8] H.J. Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East*, chapters 2 & 3.
[9] Moorey, *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries*, p.4.
[10] *Ibid*, p.43.
[11] Gordon Childe, *What Happened In History*, p.97-100.
[12] *Ibid.*

pattern of core and periphery enabled a production structure to develop that a simple village economy could not have sustained.

(2.4) Finance

As the surpluses accumulated in the cities of Mesopotamia it became necessary to build financial structures, or systems of credit whereby the agricultural wealth could be collected, stored and re-distributed. The first distinct financial structures pioneered by the Sumerians were based around the god and the temple. The genesis of the city-gods goes something like this:

> 'Now one important side of the new urban life was a process of division and differentiation that took place within the human personality itself. When a villager came to the city, he ceased to be a man among men; he became a specialist among specialists... he left part of himself behind. Under the new regime, it might take twenty different kinds of craftsmen and vocational specialists to make a single man... To offset this, the city created a sort of super-personality, visible in the city's god or ruler, who brought all the parts together.'[14]

This super-personality had to be internalized by all of its individual parts in order to help determine, motivate and regulate their actions. There is a psychological theory that the first gods of civilization were sown into the right hemisphere of the brain, from whence voices grew with the authority to inform their subjects how best to cooperate and solve problems associated with the unpredictability of social complexity[15]. The sacred task of the temple was to promote the voice of its god within the human spirit and to act as a centre for the collection and redistribution of the economic surplus.

The temple was manned by a new type of human being, the priest. The priest had to promote the voice of god and collect, store and redistribute the surplus. The priest was new in that for him the creation and reproduction of the city-gods had to become a reflective act[16]. The priest literally had to make, preserve and present the

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[13] Moorey, *ibid*, p.3.

[14] Lewis Mumford, 'University City', in *City Invincible: A Symposium On Urbanization And Cultural Development In The Ancient Near East*, Edited by Kraeling & Adams, p.10.

[15] Julian Jaynes, *The Origins of Consciousness In The Breakdown Of The Bicameral Mind.*

[16] The word 'conscious' is used here to refer to the human condition of purposive agency as suggested by: Louise Amoore, Richard Dodgson, Randall D. Germain, Barry K. Gills, Paul

icons and idols through which the city god could inculcate her voice into the heads of her people. This meant that the priest was intimate with his god in a way that other members of his civilization were not. Somewhere here, probably, lies the origin of consciousness[17].

At some level, if only to carry out the specialized task civilization had allotted him competently, the priest must have been aware that god was the product of man[18]. At another level, if only to be more convincing to others about the authenticity and authority of god, the priest had to hear the voice of god and obey just as if he were any other member of his civilization[19]. This doubling required the invention of an analog self that could do or be one thing on the inside and another on the outside[20]. The priest could thus become the faithful servant of god, but simultaneously conceal the thaumaturgical stage magic behind which he mediated the prayers of his city in the divination of god's word and its dissemination through ritual[21]:

> 'The gods could not be known, their workings were inscrutable, and man could only propitiate. The temple supplied that need, and the high priest became mediator between man and god. Man met these obligations through offerings and the payment of tribute to the temple, so that, in the course of time, the temples accumulated considerable wealth, controlled by what became a corporation of priests.'[22]

As long as man met his obligations to god by the payment of tribute to the temple, god would meet his obligations to man when the crops failed, by using his good offices to redistribute the surplus. In time, the financial functions of the temple became ever more complex. It made sense for god to also set aside some of the surplus for investment in public goods, such as a new granary, dyke, canal, etc. God thereby reinforced the authority of his voice within the minds of her populace and found that even more tribute

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Langley and Iain Watson, 2000, 'Paths to a historicized international political economy', *Review of International Political Economy*, vol.7, no.1, p.56-8.

[17] My narrative slightly modifies Julian Jaynes' hypothesis in that it assumes that the rise and fall of the bicameral mind and the evolution of consciousness would have to have been combined but unequal developments, thus giving his psychological theory a political and economic angle.

[18] Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, p.28-34.

[19] Paul Ekman, 'Self-Deception and Detection of Misinformation', in J.S. Lockard & D.L. Paulhus (eds), *Self-Deception: An Adaptive Mechanism?*

[20] Julian Jaynes, *op cit*, p.219-20.

[21] Strange's model has the advantage of being able to assimilate both the 'integrationist' and the 'conflict' theories of state origins. For a discussion of these see Jonathan Haas, *The Evolution of the Prehistoric State*, chapter 2 & 3. Also Cohen & Service (eds), *Origins Of The State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, Chapters 1 & 2.

[22] James Bowen, *A History of Western Education*, Volume One, p.6.

would thereby flow back into his pots. Some, like Enki for example, then set aside some of the surplus to invest in the new arts and crafts that were prepared to huddle around the temples, which brought even more tribute back in return as a miraculous multiplier sprang into effect[23]. The demand for materials and manufactures from afar then tempted the temple to sponsor the creation of the merchant, who would eventually learn to trade on his own account, but who would always return to the temple to seal bargains, pay taxes and deposit his profits for safe keeping under the regulation of the voice of god. Every once in a while god took a little from the till just to spend on himself. The priesthood found that the authority of god's word depended upon him having a head office which inspired awe. In a way, god was the first banker[24].

(2.5) Security

At a very early stage in the development of civilization though, its gods began to summon up and develop a capacity for organized violence. This wrath from the gods was partly a response to the development of inequality. Scholars are agreed that a marked increase in the production and accumulation of wealth brought about a corresponding increase in the complexity of social conflict in Mesopotamia, both internal and external. Given the paucity of evidence the scholars are divided, however, on the extent to which it is feasible to construct a narrative about how this increase in complexity manifested itself. When the experts disagree, we may either pass over in silence or select from a variety of competitive plausibilities.

Extrapolating from early epic literature and from anthropological observations of village based cultures, Thorklid Jacobsen once proposed that during the early Ubaid phase of Mesopotamian settlement conflicts were simple enough to have been dealt with by village assemblies, made up of women and men and possibly presided over by

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[23] Enki was the water god of Eridu in Southern Mesopotamia. Eridu was, according to Babylonian legend, the first city to be created. Enki 'was renowned for his wisdom and learning, his patronage of the arts and crafts, and his power over the sweet waters that flow beneath the earth.' Max Mallowan, 'The Development Of Cities From Al-'Ubaid To The End Of Uruk 5', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume 1 p.330.

[24] See Morris Silver, 'Gods as Inputs and Outputs of the Ancient Economy', in *Economic Structures of the Ancient Near East.*

elders[25]. Naturally these elders were often also priests who had access to the appropriate rituals by which their ancestors had learnt to orchestrate model responses. Internal feuds, for example, would be thrashed out in public before the assembled village, which could then perform a ritualized expression of its vested interest to put communal pressure upon the antagonists to settle. Wrongs would be put right by the reparation or punishment deemed appropriate by the whole community. The assembly would also serve as a forum for the regulation of communal obligations. Here failures to meet social obligations could be exposed and corrected. When it came to the problem of external conflict, the assembly would attempt to deal with it by the ritual appointment of a temporary officer or king, with instructions to parley or to lead in attack or defence. These simple means of communicative mediation worked well enough to begin with, but when civilized life became more complex such assemblies ran up against a number of problems.

One set of problems were simply practical. As the populations in the cities grew, the assemblies became larger and more difficult to manage. The work the assembly had to get through increased, whilst the size of its meetings meant that its capacity to do it decreased. The issues the assemblies had to deal with also became more complex, which meant that many more meetings had a propensity to go on forever without coming to any conclusion. All this meant that the number of meetings called had a propensity to multiply. Meanwhile, the unit area of each community had become more extensive, so people had to walk further to attend the increasing number of meetings of longer duration[26]. The increase in the size of population also led to a steady erosion of kinship. Whereas before many had known each other through the daily intimacy of communal life, now increasing numbers of people found they were becoming strangers to one another. Anonymity made life less commensurable, made it harder for the multiplying numbers of people to arrive at decisions within assemblies that were becoming increasingly fractious and impatient. In the interests of his own subjects, God eventually decided to intervene.

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[25] Thorklid Jacobsen, 'Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia', in W.L. Morgan (Ed), *Towards the Image of Tammuz*, p.157-70. See also: Henri Frankfort, 'The Last Predynastic Period In Babylonia', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume 1, Part 2, p.92.

[26] Thorklid Jacobsen, 'Political Institutions, Literature, And Religion: Discussion introduced by Thorklid Jacobsen', in Kraeling & Adams, *City Invincible*, p.65-66.

Via a series of improvised solutions many assemblies started to devolve some of their powers on a temporary basis, and gradually these temporary solutions became more permanent and formalised. One of the first powers to be devolved seems to have been the power to make judgements over internal disputes and feuds. It made sense to delegate the work that was becoming irrelevant to the majority of the population who neither knew nor cared about the individuals embroiled in the petty disputes of another parish. The assemblies would appoint priesthood magistrates to arbitrate between conflicting parties and consider alleged wrongs or crimes.

Another power that was devolved quite early on can be plausibly linked to another set of problems to do with the evolution of social stratification. The steady accumulation of the agricultural surplus was a blessing, but some people found that they were accumulating much less of this blessing than others. Given that the priest would always be the first to be in on the secret that god seemed to need man as much as man needed god, it is perhaps understandable that the priesthood was often a major beneficiary of this process.

Growing inequalities inevitably led to forms of alienation that the theocratic assemblies had not had to deal with before. Spiritual reflections about inequality may well have been a factor that can explain why some people proved to be better at paying tribute to the temple than others. Why listen to and pay tribute to a fertility god who is proving to be more fertile for someone else? Many early gods appear to have been taken by surprise at the novelty of inequality. This is evident in an impertinent letter written by Apiladad to his personal deity, explaining his recent spell of absence from the shrine:

> 'To the god my father I speak; thus says Apiladad, thy servant; 'why have you neglected me so?' Who is going to give you one who can take my place? Write to the god Marduk, who is fond of you, that he may break my bondage; then I shall see your face and kiss your feet. Consider also my family, grownups and little ones; have mercy on me for their sake, and let your help reach me.' [27]

Apiladad is so intimate with the voice of his god that he thinks he is perfectly entitled to ask him: '*cui bono?*'. He expects justice and is not afraid to threaten the withdrawal of his affection when it is not forthcoming. Perhaps his poor fortune is merely due to some divine administrative oversight? If so the deity is instructed to put this right without

delay. The Mesopotamian record is full of letters like these[28]. It seems that the authority of god's voice had limits beyond which obedience in the form of tribute failed to meet temple targets regularly enough. Therefore, god persuaded his assembly to order their priests to invest some of the surplus in the construction of a coercive apparatus to help encourage people to meet their social obligations more faithfully:

> 'And now the priest lands on the embankment and will register the harvest. The porters carry sticks, the police palm ribs. They say: "Give grain!" "There is none here." He is stretched out and beaten; he is bound and thrown into the canal. His wife is bound in his presence, his children are put in fetters.'[29]

To begin with both the judicial and coercive powers were simply executive arms of temple administration. Whenever an assembly decided to devolve these powers, the temple was the civil service in place to provide the necessary resources in terms of material and authoritative personnel. It was only when a third set of problems to do with the management of external conflict prompted the parallel development of a defensive apparatus that we can begin to see the crystallization of a security structure as an independent source of power in its own right.

Up until the onset of the Uruk phase of Sumerian civilization, say about 4000 BC, the demands of external conflict were generally simple enough to be dealt with on an ad hoc basis. As has already been noted, when trouble was brewing with another town the theocracy would appoint a temporary king, or *lugal* (literally 'big man'), to conduct diplomacy or lead in battle. This practice has also been observed by anthropologists in tribal areas all over the world[30]. Towards the close of the fourth millennium however, external security requirements within Sumer gradually became more complex as various towns waxed in size and wealth. One consequence of this was that the temporary kings began to grow in status and influence within their own communities. Without the benefit of much in the way of written records the archaeologists are reduced to a human needs based approach to the study of inter-

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[27] Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen & Irwin, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay On Speculative Thought In The Ancient Near East*, p.205.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] This is a bit of a cheat because the quote is from Egypt (see 'The Schoolboy Texts' translation by Joseph Kaster, *The Wisdom Of Ancient Egypt*, p.195.). But it is a viable cheat because the raw details of tax coercion in the two lands are generally thought to have been pretty similar.

communal conflict in prehistory, and when they survey the evidence in Mesopotamia two major candidates stand out as likely factors making for an increase in the complexity of inter-communal conflict. One candidate is the importance of trade, which is a subject that shall be dealt with in a following section. The second candidate is the development of scarcity in water and pasture.

According to Nissan, in its early Ubaid phase of settlement the 'land between the two rivers' had been the prototypal 'Garden of Eden'[31]. The early settlers found an abundance of fresh water, date palms, and fish in the lagoons. Large areas of rich land were suitable for cultivation at a time when there was plenty of water around in a profusion of small creeks and natural waterways. Artificial irrigation could be obtained without any great effort because almost every arable plot of land had easy and direct access to it. Meanwhile, away from the water, there were semi-arid steppes, ideal for the seasonal pasture of sheep and goats. During the fourth millennium, however, fate intervened. Changes in the geology and climate of the region caused the water table to sink. Much of the semi-arid zone gradually turned into desert. Meanwhile, many of the smaller waterways on the floodplain dried up. Consequently, more concerted social effort was required to make the water go to where it was needed.

The Mesopotamians heroically accepted their sisyphean fate, progressively improving their water management skills and building an unprecedented network of canals, dams and reservoirs. Each town and its surrounding area functioned as an irrigated island separated from other such islands by open stretches of semi-desert and swamp[32]. But given the density of settlement that had been achieved during the golden age, these islands sometimes overlapped. This meant that the struggle to control water flows and regulate the remaining pastureland often involved struggles with the gods of other towns. As the water receded, power in the production structure tended to shift towards the settlements that had access to the remaining water channels. Where disputes over rival claims to water supplies and pasture could not be resolved by synoecism, they were often settled by violence.

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[30] Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*, p.150. The reference she cites is: Jacobsen, Thorklid. 1960. "Discussion." Pp.62-70 in *City Invincible*, edited by Carl H. Kraeling and Robert M. Adams.

[31] See Nissan, *op cit*: pp.59-60; 69; 95; 129-134; 142-143.

[32] Bernard Knapp, *The History and Culture of Ancient Western Asia and Egypt*, p.45.

It was this increase in the intensity of conflict that led to the rise of the institution of permanent kingship in Mesopotamia. As Strange has argued, security has a high value in times of great peril. During increasingly prolonged periods of conflict the more charismatic generals found themselves in a position to exploit their ability to provide this value. It was a dangerous job, but it had perks for which a man could acquire a habit. When a community sensed the march of an enemy approaching it made sense for the theocracy to cut down on debate and bend its ear to the decisive voice of the *lugal*. It made sense too for the priests to secede to the *lugal* certain powers over the resources of the temple. He was in the right position to put them to maximum strategic use. The *lugal* was therefore appointed as the tenant of god's dominium. Likewise, a god terrified of external violence was not likely to quibble about the assumption of a monopoly by his king over the forces of internal coercion. This was a job for which he was eminently well qualified and he may well have been recruited from the ranks of this apparatus anyway. Similarly, in times of war precious time wasted divining god's word over an internal dispute is bound to have been considered a luxury. All judicial casework was handed over to the *lugal* or his lieutenants for summary justice in god's name.

Naturally, whenever it looked like an era of peace was about to break out the *lugal* could claim that he would be neglecting his duty not to counsel prudence when it came to the delicate business of handing back the powers to which he had become accustomed. How could god ever know that the time of mortal danger of his people had truly passed? Having accumulated considerable prestige within the theocratic community during his military campaign, any arguments to the effect that the *lugal* should retain many of his powers in peacetime would not have been easy to counter. And when it came down to the nitty-gritty, who was going to argue the toss with the 'big man' who had become chief soldier, speaker, priest, policeman, judge and bailiff? There appears to be little or no philological evidence of heresy at this stage in the formation of the human spirit.

Some powers were clawed back by elements within the Sumerian community. The rich landowners who controlled a significant portion of the means of agricultural production were a faction to reckon with. So were the priests, who still controlled a major part of the spiritual realm, banked the surplus, and managed the input and output of credit. But both of these factions were people with whom the *lugal* could bargain in private negotiations. The rich landowners were ready to do a deal over land in exchange

for security against external danger plus indemnity against internal sabotage from disaffected small-holders. The priests were happy to concede a stake in the determination of god's will, plus a stake in the keeping of his accounts: in exchange for leaving temple affairs alone; plus security against external danger; plus indemnity against the internal vandalism of the alienated poor[33].

In the short term these deals were easy enough to stitch together. In the longer term they were more unstable due to the existential problem of the ageing process, as is highlighted by the *Epic of Gilgamesh*[34]. Reading this text for the first time, it is hard not to jump to the conclusion that the priests are trying to josh their *lugal* with serious intent. 'Jolly well, Mr would-be Gilgamesh', the priests seem to be saying, 'you may be the "big-man" now. But do not forget that you are mortal. Do not forget that we are the ones who balance the books at the end of your day. And do not forget that the temple is the institution that has to supervise the hereditary principle that you are trying to foist upon the populace'. Trouble-free successions have always been a notoriously difficult thing to engineer, but in Early Dynastic Sumer the practice was only just being pioneered. The office of the *lugal* would thus frequently decompose along with the corpse until a new recruit emerged out of fresh bout of inter-city conflict. With the progressive dessication of the environment, however, these fresh bouts of inter-city conflict became increasingly frequent.

The development of the Sumerian security structure was combined but uneven. The 'Uruk phase', for example, is so called because for an uncertain period, let us say from 4000 to 3100 BC, the town of Uruk was by far the most precocious urban development and appears to have enjoyed a degree of hegemony over Mesopotamia and beyond. We have reason to suspect that this hegemony came complete with coercive teeth. Mythologies of Uruk have Gilgamesh building the first city walls around this town - perhaps the first true *polis*. It was during this period that the word *lugal* first took on connotations of authority over other cities for the purpose of determining the boundaries of neighbour-god's estates - or in secular terms to settle frontier disputes

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[33] Some scholars are less prepared to accept there was a dialectic between temple and palace in Mesopotamia than others. Compare: Knapp, *op cit*, p.69-72; with Amelie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*, p.34.

[34] N.K. Sandars, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London, Penguin, 1960).

between cities[35]. The Jemdet Nasr period which followed, let us say from 3100 to 2900 BC, is thought to have been a phase of urban diffusion during which many sibling towns began to flourish under the protective umbrella of Uruk. It was perhaps during this period that the titles *en* and *ensi* took on the designation of leaders of independent city states, whilst being in some way deferential to the *lugal*. The Early Dynastic Period I to III, let us say from 2900 to 2350 BC, is generally characterized as an age of rival city states. By this time the hegemony of Uruk had crumbled and it is just one powerful city state amongst many. In this period the word *lugal* often appears to slip its connotations of arbitration between cities, but deepens its connotations of soveriegnty within cities, displacing other appellations of urban authority such as *en* and *ensi* like cuckoos in the nest[36].

To sum up, the security structure that emerged in Sumer was made up of a community of independent city-god states, each of these cities having a *lugal* who offered a security package of judicial, coercive and defensive functions brought together under the rubric of the palace. Though these states were fiercely independent, together they did form a community with a common set of customs and conventions. The Sumerians acheived this with the innovation of the pantheon, the temple in the city of Nippur dedicated to all the city-gods of Mesopotamia[37]. This city was a crucial nexus, a kind of fusion between Rome and Geneva of the inter war years. In Sumerian mythology Nippur was the seat of assembly for all the city gods under the chairmanship of Enlil:

> 'the gods who owned and ruled the various city-states were bound together in a higher unity, the assembly of the gods, which possessed executive organs for exerting outward pressure as well as for enforcing law and order internally'[38]

As god of Nippur and in his capacity as chairman of the divine assembly, Enlil was custodian of the Sumerian inter-city world order; but it was an anarchical world order, regulating principles and norms in which all gods had a common interest. By leaving aside a seat of worship for every city-god in the league, Nippur managed to cultivate an air of impartiality which enabled it to rise above intercity strife. Having released itself

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[35] C.J. Gadd, 'The Cities of Babylonia', *The Cambridge Ancient History* (volume 1 part II), p.103-4.

[36] The chronology here is conventional. However, my typology of terms would probably be too neat for many scholars. See Knapp, *op cit*, p.71.

[37] Roaf, *op cit*, p.81. H. Frankfort, H.A. Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen and Irwin, *op cit*, p.193-5. Knapp, *op cit*, p.69-70.

from the fray Nippur discovered an niche within which it could prosper, as a neutral site to meet for the purpose of mediation, negotiation and settlement:

> 'We see, already at the dawn of history, that a boundary dispute between the neighbouring city-states Lagash and Umma was viewed as a dispute between two divine landowners, Ningirsu, the god of Lagash, and Shara, the god of Umma. As such it could be taken to court and adjudicated by Enlil in Nippur. Enlil implemented his decision through the ruler who was then his human representative, Mesilim, king of Kish. Mesilim measured the disputed territory and marked the boundary line which Enlil had designated.'[39]

As with every such nexus in any particularist world order, Enlil of Nippur was thoroughly pragmatic and shows no sign of ever getting carried away about what he could achieve. Whenever the shifting sands of Sumerian political economy drifted toward hegemony, Nippur's instinct for self-preservation saw to it that the ministrations of its god did not step on the hegemon's toes: 'any conqueror, if he was successful, was recognized as the agent of Enlil'[40]. And when he had to, Enlil also knew how to turn a deaf ear. From four and a half thousand years ago, when Ningal the goddess of Ur goes to Nippur to make an impassioned plea for her besieged city, her pathos still has the power to momentarily sieze the breath from the modern scholar of international studies:

> 'Then verily, to the assembly, where the crowd had not yet risen, while the Anunnaki, binding themselves (to uphold the decision), were still seated, I dragged my feet and stretched out my arms. In truth, I shed my tears in front of Anu. In truth, myself I mourned in front of Enlil: "May not my city be destroyed!" I said indeed to them. "And may its people not be killed!" I said indeed to them. But Anu never bent toward those words, and Enlil never with an, "It is pleasing, let it be," did soothe my heart. Behold, they gave instruction that Ur could be destroyed... as its destiny decreed that its inhabitants be killed.'[41]

Nippur was also a place for the city-gods of Sumer to discuss foreign policy beyond Mesopotamia. From the Late Uruk to the Early Dynastic I, the agenda would have been dominated by the desire for joint ventures to establish trading links abroad. As well as being chairman of the divine inter-city assembly, Enlil was 'trader of the wide world'[42]. From the Early Dynastic II discussions probably drifted more toward common threats to security as the Sumerian age drew to a close. Because of its neutral political status the

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[38] H. Frankfort, H.A. Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen and Irwin, *op cit*, p.194.
[39] *Ibid*, p.195. See also Kuhrt, *op cit*, p.41-43.
[40] H. Frankfort, H.A. Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen and Irwin, *op cit*.
[41] *Ibid*, p.197.

relative peace which Nippur enjoyed meant that it was also a safe haven for inter-city finance.

Scholars have speculated on why particularism was such a characteristic feature of Sumerian civilization. One explanation commonly offered is the periodic floods that were characteristic of the region, and which were liable to change the main course of the two rivers at a stroke. This appears to be what finally did for the hegemony of Uruk during the Early Dynastic I period[43]. Just as a city had managed to establish a stable hegemony, a catastrophic flood could change the main course of its river overnight. Its network of waterworks and thus its attendant alliances with suppliant villages would be rendered obsolete. City-gods favoured by the new course of the river would vie with each other to step into the breach and a new struggle for hegemony would ensue; before the next deluge, whereupon the cycle would repeat itself[44].

A second possible explanation for Sumerian particularism is the relative security of its people vis a vis the outside world by virtue of their position as 'first comers'. Being members of a primary civilization without peer, they got used to the idea of having a competitive advantage over the less complex social forms which surrounded them. Each urban formation lying along the Euphrates and the Tigris was thus, as a seminal text has put it, a *city invincible* as far as the outside world was concerned[45]. The lack of insecurity with regard to the outside world meant that there was precious little incentive for unification. This world order was changing by the middle of the Early Dynastic III period, but the Sumerians could not find the time to look up and realise this until it was too late. By then the city-gods of Sumer had become locked into the habit of putting their internal struggles over water and pasture at the top of the security agenda.

(2.6) Knowledge

The agricultural surplus, managed by the temple and secured by the palace, enabled the concomitant development of a distinct knowledge structure. As has been noted, some of the surplus was siphoned off toward the cities to finance specialization in the division of labour. In these cities craftsmen were able to concentrate their efforts

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[42] Knapp, *op cit.*
[43] Nissen, *op cit*, p.131.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] Kraeling & Adams, *op cit.*

on a particular skill and thus achieve levels of excellence and innovation that had not been possible beforehand. Many of the crafts were developed from skills common to village communities right across the Near East. These were augmented by skills pioneered by journeymen who already practised a limited degree of specialization by travelling from village to village along the fertile crescent in search of trade. The wealth of Sumer leached many of these journeymen down into the cities where there was enough work to persuade them to take up permanent residence. In this way knowledge became structured in the sense that it became concentrated into the hands of the elites who controlled the temples and palaces.

The division of labour also brought about the structuration of knowledge in another sense. The skills being developed in the cities were no longer reproduced collectively by society as a whole and held in common as before, because of the opportunity costs that were beginning to evolve in terms of teaching and learning. The villagers of the late Neolithic had already recognised this when they sponsored the development of specialized journeymen, but with the coming of the city the structuration of knowledge became far more radical. It became unfeasible to communicate an increasingly sophisticated set of skills to all members of a given community. The only way to reproduce the hard earned skills down the generations was by a long process of exclusive association between the apprentice and the craftsman. The opportunity cost of devoting a life to learning the skill of the carpenter, for example, meant the loss of opportunity to learn the skill of the potter. It ceased to be viable to be a Jack or Jane of all trades. In order to benefit from the development of the new skills the Mesopotamian gods thus made a faustian bargain with civilization. A dialectic between knowledge and ignorance came into play whereby certain people had to accept that they were becoming dependant upon others for a multiplicity of skills that would forever remain mysterious. This then, was a second form of enclosure. Knowledge became a source of structural power in the sense that it became something which could be possessed by an individual, family or guild, and ceased to be part of the knowledge held in common by the community as a whole. The first civilization thus saw the debut performance of the person whom the Greeks would later call the *tekhnikos*, the possessor of a particular *tekhne*, meaning an art, skill or craft[46].

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[46] J.O. Urmson, *The Greek Philosophical Vocabulary*, p.162.

So far we have talked about *tekhne* in abstract terms. Both the strength and weakness of all abstraction, of course, is that it simplifies. It helps us to glean a broad overview, but can eventually become an obstruction to understanding unless balanced with a strategic approach to detail. *Tekhne* may be considered as a whole in order to comprehend many of the things that each of the specialized crafts had in common, but it also had heterogeneous qualities that can only be fully appreciated by a sectoral approach[47]. Given that there is not enough time or space to cover every sector even for a relatively simple civilization such as Sumer, we have to select in the hope that we can dredge up a representative sample. Every single one of the specialized arts being sponsored by the surplus in the Mesopotamian delta made important contributions to the development of early civilization, but here we shall single out a mere three sectoral examples for attention: pottery, metallurgy and writing.

Archaeologists have good reason to be particularly grateful for the *tekhne* of the ancient potter. Compared with the skills of many of his contemporaries his work has proved to be relatively durable. Much of what we know of prehistory has been gleaned by meticulously piecing together the broken fragments of his work. In fact, archaeologists have built whole chronologies out of the shards of pottery which have been recovered. Pottery also lends itself to chronologies because clay was a relatively democratic material, being widely distributed in the alluvial silt along the banks of most waterways. Provided it is not a volcanic island, Strange's castaways ought to be able to find the stuff and get some 'hands-on' experience without too much difficulty. The ubiquity of clay made it a precocious medium for human innovation and the subsequent dissemination of that innovation. Today we tend to think of pottery mainly in terms of ornament or as utensils for eating and drinking, but in ancient times pottery had a more universal significance. Not only was it used to make tools and weaponry such as clay sickles and sling bullets, but was also used in the manufacture of containers for storage, manipulation and transport. Pandora's box, if we reinscribe the mythology of ancient Greece, was actually a potter's jar[48].

Like many of the early crafts such as basket making and spinning, pottery started out as a household skill, probably pioneered in villages during the neolithic by

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[47] Roger Tooze, 'Sectoral Analysis and the International Political Economy', in *Perspectives On Political Economy: Alternatives to the Economics of Depression*, edited by R.J. Barry Jones, p.231-240.

[48] M.Grant & Hazel, *Who's Who In Classical Mythology*, p.264.

women[49]. Clay had already become a familiar raw material by the end of the eighth millennium through the manufacture of bricks for construction: also figurines, tokens, bins and basket linings[50]. During the seventh millennium some communities began to experiment further with this material, using slabs of clay to make the first pots, which were then baked in the sun. Major breakthoughs in the use of hearths and kilns for controlled firing were being made by the second half of the seventh millennium, dramatically improving the utility of the finished goods. At this stage potting was still a household seasonal craft and agricultural labour and pottery manufacture complemented each other in the community's annual life-cycle, but by the sixth millennium archaeological analysis begins to detect the first signs of production for exchange, a tell-tale indicator of incipient specialization. Moorey carefully defines this as a shift from 'household production' to 'household industry': where certain members of a village produce more than is required locally and where other villages choose to acquire pottery of finer quality than can be made at home. The finer wares were distinguished by little tricks of the trade learnt through trial and error, such as improving the working properties of the clay by using grit rather than fibre as temper, or by allowing the clay mixture to age in a sheltered place for a couple of weeks to allow the fine particles to wet through and thus maximise plasticity. Another development which lent extra prestige to the products of some villages was the use of slips, ochres, oxides and other mineral mixtures which, when painted onto the pottery surface, would combine to form permanent layers of colour when heated and also help to make the product less poros.

We have seen then that the basic fundamentals of pottery manufacture were well established by the end of the early neolithic, but when settlement in Mesopotamia began to condense into towns toward the close of the fifth millennium there is evidence to suggest that the evolution of specialization in ceramics gathered pace. Some potters were now turning over enough work to find it worthwhile to introduce the tournette, consisting of a wheel balanced upon a stone pivot whereby the clay object could be slowly turned. Many potters also now began to use 'trademarks': either to distinguish their work from wares made by others with whom they fired jointly; to signify some form of collective authorship; or to identify the particular customer for whom the given artefacts were intended. Higher temperatures were often now being employed in the process of firing, evidence which is consonant with archaeological claims that many

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[49] Boulding, *op cit*, p.101.

purpose built kilns can now be distinguished from ovens built for household use. The first hints of a shift from 'household industry' to 'urban production' become evident, as the manufacture of pottery begins to move from residential areas toward sectors on the outskirts of town. This may be partly explained by the fact that as an occasional activity firing in rural areas could be done at home, but that on a more permanent basis in an urban setting firing became a public nuisance. Once a ceramic sector had been thus designated it became feasible to contemplate production on a slightly larger scale. In addition to the aforementioned purpose built kilns and tournettes, space could be found where pots could be set to dry, and permanent basins could be installed for the day to day preparation of clay, pigments and slips. In this way some pottery production was organised on a large enough scale by late Ubaid times in Mesopotamia to export significant quantities along the Gulf toward Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. Nevertheless, household production and household industry together still enjoyed the major share of gross pottery produced.

In the Uruk phase of urbanisation during the fourth millennium large scale specialized urban pottery production expands whilst household production and household industry begins a slow decline. The tournette was supplemented with the 'low fly wheel' which was fixed on a spindle and turned by an assistant at a speed of up to twenty rotations per minute. This was still far too slow to be able to enlist the use of centrifugal force to 'throw' a pot, but did enable the introduction of more rapid forming methods and opened up a vacancy for the apprentice as a recognised means of reproducing knowledge from one generation to the next. The use of coil building in spirals also came in at this time. By the close of the fourth millennium, ceramics had become a highly centralised temple or palace based affair, and it was urban industry which now enjoyed the gross share of pottery produced. The enigmatic 'bevilled rim bowls' which have puzzled so many archaeologists may actually turn out to have been symptomatic of a widespread de-skilling of the population as a whole, the last gasp of household based production before it finally petered out[51]. Meanwhile, on the outskirts of town, pottery was acquiring a mass produced 'almost factory made look' (Moorey

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[50] The following digression on pottery relies on Moorey, *op cit*, p.149-162 (though he would possibly find my precis of his research too 'diachronic').

[51] See for example Nissan's discussion of Uruk's 'bevelled rimmed bowls', *op cit*, p.83-85. For a critique of Nissan's interpretation see T.W. Beale, 'Bevelled Rim Bowls And Their Implications For Change And Economic Organization In The Later Fourth Millennium B.C.', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 1978, volume 37, number 4, p.289-313. For a glimpse of the geographical distribution of these bowls see Roaf, *op cit*, p.64-65.

calls them 'dull pots'). Shapes and forms conform to a standard range produced in large quantities and decoration is greatly simplified[52].

Frankfort believed that the decline of fine decorated pottery by the third millennium BC may be partly explained by the fact that it was supplanted by stoneware, jewellery and metal trinkets as the key signifiers of wealth, taste, nobility and status[53]. As his *tekhne* became preoccupied by a patronage of increasingly utilitarian commissions the potter is thought to have suffered a relative decline in socio-economic status when compared with many of his contemporaries. When the first third millennium inventories pull Sumer into history, potting is identified as a specialist skill, but is not regarded as precious enough to register very often in the rosters of 'civilised' crafts[54].

Perhaps the potter's pioneering experience of demotion can help explain why clay was chosen as the key metaphor for the first known algodicy[55]. The myth of *Enki and Ninmah* uses the skill of the potter as a metaphor for creation itself, thus retaining a memory of his former prestige, but tempers it with a mordant touch of ambivalence that makes our modern existentialism look almost adolescent. The myth tells how the gods get fed up with having to earn their living and decide to make human beings out of clay in order to do all the work for them[56]. To celebrate their emancipation the gods decide to throw a party but, unfortunately, they proceed to get drunk and things get out of hand. With great merriment they take turns to sit at the wheel and compete with each other to see who can pot the human with the most hilarious affliction: disease; malformity; infertility; incontinence and old age. Eventually the game turns sour with the creation of old age because the goddess Ninmah cannot think of any use for it. Being the worse for wear, Ninmah loses her temper and the divine party breaks up in acrimony. Thus left helpless and redundant, humanity in old age has 'to return to the original clay': the Sumerian euphemism for death.

We have seen how, during the Neolithic Age, pottery firing inspired households to become more adroit in the use of fire, learning how to build ovens in which high

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[52] Moorey, *op cit*, p.155.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Ibid*, p.149.
[55] Peter Sloterdijk defines **algodicy** as: 'a metaphysical interpretation of pain that gives it meaning', *op cit*, p.460.

temperatures could be achieved and sustained. It was this knowledge which made the smelting of metals possible[57]. The first experiments in metal working were with copper, gold, silver and lead, which could be found on the surface of the earth in their natural state. When these nuggets were heated in the fire it was found that they were more malleable and could be beaten into ornaments and tools. The association of metal working with fire eventually led to the discovery that they could be produced artificially by collecting strongly coloured metalloid ores, which are more plentifully found on the earth's crust than pure nuggets, and then smelting them in a furnace[58]. Humans had long been familiar with the practice of collecting brightly coloured ores like blue azurite, green malachite and red ocher for the purpose of processing them into body paints[59]. Gold, silver, lead and copper have relatively low melting points, which would have rewarded the first trials. Gold and silver were attractive for ornament because of their colour, lustre, and resistance to corrosion. Being soft and ductile, they were also easy to work. Lead was easy to find, work and, because of its weight, could be used for weights and anchors. Copper was easy to find and work too, and when it was mixed with ores rich in arsenic or tin would form a harder alloy that could take a cutting edge[60].

Unlike clay, metal is an exclusive raw material. That is to say, metal ores are more unevenly distributed across the surface of the earth's crust. Some metals are more unevenly distributed than others, but Strange's castaways will be lucky if they can find any deposits on their island at all. The consequence of unequal distribution was that the earliest innovations in metallurgy confined themselves to regions that were rich in the raw materials, and there was a natural barrier to the dissemination of innovation beyond these regions. Working from the reasonable assumption that within a given framework of physical conditions all humans are capable of independently arriving at similar deductions, modern archaeologists tend to assume that thousands of early neolithic communities must have experimented with metals on their own initiative right across the great mountain chains stretching from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas[61]. Many of

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[56] Frankfort et al, *op cit*, p.161-165.

[57] J.D.Bernal, *op cit*, p.96. Also: R.F. Tylecote, 'Furnaces, Crucibles, and Slags', in Wertime & Muhly (eds), *The Coming of the Age of Iron*, p.183.

[58] J.D.Bernal, *op cit*, p.110. Gold is slightly different because much of it was recovered from alluvial deposits.

[59] Schmandt-Besserat, 'Ocher In Prehistory', in Wertime & Muhly, *op cit*, p.127-150.

[60] T.S. Wheeler & R. Maddin, 'Metallurgy and Ancient Man', in Wertime & Muhly, *op cit*, p.101-13.

[61] James A. Charles, 'The Coming Of Copper And Copper-Base Alloys And Iron', in Wertime & Muhly, *op cit*, p.158.

these communities would thus have become familiar enough with metals to be able to emulate foreign innovations in mining and manufacture. It is also reasonable to assume, however, that local variations in social conditions did, over time, sponsor pioneers who set the pace of innovation. An important step seems to come with the smelting of ores. *Tekhne* would not have been necessary within communities when it came to the relatively simple business of working with natural metals. Even Strange's castaways ought to be able to bodge a bit of hot and cold hammering. But the need for specialization would have become more urgent when it came to prospecting for and mining ores, collecting fuel and making furnaces, crucibles and moulds to smelt and cast, and then working with the processed materials to manufacture diverse sets of artefacts such as the ones found in sixth and fifth millennium contexts at Catal Huyuk, Cayonu and Tepe Yahya.

When we select for areas according to an early ability to make it both feasible and worthwhile for communities to pioneer the sponsorship of metallurgical specialization the field of likely candidates is reduced significantly[62]. The most precocious zones appear to have been in the Taurus and Zagros mountains. Given the natural location of most ores in relation to the average distribution of early settlements, the first smiths are likely to have been recruited from nomadic sectors of the local population. It would have been natural for such people to finance their trade by becoming a bit itinerant; mining and smelting the materials themselves in the mountains, bringing their bun ingots down to the bazaars in the hills and steppes and then tinking their way through the lowland villages of the fertile crescent. Some of their goods had functional value, such as copper pins, awls, hooks and axes. But most neolithic communities would have been content with their own tools made from local materials, so many of the most transferable metal goods had symbolic rather than functional value[63]. For both tinkers and merchants it made sense in marketing terms to target the most powerful members of each village community. They were the ones most likely to be in control of the surplus. They were also the ones in a position to be able to grant a safe passage and allow the metal trade to continue. The answer was trinkets, easily carried luxury goods designed for conspicuous consumption by which elite elements could parade and reinforce their elevated status.

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[62] James D. Muhly, 'The Bronze Age Setting', in Wertime & Muhly, *op cit*, p.27.

Some of these goods trickled down into the villages and towns of southern Mesopotamia through down-the-line exchange, prestige chains, freelance trade, or a mixture of the three[64]. Bits and pieces of gold and copper have been found in Ubaid deposits of the early fifth millennium, though these finds are more isolated and the workmanship generally of lower quality when compared to more numerous examples of contemporary work closer to the source zones[65]. It took a while for the burgeoning elites of southern Mesopotamia to acquire a serious taste for metal goods, but once they did their unprecedented surpluses enabled them to become a major source of effective demand. By late Ubaid times there is already evidence to suggest that demand in southern Mesopotamia had exceeded the capacity of existing forms of supply, and that temples such as Eridu were financing the first forms of directional trade. This trend was sustained into the fourth millennium, when there was 'a marked expansion in the use of metals' in and around Uruk[66]. By this stage ingots are being imported into Sumerian workshops, where they are being melted and then hot or cold hammered after casting. Perhaps these workshops were initially manned by former tinkers who had been recruited from the highlands to find permanent employment in the towns. Or perhaps some of them were smiths sent as diplomatic gifts from foreign city-gods such as Susa to the east[67]. No doubt there was also indigenous initiative involved, whereby newly imported artefacts would challenge local artisans to emulate their manufacture. By the end of the fourth millennium the workshops of Sumer were providing her cities with metallurgical skills that were beginning to rival those developed nearer to the source of the raw materials hundreds of kilometres away.

The accumulation of metallurgical skills in Sumer during the Late Uruk and Jemdat Nasr phase was important because it pooled together pockets of knowledge that had previously been dispersed. Before about the middle of the fourth millennium the tinkers working from the mountains above the fertile crescent tended to gain experience in working the particular metal sourced in their area. From the middle of the fourth millennium the cities of Sumer gradually became metropolitian agencies for the combination of metallurgical skills and resources. The synergic reactions produced by

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[63] John Oates, 'Trade and power in the fifth and fourth millennia BC: new evidence from northern Mesopotamia', *World Archaeology*, 1993, Volume 24 No.3, p.408.
[64] See following section below. Also: Colin Renfrew, 'Four models for external trade or exchange', in *The Emergence Of Civilization*, p.465-471.
[65] Moorey, *op cit*, p.221 & 256.
[66] *Ibid*, p.256.
[67] *Ibid*, p.16.

this concentration of skills and resources were essential in the formation of the 'truly international age of polymetallic metallurgical technology' which was to have such a profound impact upon the Near East and beyond throughout the third and second millennia[68].

It was in the fourth millennium that gold and silver first became the media of symbolic power. These two precious metals were used to furnish the temples and palaces with charismatic fixtures and fittings, and for other assorted props such as cult equipment and the jewellery for personal adornment which helped to help buttress the authority of god's servants of the highest rank[69]. Copper was the principal utility metal. Once the tinkers had settled down into their smithies in the cities they were able to diversify their product base. The prehistoric pins, awls, hooks and axes were supplemented with luxury household goods such as bowls, dishes, tumblers, ladles and razors. Meanwhile, the advantages of using copper tools had an important knock-on effect upon other crafts in the production structure. The copper knife, chisel, nail, drill and saw, for example, transformed the working of wood and stone, making jointed carpentry and coursed masonry practical on a large scale[70].

In addition to the copper axes the archaeological record in Mesopotamia also turns up increasing numbers of copper spear and arrow heads throughout the fourth millennium. One drawback with pure copper was that it is a soft metal, but the earliest smiths learnt how to alleviate this shortcoming by a repeated process of hammering and annealing. In their efforts to narrate a 'story of progress' many authors have understated the efficacy of this simple chalcolithic technique[71]. Nevertheless, it is still axiomatic that a new phase in the evolution of metallurgy as a *tekhne* came when it was discovered that the utilitarian properties of copper could be improved by alloying it with other minerals. This discovery is thought to have been first made during the fifth millennium in areas such as Tepe Yahya on the southern Iranian side of the Zagros, where geological fate had left unique deposits of arsenical-copper ores that, when smelted, would produce superior coppers that were not only easier to cast but also more responsive to the hammering and annealing process, yielding a bronze 'cutting edge' that

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[68] Muhly, *op cit*, p.25.
[69] Moorey, *op cit*, p.221, 224-5, & 238.
[70] J.D.Bernal, *op cit*, p.114.
[71] J.A. Charles, *op cit*, p.167.

was harder and more durable[72]. At first this would have simply manifested itself as a local eccentricity within a chalcolithic paradigm. But once the advantages of the naturally occuring alloys were recognised through contacts with other tinkers and metal traders, a cosmopolitan appetite for them gradually spread, and people began to deliberately seek out minerals which were similar in colour to the impurities in the arsenical copper ores with the intention of adding them to their local supplies of pure copper[73]. Isomorphic developments subsequently occurred with the stannite copper ores that chalcolithic communities began to mine in the foothills of Afghanistan[74]. Here tin became the natural alloy, which was eventually destined to become the favourite, probably due to difficulties caused by the variable composition of arsenical ores and the propensity of arsenic to vapourize in the smelting process.

The advent of bronze metallurgy posed a challenge to the chalcolithic world which some communities were better placed to turn to their advantage than others. An indication of what was to come may be seen in the late fourth millennium hoard found at Arslantepe in southern Anatolia, including 22 arsenical copper daggers. According to Renfrew:

> 'The plain fact is that until daggers were invented, no metal product was so remarkable or original as to be indispensable. Stone axes were nearly as efficient as copper ones, and shaft-hole axes of copper were not an enormous improvement upon those of antler furnished with a stone working edge. The dagger, on the other hand, was a new form... Connected with the appearance of the dagger is the discovery of alloying copper with tin (or arsenic) to make bronze. The increased strength and hardness which this produces were highly desirable when a robust yet rather thin blade was required. The new form, coupled with this technological advance, produced a universal military threat which could be answered only by equipping oneself with similar weapons. The analogy with the various twentieth century arms races is obvious...'[75]

In short, bronze became a strategic material. Before the advent of bronze there would have been a fairly egalitarian structure of access to the primary means of violence. After bronze, it became more feasible for certain members of a society to attempt to construct monopolies in the use of force. Also, when it came to the dissemination of bronze metallurgy beyond the source areas of copper and its alloys, the first cities had an

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[72] Dennis Heskel & Carl Clifford Lamberg-Karlovsky, 'An Alternative Sequence For The Development Of Metallurgy', in Wertime & Muhly, *op cit*, p.229-265.
[73] T.S. Wheeler & R. Maddin, *op cit*, p.106.
[74] J.A. Charles, *op cit*, p.172-8.
[75] Renfrew, *op cit*, p.320.

organizational advantage over less complex social forms in the procurement of minerals and skills.

That bronze was a strategic material is evident in the fact that its use was mainly reserved for the production of arms (outside source areas). Utilitarian tools and implements were almost exclusively made of copper until the Late Bronze Age. Bronze was a highly sought after material made in small quantities from ingots produced and transported from far away. Consequently its distribution and use became tightly controlled and regulated by the most powerful elements within the security structure.

Having become such an indispensable productive, financial and strategic asset the polymetallic smith became something of an aristocrat amongst the trades, judging by the measure of religious anthropomorphism; but there was a price to be paid. A minor footnote in history. Metallurgy was the first *tekhne* to engender an occupational disease. Unfortunately, arsenic is poisonous and has a low vapour point. The absorption of small quantities of arsenic over long periods causes muscular atrophy. The smith also had to handle hazardous hot and molten metals on a daily basis. This is the most plausible explanation for why so many smith-gods all over the ancient world came to be represented as cripples[76]. The use of arsenical bronze begins to take off at the beginning of the fourth millennium. Its gradual replacement by tin bronze starts at the beginning of the third, but the relative scarcity of tin meant that arsenical bronze continued to be used in areas such as Egypt right up until about 1900 BC.

We have seen how pottery firing helped to provide the pyrotechnological background for the development of metallurgy. Pottery was also instrumental in the genesis of writing. Cuneiform, the first known writing system used by man, was made by using sharpened reeds to cut wedge-shaped signs into clay tablets. To understand the history of the *tekhne* of writing it is first necessary to dispel a common fallacy that has crippled western thought about it for many years. Writing was never invented to represent speech. The use of writing to record speech was a spin-off which happened hundreds of years later. Writing was originally designed simply to reproduce difference for the purpose of generating information, data, models, calculations, calendars, lists, orders, bills, reciepts and accounts, plus the signatures that signed, sealed and delivered the accumulation of power over property and people. The logocentric premiss that *true*

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[76] Saggs, *Civilization Before Greece And Rome*, p.200-1.

writing is for the representation of speech is thus a philological error, which obscures both the nature of writing and its historical role in the development of knowledge and power[77].

From about 8500 BC, clay was used to make pebble-sized tokens, which archaeologists have found in the storage areas of many neolithic dwellings across the fertile crescent[78]. One theory is that these fired-clay tokens, moulded into different shapes, were used to represent units of crops and livestock in order to model economic activities in the village[79]. The tokens served as mnemonic aids to help the first agriculturalists make long-term communitarian decisions about things, such as how to divide a given harvest into grain for current consumption, future consumption, and seed-corn - a basic accounting system or planning tool. These economic models gradually became more complex, as is evident in the way the tokens acquired a greater range of shapes and began to bear a range of marks on their surfaces. Slightly later in the archaeological record, the tokens become placed into clay containers. The containers served as means to record economic transactions. A given movement of grain, for example, could be represented by moving an appropriate token from one container to another. This is something which Economics tends to overlook in its fetish over money. The production and finance structures rely on a knowledge structure because they both need a memory. In order to foster the economic exchanges necessary to develop a complex division of labour human society had to create an artificial mnemonics.

With the emergence of the city and the temple two related things begin to happen in the archaeological record. Firstly, the clay containers for the tokens start to fold into envelopes, or bullae. This enclosure was a temple innovation, invented to regulate the editing of the record contained inside. Once the tokens had been sealed inside the envelopes the only way to change the record was to break the bullae, so any tampering would be detected. The utility of such a device is obvious in a society that

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[77] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

[78] Geoffrey Sampson, *Writing Systems*, p.57.

[79] Denise Schmandt-Besserat (see bibliography). Although Schmandt-Besserat's scholarship is well respected by archaeologists, her theories about the invention of writing are not universally accepted. For a very critical appraisal see Stephen Lieberman, (1980) 'Of clay pebbles, hollow clay balls, and writing: a Sumerian view', *American Journal of Archeology*, vol.84, p.339-58. For a paper countering many of Lieberman's criticisms see Powell, H.A. (1981) 'Three problems in the history of cuneiform writing: origins, direction of script, literacy.' *Visible Language* 15 : 419-40. One attempt to pick a way through the controversy, together with helpful comments

was becoming more stratified and heterogeneous and where kinship and ritual were ceasing to be effective forms of social cohesion. One consequence of this enclosure was that the priests decided that it would be useful to be able to tell at a glance what was inside the bullae without having to break them open, so they started to mark the outer surfaces of the envelopes with the negative imprint of the tokens before they were enclosed inside.

The second innovation was the development of cylinder seals. These seals were like tiny rolling pins, made out of stone and carved in such a way that a relief was produced when they were rolled out on wet clay. They were used to seal the aforementioned bullae, denoting that the information therein was the property of a certain individual or institution, but they were also used to seal many other things such as jars, baskets, and the doors to storerooms. The seals worked through the reproduction of difference. Every seal was carved in such a way that it produced a distinct design when rolled out onto the wet clay. The clay then dried to produce a permanent record. The differences produced by the seals stood for particular individuals and organizations, or signatures which could be rolled into and then read from the embossed surfaces[80]. Any unauthorized access to the objects that had been sealed could thus be ruled out. These seals were instruments of power that could be used to guarantee the effective supervision of certain proceedings and the security of certain goods: crucial tools in the early formation of the state and private property.

The consequence of the tokens, the bullae and the seals was that people acquired the habit of reading difference from variegated impressions marked out upon clay surfaces. The habit took hold to such an extent that for many purposes the tokens themselves became redundant and the bullae envelopes evolved into clay tablets, upon which cuneiform, the first known writing system, was pioneered.

As with the potter and the smith, the *tekhne* of writing began life as the preserve of a specialist, in this case the scribe. In many ways writing was just like any other kind of *tekhne*. It involved the use of special tools requiring a high degree of expertise, which people would acquire over a long period of association with a master of the craft. But

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concerning Schmandt-Besserat's influences, can be found in: Geoffrey Sampson, *op cit*, 57-61; see also Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, p.50-55.

[80] Nissen, *op cit*, p.74-80. Roaf, *Cultural Atlas Of Mesopotamia And The Ancient Near East*, p.72-73.

there was something about the *tekhne* of writing that made it special right from the start, and which made its possessors a class apart from all the other *tekhnikoi*.

What made the scribe so different was that it was writing which coordinated all the other trades into an effective political and economic whole. Early social experiments in the division of labour would have been impossible without him[81]. His ability to process data placed him at the centre of the rapid acceleration in social complexity characteristic of early Mesopotamia. The scribe was the person in possession of the *tekhne* that inscribed the voice of god, the management of credit, the communication of instructions and the recording of social bargains. The early scribes were thus indispensable servants of divine volition and its earthly agencies of wealth, power and influence. In Mesopotamian mythology the scribe was the eternal companion and servant of the leviathan, perpetually jotting down his divine orders, first as Nisaba the wife of Enlil, then as Nabu the son of Marduk[82]. But the myths also carry a hint of suspicion akin to that between king and courtier, emperor and mandarin, minister and civil servant. Both wife and son are suppliants who might also become supplanters if given half a chance[83].

The suspicion was well founded. The *tekhne* of writing was the servant of power that paradoxically acted as a trigger for its dissemination at the same time. It was simply too useful to be contained, and refused to remain within the confinement of one profession. To begin with the scribe was synonymous with the priest. Writing had been pioneered in the temple and the temple thereby held an early monopoly over its transmission. It was in this context that the first attempts at organizing the process of education on a systematic, institutional basis took place[84]. Within the Sumerian temples a specific building called the 'tablet house' would be set aside for the training of scribes, complete with rows of benches, exercise tablets and counters for reckoning and computation. Here the student scribal priest would learn how to externalize the voice of god by inscribing it upon the silent clay, thus hollowing out an interior space in his mind ripe for the development of a sovereign capacity for the purposive, reflective act[85]. It was thus the scribe who was bound to be the first human tempted to take a bite from

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[81] Florian Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, p.15.
[82] Knapp, *op cit*, p.53.
[83] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p.84-94.
[84] J. Bowen, *op cit*, p.11-17.
[85] Julian Jaynes, *op cit*, p.208.

the apple of consciousness, and his dissemination of writing that inaugurated the genesis of history.

When the *tekhne* of writing spread, so too did the capacity for consciousness. As the palace began to exploit its power over the provision of security the temple began to lose its scribal monopoly. The palace began to recruit scribes for its own purposes. Whenever the temple tried to resist this the palace moved to ensure that the training of scribes became a more secular affair. The 'tablet house' thus became an institution in its own right, now called the 'house of learning', where elites were trained to serve either in the temple or the palace. A third phase of diffusion took place when merchants started to take up writing in order to trade on their own account. With their account books, invoices, letters of credit and business correspondence the merchants carried literacy north, south, east and west. A fourth phase of dissemination took place when literacy was taught to the slave so as to assist the master in his household affairs. The slave gains the power of consciousness! But the impact of slave consciousness and its role in the rise of cosmopolitanism would not become evident for many centuries...

(2.7) Secondary Power Structures and Secondary State Formation: trade; transport; energy; welfare and development

We have seen how the emergence of civilization in Mesopotamia may be interpreted with Strange's model of production, finance, security and knowledge structures. The less well-thumbed part of *States And Markets* is the third part, where Strange talks about the 'secondary power structures'. According to Strange, the secondary structures are major sources of power in the sense that they are frameworks within which important human choices are made, but are secondary in the sense that the four primary structures 'play a large part in shaping the secondary structures' (p.135). In this section we will attempt to demonstrate how the concept of 'secondary power structures' could be useful in accounting for the historical phenomenon of secondary state formation in Syria-Palestine and Anatolia.

Though both Syria-Palestine and Anatolia witnessed the development of some of the first neolithic, food producing communities along with the rest of the fertile crescent from about 10,000 B.C, subsequent development during the fifth and fourth millennia did not evolve at the same pace as in Mesopotamia (or Egypt - see below). The geography of Syria-Palestine was made up of coastal plains, rolling plains, deserts,

hills and mountains. Generally, the land was consistent with village and encampment polities based on variegated subsistence mixtures of fishing, hunting, dry-farming and pastoralism. The geography of Anatolia was even more diverse, consisting of coastal plains, continental mountain ranges, steep river valleys, high plateaus, pluvial plains and lakes. This terrain was generally more punishing than most of Syria-Palestine, but could also support human populations based upon similar productive ingredients and with similar settlement patterns. Niether Syria-Palestine nor Anatolia could produce the agricultural surplus furnished by the irrigated alluvial plains of Mesopotamia. Consequently, they did not autonomously develop the distinct production, finance, security and knowledge structures characteristic of Sumer and the other primary civilizations.

What they did have was an unevenly distributed array of natural resources that could be used for manufacture, transport and trade. The development of transport and trade networks was an inevitable consequence of the neolithic revolution. By choosing to settle down and cultivate the land many communities made themselves less mobile and were less able to fetch materials for themselves[86]. At the same time immobility removed the barrier to acquisitiveness that results from having to leave behind what cannot be carried[87]. For these reasons it became important to cultivate exchange relations between peoples. Communities that happened to have desirable materials on their doorstep were in a favourable position to specialize in their production. A window of opportunity also opened for those who were prepared to specialize in their transport.

Catal Huyuk, for example, was a small town occupied in southern Anatolia from about 7000 to 5600 BC. Its subsistence was based upon the agriculture made possible by the gradual drying up of a pluvial lake in what is now the Konya plain, but the precociousness of its development is also explained by the working of obsidian in the mountains nearby[88]. Another Anatolian centre for obsidian was Chayonu, situated about 50 kilometres south east from the modern town of Elazig. Obsidian is a volcanic glass rock capable of being chipped into cutting tools[89]. The volume of the obsidian trade was not great and the sharpness it furnished was a luxury, but the distribution in terms of distance travelled is impressive. Anatolian obsidian reached right across the

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[86] J.G. Macqueen, *The Hittites and their Contemporaries in Asia Minor*, p.14.
[87] Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man*, p.37-8.
[88] Macqueen, *op cit*, p.14.
[89] Roaf, *op cit*, p.34.

fertile crescent, from Beidha due south of the Dead Sea, to Eridu in the Mesopotamian delta. Scientists have proved this by using chemical analysis to match obsidian finds back to their source. What the scientists cannot tell us is how the obsidian changed hands and who carried them from A to B.

One model which might account for the prehistoric distribution of obsidian is called 'down-the-line' exchange[90]. If we imagine a chain of villages equally spaced across the fertile crescent, each village down the line would receive obsidian through exchange from its neighbour nearer to the source, and pass on about a half to two thirds of what they received to the next settlement along the chain. This primary mode of exchange has been observed in many anthropological contexts and we may assume that it can account for the distribution of some of the obsidian. If we were to try and turn it into an exclusive explanation for the movement of obsidian, however, the model runs up against a number of problems. The first weakness of the model lies in the assumption of an even distribution of villages across the fertile crescent which were more or less equally capable of passing on goods further down the line. One of the few things that we can take for granted about neolithic settlement is that it was not evenly distributed, and that the combination of climate and terrain actually placed some rather formidable obstacles between the sources of obsidian and many of the places it managed to reach. A second weakness of the model is its apparent lack of interest in the different commodities that would have had to travel in the opposite direction to provide down the line exchange with any incentive[91]. It is reasonable to postulate that many of these goods would have been perishable and that this is the reason why they have not been detected by archaeologists. When we contrast the relative self-sufficiency of neolithic settlement with the diversity of goods that would have had to have been traded in the reverse direction, however, it becomes clear that the simplicity of the down-the-line exchange model has been achieved by sweeping the most perplexing half of the necessary gross number of bargains outside its purview. A third weakness of the down-the-line model is its propensity to regard neolithic communities as undifferentiated wholes, when we know that a lot of ancient Near Eastern villages were the nuclei around which nomadic agencies orbited.

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[90] Renfrew, *op cit*, p.465-466.

[91] Harriet Crawford (1978), 'The mechanics of the obsidian trade: a suggestion', *Antiquity*,LII, p.129.

Thanks to research conducted within the discipline of Anthropology, we are now in a position to know more about the nature of nomadism than any previous generation of scholarship[92]. Previously the nomadic contribution to civilization has often been conceived in fairly violent and destructive terms, but recently their role has been reassessed. One of the most plausible reconstructions of the genesis of trade draws from anthropological research which suggests that nomads may have played a major role[93]. The word 'nomad' often conjures up images of Bedouin or Mongol warriors, but neither camels nor horses were domesticated until late into the third millennium BC. The nomads of Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine and Anatolia during the neolithic and early Bronze Age were simple sheep and goat herders practising what Rowton calls enclosed nomadism[94]. Pastoralism is now thought to have been a form of agricultural specialization designed to exploit the diversity of environments rather than a primitive stage in the evolution of agriculture itself[95].

Each nomadic community had a regular cycle of movement that varied in detail, but which generally remained the same from year to year. These cycles were regulated by the nature of the terrain and its seasons. Steppe nomads would chase the rains in the arid plains during the wet months and then, with the onset of the summer seasons, herd their animals along to the sedentary zones where there was still pasture, rivers and springs. Mountain nomads would take to the hills in the summer and then, with the onset of winter, descend from the mountains into the sedentary areas for shelter. In between these two extremes were pastoral zones that supported a rich mix of intermediate cycles, such as areas where rain catching mountain ranges would cut across steppe. All these nomadic cycles were enclosed in the sense that the annual odyssey involved regular periods of close economic and political contact with sedentary communities at certain times of the year.

Both parties had strong motives for wanting to cooperate and bargain with each other. The nomads wanted free access to shelter and water supplies and the right to

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92 For example see: Cynthia Nelson (ed), *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society*; A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the outside world*; M.Rowton (1973), 'Autonomy and nomadism in Western Asia', *Orientalia*, 42, p.247-258.

93 Harriet Crawford, *op cit*, p.129-132. (In a paradigm example of scholarly prudence, Crawford cautions us not to overstate the value of anthropological analogies and draws our attention to 'the very tentative title given to this paper'.)

94 M. Rowton, (1974), 'Enclosed nomadism', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, volume 17, part 1, p.1-30.

95 Moorey, *op cit*, p.2.

graze their flocks on stubble fields. They were also keen to obtain grain and vegetables to supplement their diet and would prefer to negotiate a peaceful passage through potentially hostile territory whenever possible. The sedentary communities were generally happy to let the nomads' sheep manure the fields when the crops were in, as long as they could negotiate agreements to prevent the ruination of fields in cultivation. They were also mildly interested in the supplementary meat and animal products the nomads had to offer, but what really got them excited was any exotic materials that the nomads might have been able to pick up on their travels. What tipped the balance for the nomads was the fact that sedentary demand for milk, meat and leather products was relatively elastic, owing to the fact that animal husbandry was just as feasible on the farm as it was upon open pasture. Demand for exotic material goods, however, was inelastic. Therefore a potential advantage for the nomads to exploit was their comparative mobility. Anything spotted on the annual cycle that was portable, easy to acquire at source but valuable at a distance would be picked up and transported by the nomads as handy bargaining chips to be used further down the road.

This scenario for the genesis of trade is supported by surveys which have shown that the oldest caravan roads tend to follow transhumant livestock paths across country, rather than what would have been easier natural valley routes[96]. The low volume of this trade needs to be emphasised. It was limited to what could be transported on the backs of humans. In other ways though it could be surprisingly sophisticated. The regularity of the nomadic cycle was capable of engendering such relations of trust between nomad and sedentary that in some cases villagers would place orders, offering credit in the form of goods such as grain or vegetables to pay for goods that would not be received until the following year. The nomads knew how to put this credit to work too, buying and selling on their journey to make cyclical profits of up to 200 per cent[97]. The nomadic cycle also involved regular contact with other nomadic groups in the steppes and mountains. Here the nomads would exchange bargaining chips with each other, thus pooling their global reach and increasing the diversity of goods traded. Over time these exchanges evolved into formal bazaars, traditionally held well away from the settled villages at certain times of the year[98].

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[96] Harriet Crawford (1978), *op cit*, p.131.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] *Ibid.*

The overland trade and transport structure envisaged then for the neolithic is of an interlocking network of migratory cycles redistributing materials from far distant places: salt from the Dead Sea; shells and dyes from the Levant; obsidian from Anatolia; bitumen from the Zagros[99]. Most of these goods were perishable and thus invisible to our archaeological record, but obsidian was the first major exception, leaving behind the indelible trace of an early source of secondary power. It was an important power source as far as the nomads were concerned, making quite a difference to the warmth of the reception they could expect to receive on their travels. But it was always a secondary source of power in the sense that demand for exotic materials was determined by sedentary developments in the realm of production, finance, security and knowledge. And we must always remember that the economy of neolithic settlement was relatively autarkic, living mostly upon resources close to hand.

Our archaeologists regretfully inform us that the shift from the Neolithic to Bronze Age trade did not begin with quite the same grace as one might expect from the theories of Smith and Ricardo. The major stimulus to the entrepreneurial activity of the nomads from the beginning of the fifth millennium was the gradual development of social stratification in the towns, particularly in Mesopotamia. This development furnished rich gods with human retinues who were hungry for exotica through which their authority could be expressed and reinforced. They did not want for food and they had no need for tools. Subsistence was already catered for, but power often feels naked without a steady supply of new clothes. What the gods, priests, landowners and kings desired were exotic things they could flaunt about the town to demonstrate both to self and other that they were sources of authority, refinement and distinction. To these gods and men nomads would come with small bags filled with pretty things such as lapis lazuli, turquoise and carnelian. Then there were metal trinkets made from gold, silver, lead, copper and bronze. Then there were the sweet smelling carvings made out of cedar. Then the nomads also whetted appetites for other luxury portables made from pearls, shells, dyes, ivory and perfumes[100]. Bronze Age trade thus began as a source of symbolic power and wealth in the functional sense had nothing to do with it. Over time the trade structure became more sophisticated as more materials got added to the list of goods for exchange, and power more structured in the sense that the cities of Mesopotamia provided the largest source of effective demand.

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[99] Roaf, *op cit*, p.34 & 35.
[100] *Ibid.*.

The next step came when effective demand for foreign materials became so keen in Mesopotamia that it outstripped existing supply. Supply was constrained by what the nomads could carry on their backs and by the number of hands the materials would have to pass through on the way to the delta. The temples started to finance city-state initiatives to foster improvements in supply. One scheme was to commission boats from the fishermen to help establish trading outposts on the upper tributaries of the Euphrates. By using the river traffic skills of the fishermen these trading posts could be placed closer to the supply source of a desired material. An early example of this is the site of Degirmentepe, near the modern town of Malatya, deep into eastern Anatolia on the upper Euphrates[101]. This initiative was sponsored by the Temple of Eridu during the fifth millennium BC, establishing a Ubaid enclave beyond the Taurus to tap into the local nomadic exchange networks in copper and silver. By utilizing the advantages of water transport the priests at Eridu hoped to import copper and silver in quantity. Having an outpost close to the source of supply also helped to cut out many middlemen. But to make the Degirmentepe project viable the temple had to commission a navy. The first navy was comprised of fishing boats, looking like oversized canoes, usually made out of reeds but sometimes wood, and propelled by paddles and poles[102]. There were sailors too, the earliest evidence of the use of sail to harness the energy of the wind has been found in a grave at Eridu. But sail was more useful in the Gulf as the use of sail was not frequently appropriate on either the Euphrates or the Tigris.

Another significant development in the structure of trade and transport was the domestication of the donkey at the beginning of the fourth millennium[103]. The domestication of the donkey made it feasible to carry more cargoes of greater bulk and weight over longer distances overland. Once the use of donkeys for transport had become common practice, and once demand had reached a certain level, certain elements within the nomadic community realised that a living could be made in long distance caravaning. The process of fragmentation from nomadic life would have been gradual. The first caravaneers would have been simply foraging for the good of their own kin, reliably returning to the nomadic bazaars on the mountains or steppe on a regular basis, from where the traditional sheep and goat nomads would then distribute

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[101] Joan Oates, 'Trade and power in the fifth and fourth millennia BC: new evidence from northern Mesopotamia', *World Archaeology*, Volume 24 No.3., p.408-411.
[102] Lionel Casson, *Ships And Seamanship In The Ancient World*, p.23-29.
[103] Roaf, *op cit*, p.36.

the materials locally. But once word got round that there were was a trading enclave on a river nearby where people were offering a good deal, many caravaneers naturally felt tempted to work for the rich foreigners as well.

By 3200 BC there were at least fifty of these Sumerian enclaves situated along the upper reaches of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Along the Euphrates and the Tigris the Sumerians were able to bring all four primary sources of power to bear. First of all, they had the wealth in terms of an agricultural surplus to sustain long term adventures. Second, they had the credit systems in place to organize surplus wealth for certain projects. Thirdly, the institution of the *lugal* was already there to try to ensure that the outposts were secure. Fourthly, the Sumerians had developed a division of labour in the city that furnished crafts able to turn out large quantities of quality products for trade, such as in textiles, reeds and ceramics. Fifthly, they had city-gods blessed with an unrivalled ability to summon the collective will of thousands of human subjects to action. Lastly, the Sumerians were able to make these power sources count over long distances because of their ability to use the rivers for transport.

The agrarian barbarians who happened to be situated along the banks of the rivers were probably given offers that they simply could not refuse. They had precious little to fight with and yet neither could they run away, for their lives depended upon what had been sown in the ground. It was these communities that tended to find their villages being turned into enclave towns. Sumerian quarters of these enclaves were protected by walls, and it is around this time that we see the first seal impressions of conflict in Uruk, with Sumerian soldiers taking bound prisoners using spears and whips[104]. 'Bargain' would probably be a pretty word for some of the things that went on here, but it was never in the civilized interest to utterly crush those barbarians who were prepared to become supplicants and help the city-god achieve its foreign policy objectives. The deal was that the suppliant riverine community should produce food to help sustain the Sumerian personnel manning the outposts. In return they were left in peace. Perhaps they got a few goods in exchange. Maybe they would also gain some right to famine relief in the event of a bad harvest. After a while some of the suppliant communities began to thrive and prosper, by falling into niche positions within which they could make themselves useful. The most suppliant families within these suppliant communities formed into petty elites, quickly internalising the gods, mannerisms and

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[104] Joan Oates, *op cit*, p.411-112.

habits of their civilized masters. Suppliant communities were also a potential source of labour in areas where the extraction and processing of raw materials required its ready supply.

The pastoral barbarians, the ones who had chosen a nomadic way of life moving with the flocks and herds plus a little bit of trading thrown in, were in a much better position to bargain[105]. They too had precious little to fight with, but they could run away. Nomads have never been as footloose and fancy free as popular mythology has painted them, but their livelihood was certainly portable enough for them to be able to disappear into the mountains or steppes whenever they saw civilization coming. Consequently, their gods retained a degree of autonomy. Being river delta peoples, the Mesopotamians did not care much for mountains nor steppes. Another thing the nomadic barbarians had in their favour was their superior knowledge of foreign lands. In a world without geography the quickest route to the biggest deposits of material resources was to be found by people who had grown intimate with the lands which they had traversed for so long. Then there was the fact that the nomads were the ones who were skilled with donkeys, breeding and training them to carry heavy loads. They also knew how to drive caravans, with generations behind them gained in treading treacherous roads from one pasture to another. They also had diplomatic skills: they knew how to manage the delicate business of negotiating a passage through other people's land without drawing unwanted attention to themselves. Perhaps above all they knew the markets inside out. They were after all the very agents of the interlocking migratory trade network that had existed hitherto. They knew the routes. They knew the bazaars. They had the contacts. They commanded Sumerian respect.

They knew how to strike bargains too. The picture that emerged on the ground in Syria-Palestine and Anatolia toward 3200 BC was of Sumerian authority over the settlements along the Tigris and the Euphrates, combined with semi-nomadic authority

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[105] The division between the sedentary and the nomadic way of life needs to be carefully defined here. According to Khazanov, in *Nomads And The Outside World*, p.85-118, 'pure' nomadism as it is commonly understood today did not evolve much before the second millennium BC, when the domestication of the horse and the camel was consolidated. However, Khazanov's definition of 'true' nomadism is a very exclusive one and his account of the genesis of pastoral nomadism is based on the assumption that right from the start of the Neolithic Age, many communities were plumping for a clear choice between a sedentary and a more mobile, pastoral means of existence. The use of the word nomadism in this thesis refers to the concept of 'enclosed nomadism' already explained above, assumes that some communities were able to keep a foot in both camps, and that others were able to switch from one to the other and back again, according to prevailing circumstances.

in areas beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates. Let us explain the concept of 'semi-nomadic authority'. Away from the banks of the two rivers lay various chalcolithic communities variegated along the themes of sedentarism and nomadism. The Sumerian enclaves provided a stimulus to the caravan trade and thus upset the existing balance of power. Elements within the nomadic community suddenly found they were more powerful, both vis-a-vis fellow nomads and the sedentary groups. For one thing dividends from the caravan trade were so great that some caravaneers found that their wealth was too heavy to carry. Strongholds had to be built in the summer pasturages to keep it safe[106]. The chieftains thus became semi-nomadic. Their hearts would lie in their tents, but the bank balance lay in the temple. These temple strongholds were often placed next to the sites of bazaars that had been held from time immemorial. With these sedentary enclaves the chiefs acquired the ability to accumulate more wealth. And with this wealth the chiefs began to dominate business at the bazaars, hence accumulating further wealth. Eventually the opulence became so conspicuous that it began to arouse jealousies within the nomadic population. In time this led to the pillaging of caravans en route and the raiding of strongholds[107]. Nomadic chieftains began to sink their wealth into the building of security structures to protect their caravans and strongholds against their former kin.

With the caravan trade the nomadic elites could also accumulate authority over the local sedentary communities. The semi-nomadic chieftains were dealing with powerful clients from Mesopotamia now. They no longer needed to peddle petty bargaining chips to secure tolerance from the numerous highland and lowland villages. What they were more interested in now was tribute, regular supplies of agricultural produce to help finance the security of trade and transport. In return the sedentary community was left in peace. This turning of tables must have been difficult for many of the villagers to accept, and probably needed countless punitive expeditions. Some villages also had to be turned into citadels to provide the nuclei for manufacturing, administrative and military support. Of particular interest were those villages close to the sources of material supplies. It made sense for many chiefs to try to secure control over the production of materials from the mountains. To achieve all this many chiefdoms probably received advice and maybe even grants from the Sumerians. It was in the Sumerian interest to provide financial, military, organisational and technical

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[106] M.B. Rowton, (1973), 'Urban Autonomy In A Nomadic Environment', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Volume 32, p.205 & 207-8.

assistance to those groups who were most likely to be able to guarantee reliable supplies of the required materials. The priests even taught some of them how to use cuneiform.

Our hypothesis then, is that the Sumerian enclaves on the upper reaches of the Euphrates and the Tigris stimulated the development of a number of dimorphic chiefdoms in Syria-Palestine and Anatolia, based upon the secondary power sources of trade and transport[108]. The chiefdoms of Syria-Palestine tended to recruit its elites from the nomadic communities of the rolling plains and steppes. The chiefdoms of Anatolia tended to recruit its elites from the nomadic communities of the northern mountains and highland plateaus. They were dimorphic in the sense that nomadic and sedentary elements combined to create autonomous polities that secured the supply of materials for the trade to Mesopotamia. In return these polities received the wealth, financial acumen, military and technical aid required to help them provide the infrastructure which kept the supply lines open. The warlord tended to spend his time in the open country policing the roads which gave him his authority. But the tiny package of basic ingredients for the formation of secondary states he acquired in exchange for his services could not be carried with him. They had to be left behind in the fortified towns complete with surrounding fields, granaries, treasuries, barracks and workshops. These citadels were the protective husks which helped to seed the dissemination of *tekhne* throughout the West. In Syria-Palestine a good example would be Ebla, soon to become one of the most prosperous merchant towns in Syria[109]. In Anatolia the paradigm example would be Troy, a meaner looking place overlooking the crucial trade route across the Dardanelles. By about 3000 BC there was even a modest little citadel based on Anatolian antecedents as far away as Thessaly[110].

(2.8) And then there was Egypt: "Lo, the vile Asiatic!"[111]

According to Redford:

> 'One of the outstanding questions plaguing prehistorians of Egypt is when did that fundamental change in human economy from food

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[107] Harriet Crawford, (1978), *op cit*, p.132.
[108] Rowton, (1973), *op cit*, 202-203.
[109] Bermant & Weitzman, *Ebla: An Archaeological Enigma*, p.153-169.
[110] Macqueen, *op cit*, p.17.
[111] 'Lo, the vile Asiatic!' is an Egyptian exclamation from the wisdom literature of Akhtoy III, quoted by D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, And Israel In Ancient Times*, see chapter 4 & p.67.

> gathering to food production take place in northeast Africa? Was it an indigenous development, or were the primitive Nile dwellers beneficiaries of the importation of agriculture from outside? [112]

On the one hand there is the 'out of Africa' argument. We know that there were early attempts with agriculture in the Nile valley at a time when cultivation was still unknown in the fertile crescent, about 12,000 BC[113]. Stone tools have been found above the 2nd Cataract with traces of 'sickle-gloss', and pollen analysis confirms the presence of wheat and barley. According to Grimal, these cultures bear 'many points of resemblence to that of neolithic cultures'[114]. We also know that the Sahara was not always the desert that it is now, and that it had 'wet and dry' periods. Research has uncovered some very early settlements in the Sahara, together with evidence of the emergence of cattle pastoralism. One theory is that when climate change dessicated the Sahara for the last time, many of its people were driven into the Nile valley where they intermingled with the hunter-gathering communities already there, bringing with them cattle, wheat, barley and flax[115].

On the other hand there is an 'out of Asia' argument. This thesis builds upon the assumption that the optimum habitat for the domestication of wheat and barley, sheep, goats and cattle was the 'Mediterranean type woodlands of the Fertile Crescent[116]. The idea is that there was no great rainfall belt in North East Africa to sponsor the hundreds of agricultural experiments that were possible beneath the mountains of the fertile crescent, so that African agricultural experiments were only sporadic and received less sustained natural encouragement. Perhaps this can explain why the precocious discoveries above the Nile seem to fizzle out by the turn of the tenth millennium BC, just when the fertile crescent laboratories of Asia were getting down to work.

What about the dogs? The dog is our oldest friend, the mammal that joined forces with us way back in the Upper Palaeolithic, the animal who taught us how to domesticate nature and then bore witness to the domestication of ourselves[117]. Perhaps

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[112] *Ibid*, p.5.
[113] Nicolas Grimal, *A History of Egypt*, p.20-21.
[114] *Ibid.*
[115] Frank. J. Yurco, 'Black Athena: An Egyptological Review', in Lefkowitz & MacLean-Rogers, *Black Athena Revisited*, p.66-67.
[116] Redford, *op cit*, p.5.
[117] James Serpell, 'From paragon to pariah: some reflections on human attitudes to dogs', in James Serpell (ed), *The Domestic Dog: its evolution, behaviour and interactions with people*, p.247.

the Egyptian hound can give us an allegorical answer to Redford's second question. Most dogs from western Asia are generally thought to have descended from *canis lupis*, i.e. the wolf, producing *canis familiaris*[118]. The Egyptian hound was a bit different, a rare cross breed between the wolf and the North African jackal, producing *canis lupaster domesticus*:

> 'The dog's probable descent from the jackal is suggested by several factors: its distinctive red-gold colour, its capacity as a scavenger, and its very curious practice of 'calling'. This consists of the articulation of a sort of keening moan which the dog will sustain, varying it in pitch and tone and maintaining a dialogue with its interlocutor.'[119]

Dogs do tend to follow their owners around. Egyptian dogs were much like many other working dogs found across the Near East, but with a distinctive African component. We might say then that the Egyptian neolithic was the product of sustained dialogue between North Africa and Western Asia. This exchange was maintained by the nomadic tribes of people, dogs and other animals that wandered back and forth along the corridor of Sinai, from the fringes of the Nilotic plains to the Jordan, and by the constant migration of peoples travelling in the hope that the grass might be greener on the other side.

Farming villages only really get going along the floodplains of the Nile from about 5500 BC, maybe four centuries later than along the floodplains of Mesopotamia[120]. At this point the historiography of the Nile already begins to divide between Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt. Lower Egypt first supported encampments around the lake at the modern town of El Fayyum, living on the combined economy of cereals, hunting and fishing: a culture generally known as 'Fayyum A-B'. Rice reckons that the Fayyum were seasonal visitors, dwelling in tents made from animal skins[121]. A contemporary settlement has been found at Merimda on the western edge of the delta. Butzer compares this site to those of the Mesopotamian Ubaid culture and the earliest

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[118] Juliet Clutton-Brock, 'Origins of the dog: domestication and early history', in James Serpell, *ibid*, p.8-9.

[119] The breed left Egypt by sea at the end of the Pharaonic period, and then somehow became marooned on the Maltese island of Gozo until a 'small colony' was discovered earlier this century. See Michael Rice, *Egypt's Making: The Origins of Ancient Egypt 5000 - 2000 BC*, p.291-296.

[120] Knapp, *op cit*, p.34-35 & Roaf, *op cit*, p.51. The Egyptian chronology plumped for here cleaves to the self-confidence of Frank J. Yurco, in Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers, *op cit*, p.xix.

[121] Michael Rice, *op cit*, p.29.

layers of settlement at Eridu[122]. From here human habitation seems to spread and sedentarize. By 4000 BC there was a site at El Omari toward the south eastern edge of the delta. By 3500 BC settlement has moved deep inside the delta itself onto the islands or 'turtle backs', just like some of the earliest Mesopotamian layers at Ur, Uruk, Nippur and Lagash. Excavated sites in the Nile Delta so far include Buto, Sais and Mendes[123]. The apex of the delta also witnessed the settlement of Maadi, where large quantities of copper ore have been found[124]. There were probably many other settlements such as these in Lower Egypt which are now lost beneath the alluvium[125]. In addition to irrigated agriculture, these cultures made stone tools, weapons and vases. They also manufactured pottery. By at least 3500 BC they were also working copper.

Upper Egypt also sustained settlements from 5500 BC, practicing a mixed economy of grain cultivation, animal husbandry, hunting and fishing: the culture generally known as 'Badarian'. These settlements lay beside the series of flood basins that were strung along the floor of the Nile valley. Every year these basins would be replenished with silt and water by the reliable summer floods. As the floods receded the Badarians would sow the basins with grain for a winter harvest. Beyond the basins there was still enough rainfall through the sixth and fifth millennia to support the grazing of many domesticated animals, particularly along the wadis where accessory ground moisture was available[126]. The Badarians became excellent stockbreeders. They kept their cattle and continued to experiment with other native animals. And when they encountered Asiatic sheep and goats that were hardier and better suited to life in the valley, they took them and adopted them as their own[127]. For tools and weapons the Badarians relied on stone and woodwork. For containers they had very fine pottery. For trade the Badarians worked ivory into things like combs, and had just begun to experiment with the working of copper.

By 4500 BC this Badarian culture was successful enough to swim upstream and spawn the so-called Naqada I. During this phase the heavy reliance on hunting appears to diminish rapidly, and improved farming techniques lead to an increase in the density

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[122] K.W. Butzer, 'Physical Conditions In Eastern Europe, Western Asia And Egypt Before The Period Of Agricultural Settlement', *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume 1 part 1, p.60.
[123] Redford, *op cit*, p.15.
[124] Rice, *op cit.*
[125] K.W. Butzer, *op cit*, p.58. See also: Rice, *op cit*, p.17 & 25.
[126] Butzer, *op cit*, p.67.
[127] Rice, *op cit*, p.27.

of population. The combination of hunting, pastoral resource depletion and incipient aridity had begun to thin out the local populations of rhino, elephant, giraffe and gazelle, but there was still enough savannah for the pastoralists to continue refining their stock of domestic animals. Meanwhile, back on the flood basin, emmer wheat was now grown and the living was easy enough for the dog to become a familiar part of the household[128]. River boats got made out of papyrus, first for fishing, then for river traffic. Ivory, stone and pottery work became more elaborate and sophisticated. Copper was shaped into pins and harpoon heads. In addition to copper, some Naqada people began to experiment with the properties of gold.

Gold seems to have upset the chalcolithic equilibrium in Egypt. Up until the onset of the Naqada II phase, 3800-3300 BC, Egyptian development seems to be travelling along a fairly smooth and autochtonous path. Judging from the cemeteries the greatest density of village settlement was in the Delta[129]. In the Egyptian Delta then, developments were analogous to what had already happened in Ubaid Mesopotamia. A major difference between the two civilizations, however, was the early Egyptian propensity to develop an 'Upper Egypt' all the way along the river valley up to the first cataract. In Mesopotamia the river plains above the delta lead to where the Euphrates, Tigris and Diyala converged. The floods here were violent, unpredictable and often disastrous. The flood basins were large and difficult to control[130]. Consequently, it took time for an 'Upper Mesopotamia' to develop and when it did floods were always liable to throw things into reverse. Egypt, by contrast, had just one river with a long line of river valley flood basins flanked on both sides by dry savannah; with only wadis for tributaries that produced very marginal, seasonal quantities of water. The source waters from Ethiopia thus gave the Nile a summer flood profile that was relatively regular, gentle and predictable. Flood basins here were smaller and easier to manage, affording significant encouragement to farmers[131]. Consequently, and in contrast to Mesopotamia, an Upper Egypt did develop from the start, and these developments tended to be cumulative.

Agricultural production was organized upon a flood basin basis. Work in these flood basins thus tended to structure settlement into fairly well defined communal units

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[128] *Ibid*, p.30.
[129] Butzer, *op cit*, p.69.
[130] *Ibid*, p.60.
[131] Knapp, *op cit*, p.32.

which the Egyptians would eventually call *nomes*. In Lower Egypt these flood basin districts were naturally clustered together, forming a concentration of settlement that would have been favourable for third and fourth tier layers of urban development, especially at the apex of the Delta[132]. In Upper Egypt the flood basins were strung along the river like beads on a string, and so here the matrix of production and settlement was not quite so conducive to third and fourth tiers of urban growth. From this we may deduce that if the political economy of human settlement on the Nile had been left to itself, its society would have continued to grow at a constant rate in a smooth, linear fashion, with the productive power of Lower Egypt providing continuous encouragement for the structural hegemony of Lower Egypt over Upper Egypt.

But the political economy of the Nile was not left to itself; its society did not continue to grow at a constant rate in a smooth, linear fashion, and Lower Egypt does not appear to have secured hegemony over Upper Egypt:

> 'Egypt bounced overnight, as it were, out of the Stone Age and into urban culture. High-rises suddenly replaced mud huts; a civil service superseded the village elders. A new sophisticated focus for human organization filled the void where only chiefdoms had occasionally appeared: a king sat over Egypt'[133]

From 3800 BC, in southern Upper Egypt, certain centres started to outstrip others in size and importance. All centres were situated in places where control over a manageable floodplain was possible. Larger centres were situated in places that were also next to wadis where the community found supportive conditions for the development of a nomadic sector with cattle, sheep and goats. Still larger growth centres were the ones that lay at the mouth of a wadis that led to a caravan trail. Abydos, for example, lay at the mouth of a wadi leading to the western oasis of Dakhleh. Hierakonpolis grew at the mouth of two wadis, one leading west to the oases routes across the Sahara, and one leading east into the Red Sea Hills. Naqada lay opposite the western end of the wadi Hammamat. This wadi was destined to become a well worn route through the hills to the Red Sea[134].

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[132] See Nissan's typology of settlement systems, *op cit*, p.41.
[133] Redford, *op cit*, p.3.
[134] *Ibid*, p.14.

That the enclosed nomads of Egypt had an interlocking network of exchange links with the lands beyond Sinai is suggested by the fact that their sheep and goats were of south western Asiatic strains. That is probably how tiny amounts of ivory and gold from Upper Egypt first found their way into Mesopotamia. Ivory products would have been highly prized, but with Nubian gold the Upper Egyptians unleashed an appetite that appears to have galvanized the ancient world political economy.

Once the first gold items percolated their way into the towns of Sumer they prompted an eager source of demand. It was around this time that the Egyptian Naqada II & III acquired the name of 'gold town'[135]. How the trade manifested itself is a matter of debate. Rice itemizes three possible trade routes: one by sea from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea around the Arabian coast; another by land across the Arabian peninsula; and a third up north towards Syria and then down to Mesopotamia via the Euphrates[136].

The first two suggestions are feasible. Evidence is accumulating to suggest that the Gulf and the Red Sea were the nursery slopes of mercantile trade. There were stopping places and potential intermediaries at Bahrain, Oman, and the mysterious 'land of Punt'. The Red Sea also happens to be the scene for the first known tale of a shipwrecked sailor marooned upon a desert island[137]. We also know that the Arabian peninsula was not as arid as it is today, so there may have been an oasis route similar to ones we already know about traversing the Sahara. Sadly, however, Arabian archaeology is still in its infancy[138]. The Arabian contribution to the political economy of the ancient Near East has to remain a disturbing source of aporia as far as this case study is concerned.

The third suggestion of trade between Mesopotamia and Egypt via the dimorphic chiefdoms of Syria-Palestine is the safest line for intuitive reasoning, having a longer tradition of scholarship behind it that has survived a respectable length of time

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[135] Redford, *op cit*, p.19.

[136] Rice, *op cit*, p.40-47.

[137] 'The Shipwrecked Sailor, or the Isle of the Serpent', translation by Joseph Kaster in *The Wisdom Of Ancient Egypt*, p.282-287.

[138] In the first volume of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, published in 1970, Arabia hardly gets a mention. Some exciting work has been done since then, but it is still too fresh to the discipline of Archaeology for a mere eavesdropper to be able to absorb and assess. For an extensive bibliography see Michael Rice, *The Search For The Paradise Land.*

for critical appraisal[139]. We know that neolithic sea shells found their way up to Palestine from the Red Sea, and that obsidian found its way down to Palestine from Anatolia[140]. Palestine has also traditionally been seen as a potential source of salt. On the western coast of the Red Sea there was a Naqada I village with Badarian graves near the modern port of Quseir[141]. From here small boats might have taken the sea route up the Gulf of Aqaba; here goods would be exchanged for those from the Jordan valley where settlements like Jericho, Beth-Shan and Beth Yerah were experiencing an increase in size and density of population[142]. Alternatively some goods might have taken a coastal route up to the Gulf of Suez, and from there overland along the Mediterranean coast toward the Lebanon. Along this trail goods could stop off at new settlements like Laschish and Megiddo. Then there was the possibility of a river and sea route that bypassed Palestine altogether, though it is likely that this sea route only got going towards the end of the fourth millennium[143]. The Nile was navigable from the first cataract to the delta. From here boats could hug the Levantine coast until they hit ports like Byblos and Ugarit, from there overland to Carchemish or Ebla, next to Habuba Kabira, and then down the Euphrates to Sumer[144].

Why was it necessary for so many merchants to tread a tortuous route through 200 kilometres of mountainous terrain when all they had to do was to float their goods down the Nile to the Delta? Perhaps there was a degree of rivalry between Lower and Upper Egypt even then. Perhaps the string of settlements downstream expected to be paid prohibitive tariffs for safe passage along their stretch of the river, making the overland route a necessary bypass. Whatever the reason, by the Naqada II phase there were several Badarian villages on the Red Sea coast. Behind them in the hills lay the wadi Hammamat. To find the wadi Hammamat on a modern atlas you look for the natural chink in the mountains between the town of Qena and the port of Quseir. The people of Naqada II thought that boats were important enough to them to make pictures

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[139] William Ward, (1963), 'Egypt and the East Mediterranean from Predynastic Times to the End of the Old Kingdom', *Journal Of The Economic And Social History Of The Orient*, volume 6, p.1-57. William Ward, (1964), 'Relations Between Egypt And Mesopotamia From Prehistoric Times To The End Of The Middle Kingdom', *Journal Of The Economic And Social History Of The Orient*, volume 7, p.1-45 & p.121-135. Also: Redford, *op cit*, p.19-24.

[140] Amnon Ben-Tor, (1986), 'The Trade Relations Of Palestine In The Early Bronze Age', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, volume 29, p.3.

[141] Ward, (1964), *op cit*, p.29.

[142] *Ibid*, p.6.

[143] Casson, *op cit*.

[144] Roaf, *op cit*, p.79.

of them on rocks, on pottery and in paintings. At the same time lapis lazuli beads were placed in Naqada II graves. The appearance of lapis lazuli is significant because of their origin. The only two known sources for them are Badakhshan in north-east Afghanistan and Quetta in Pakistan. Large numbers of them found their way to Mesopotamia where the Sumerians used them as status items. Then they start to turn up in Upper Egypt:

> 'Lapis appears in Egypt dated to the early Naqada II period, late in the fourth millennium, often in association with foreign, specifically Mesopotamian elements. It is often found in context with gold or gold mounted objects and generally and not altogether surprisingly seems to be identified with richer burials, suggesting that its acquisition was a perquisite of the developing elites in the communities which were beginning to assume a formal, hierarchic status in the valley.'[145]

In other words Egypt had become linked up to a trade network of considerable reach. A steady trickle of merchants began to arrive at the villages of Upper Egypt eager to do business. The local leaders who had secured control over access to the gold supplies on behalf of their community suddenly found that they were wealthy. Some of this wealth was invested back into those villages destined to become major central place trading towns, where local elites and foreign merchants would meet to conduct business.

During the Naqada II phase two major towns emerged in Upper Egypt, Naqada and Hierakonpolis. But during the Naqada III phase, about 3300-3100 BC, Hierakonpolis appears to emerge as the dominant player. A temple was built there based upon Mesopotamian design with a tell-tale walled oval enclosure, possibly with Sumerian assistance[146]. As with Sumer, the Egyptian temple became a centre for the genesis of complexity through the development of a production structure, a financial structure, a security structure and a knowledge structure. Within the walls there are indicators of the appropriation and redistribution of an agricultural surplus, an accounting system, a standing army and a priesthood. Under the aegis of the local god a new altar was opened up for international trade. Curiously, the Naqada III merchants have a specialist god to accompany him on his journey[147].

The wealth from the gold trade attracted not only merchants bearing precious foreign goods but also craftsmen who brought with them skills that had already been pioneered in Asia. Crucial advances in hydraulic engineering appear to have been

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[145] Rice, *op cit*, p.89.
[146] *Ibid*, p.90-91.

absorbed by Egypt at this time[148]. New pottery forms with no antecedents in the Nile valley began to supplement the local styles[149]. The craft of the coppersmith became more widespread and advanced dramatically in technique[150]. This in turn had a knock on effect in terms of the Egyptian ability to work stone. Mud brick architecture was used in ways that had antecedents from Mesopotamia[151]. At Hierakonpolis brick and stone was used to build city walls and the grand city gate. Tools of central administration began to make an appearance too. Cylinder seals inspired by Mesopotamian manufacture began to arrive in Egypt from about 3500 BC, and soon became adapted for local use[152]. By 3100 BC the Egyptians had adopted the Sumerian concept of writing and taken it to a new level of sophistication[153]. In short, much of the fourth millennium appears to have been a period of Egyptian openess and deference towards the Asian world, during which it absorbed many of the skills on offer and adapted them for its own needs.

Trade contacts with the outside world during Naqada II and particularly Naqada III appear to coincide with prolonged bouts of conflict in Egypt. There is not enough evidence to say much for certain, but a plausible case can be made to suggest that there was a positive correlation between the two[154]. Some of the most impressive fortifications found so far were built to protect those settlements that were most involved with early trade. Hierakonpolis in particular was defended by a defensive wall 9.5 metres thick in places with a monumental gateway designed to baffle raiders[155]. We may deduce that the wealth brought by trade excited the predatory instincts of gods who fancied they stood a chance of seizing it by force. When these threats became more persistant Egypt witnessed the rise of kings. But the interesting thing about these predynastic conflicts and the security structure that grew out of them was Egypt's

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147 *Ibid.*

148 Baumgartel, 'Predynastic Egypt', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume 1 part 1, p.481-483.

149 Redford, *op cit*, p.17. Ward, (1964), *op cit*, p.6-8.

150 Redford, *ibid.*

151 Redford, *ibid.* Ward (1964), *op cit*, p.19-27.

152 Roaf, *op cit*, p.73.

153 Florian Coulmas, *The Writing Systems of the World*, p.59-61.

154 An alternative model based on a 'dessication hypothesis' is summarized by Amelie Kuhrt, *op cit*, p.132-135. However, if we cross-reference this with Nissan's hypothesis for Sumer we may deduce that dessication may help account for the acceleration of indigenous human conflict, but cannot explain why certain groups from upper Egypt were so much more successful in that conflict than others. Contacts with Aisa provide that extra explanatory dimension.

155 Rice, *op cit*, p.86 & plate 39.

propensity for political unification which, as we have observed, is a striking contrast to the particularism of Sumer. One explanation could be environmental. Once Hierakonpolis had secured a hegemony over the towns of Abydos and Naqada for example, this hegemony remained undisturbed by the relatively controlled flood cycle enjoyed by the Egyptians. The main channel of the Nile remained the same over the millennia, offering the Egyptian settlement patterns a political stability that was not possible in Mesopotamia.

A second possible explanation for the early Egyptian propensity for unification is that trade contacts during the fourth milliennium stimulated power imbalances in the regional politics of Egypt, whilst at the same time stimulating a profound sense of insecurity vis-a-vis the outside world. Trade furnished regional elites within Egypt with the wealth to finance military and technological developments that made it feasible for them to assert sovereignty over other less fortunate elites along the Nile valley. At the same time trade sponsored a sense of vulnerability to social forces beyond the Nile valley. Given what we know about the many transfers of *tekhne* from Mesopotamia, we may surmise that early Egyptians would have been aware of their 'second comer' status. Syrian, Palestinian or even Mesopotamian merchants may have returned home with tales of Egyptian gold combined with information on the relative naivety of the Egyptian defences compared to the great cities of Sumer. Certainly there are artefacts like the Jebel el Arak knife which suggest that some expeditions from Asia were becoming less like trade missions and more like raids for loot and tribute[156]. We also know that the predatory raid for booty as a means of accumulation was already a factor in the international relations of the Near East[157]. What is envisaged here is that an Egyptian elite managed to defeat potential rivals from within the Nile valley, then began to use its sovereignty over the Nile from the Delta to the first cataract to anticipate the threat of predatory raids sponsored by the dimorphic chiefdoms of Syria-Palestine, and then secure state monopoly over the mines of Egypt, Nubia and Sinai.

According to Egyptian legend, the man who claimed the credit for the first attempt to unify the kingdoms of upper and lower Egypt under the control of one sovereign was Menes-Narmer, the first Pharaoh of the first dynasty from about 3100

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[156] Rice, *op cit*, p.114.

[157] Christopher Edens & Philip Kohl, 'Trade and World Systems in Early Bronze Age Western Asia', in *Trade and Exchange in Prehistoric Europe*, edited by Scarre & Healy, p.29-30.

BC, initiating the 'Archaic Era'[158]. If 'Narmer's palette' is anything to go by violence was a key ingredient[159]. On one side Menes is shown wearing the white crown of upper Egypt, about to strike a kneeling enemy of lower Egypt with a mace. Menes has assumed his monopoly over the use of force. Behind him is his son bearing the king's sandals, the loyal heir apparent. The new dynasty is built to last! Beneath this two more enemies are in flight. On the reverse side Menes is wearing the red crown of lower Egypt, still carrying his mace. He looks on serenely at the headless corpses of the kings he has defeated. Standard bearers hold heralds aloft to signify the sovereignty Menes now enjoys over all the communities in the land. In the background is a high prowed-ship, the mode of transport and communication upon which his hegemony over the Nile relies. Beneath this there is a bull tearing down the fortifications of a city, and yet another enemy flees in terror.

It seems sheer force was not enough to secure the legitimacy of the Egyptian state over the long term. Menes instigated a policy of conciliation with the north in order to consolidate his rule[160]. The sovereignty of the god-king was unstable in the delta whilst he simply remained a symbol of Upper Egyptian conquest. He tried to make his regime more palatable by marrying a northern princess whose royal name was changed to Neithhotep ('may Neith be appeased'); Neith being the deity of Sais in the Delta. By producing heirs of mixed descent and turning his dynasty into a product of both cultures the god-king internalised its conflicts and cultivated an image as a force for consonance. This consonance was called *maat*, logographed by the priests as a naked adolescent goddess with a feather in her hair, whose beauty emanated from the mouth of the hegemon[161]:

> 'Usually translated as truth, justice, order, balance, or righteousness, *maat* is more accurately characterized as a cosmic or divine force for harmony or stability, dating back to the beginnings of time.'[162]

We know that this goddess was invented very early on in Egyptian history because her name is compounded in the names of some of the first queens. *Maat* was the security

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[158] Modern pre-historiography tends to see the unification as a prolonged affair, which Egyptian legend subsequently telescoped into the heroic figure of Menes.
[159] Rice, *op cit*, p.107-112 & p.157.
[160] Grimal, *op cit*, p.49.
[161] Rice, *op cit*, p.57. Frankfort (et al), *op cit*, p.14, 82, 84, 88, 105, 108-9, 369 & 375.
[162] Knapp, *op cit*, p.103.

dividend that the king's subjects enjoyed through the sovereignty of his divine voice, the deliverance from conflict wrought by his unification of the two lands.

In Egypt the king was not just an agent of the gods, as in Mesopotamia, he was a god himself. The divinity of the Pharaoh may be another indicator of the relative insecurity of Egypt vis-a-vis the outside world. Given that the Egyptian creator god was sensitive to his vulnerability to foreign predator gods at a very early stage in his development, the Egyptian priesthood was unable to cultivate the same formative independence from the king that the Sumerian temple had enjoyed. In other words, the theocracy of Egyptian civilization was born with a club in one hand.

Being in control of the treasury, the pharaoh was able to finance public works. Menes was one of the first in a long line of god-kings depicted ritually cutting canals and building dykes before rejoicing subjects. The Egyptian tradition of using the *tekhne* of hydraulic engineering to help legitimate the authority of the god-king begins around the time of Menes, who is supposed to have diverted the course of the Nile to found his capital city of Memphis. The site of Memphis was chosen deliberately on the margin between upper and lower Egypt. It was both a symbolic and strategic site from which the god-kings consolidated the unification of the two lands. Memphis was a good place from which to despatch troops into lower Egypt, request reinforcements from upper Egypt or, if necessary, beat a hasty retreat into upper Egypt.

In the longer term there was also a political dimension. Memphis was the appropriate place from which a Pharaoh could distance himself slightly from his southern origins and make concessions to the north. Being so close to the delta he could observe its culture, adopt some of its mannerisms, patronise a few of its gods. Memphis was well placed to nurture a metropolitan culture that could act as a buffer between the two lands. Menes dedicated the temple of this new capital city to Ptah, previously a minor local deity, now promoted to the position of supreme creator-god, the 'craftsman who makes all other gods', patron deity of Egyptian *tekhne*[163]. Here Menes was able to sponsor the development of the crafts to such an extent that the craftsmen began to lose their Mesopotamian accents[164]. No longer did the state have to rely on attracting foreign

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[163] I.E.S. Edwards, 'The Early Dynastic Period In Egypt', *The Cambridge Ancient History* volume I part 2, p.53.
[164] Rice, *op cit*, p.192.

knowledge from abroad. It had a thriving centre of workshops and schools producing craftsmen and priest-scribes of its own.

Menes initiated the foreign policy that slowly became more ambitious throughout the Archaic age. One objective was to secure hegemony over the mineral resources that lay just beyond the borders and then to protect this hegemony from foreign incursion[165]. The first expeditions were to Nubia, where most of the gold mines were located[166]. During the Naqada era the Nubian chiefs appear to have grown quite powerful. Burial sites contain symbolic objects of wealth, knowledge and military power that appear to match contemporary sites in Egypt. After the unification of Egypt, however, these potential rivals were eliminated[167]. Then the Egyptians began to turn their attention to the resources of copper and turquoise in the Sinai[168]. Before Egyptian unification the resources of Sinai appear to have been open to elements from within Palestine But in the annals of the reigns of the successors of Menes the priests begin to make entries such as 'smiting the Asiatics', or 'first occasion of smiting the east' as the key events by which to commemorate the year[169]. Artistic motifs begin to incorporate shaggy-haired kilted foreigners with arms manacled, or as cowering figures about to be struck down by the confident profile of the Egyptian god-king, accompanied with captions like: 'lo, the vile Asiatic'.

(2.9.) The Meditteranean Rim: The 'Upper Sea' and the 'Great Green'

The 'ship of state' is not just a metaphor for poets and philosophers. It contains an image of the state which is well grounded in historical fact. Shipbuilding came with state building. As we have noted, the first shipwrights made boats for river traffic on the Tigris and the Euphrates. The earliest evidence of the use of sails to harness the energy of the wind has been found in a grave at Eridu, dated about 4000 BC. The Persian Gulf was friendly enough to tempt some of these boats out to sea. The earliest shipwrecks would have happened here, where there were plenty of islands waiting for the first castaways. Eventually some of these islands became important stepping stones to Oman, which became an important source of Mesopotamian copper. We have also touched on

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[165] Grimal, *op cit*, p.27.
[166] Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials And Industries*, p.257.
[167] Rice, *op cit*, p.136-7.
[168] Lucas, *op cit*, p.231-5.
[169] Redford, *op cit*, p.33.

the probable importance of the ship in the development of Upper Egypt through its contacts with Asia via the Red Sea. The importance of river transport along the Nile for the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt in the formation of the first nation state has been rather taken as given, but was briefly alluded to in our discussion of the Narmer Palette.

One thing that we have not noted so far is the advantage of sea transport over land transport in the ancient world. The Mesopotamian caravan routes into Anatolia and Syria-Palestine were fine when civilized trade was only just getting going, but when it came to bulk and weight over long distance the most efficient way of transporting goods was over water. The Mediterranean is the largest inland sea on earth, offering the communities living around it a large natural transport medium together with easy access to shelter from relatively benign storms[170]. By the beginning of the third millennium, whilst Egyptian unification was being consolidated, the combined skills of the shipwright and the seaman had matured sufficiently to make it feasible to exploit this advantage and accelerate the dissemination of *tekhne* along the strandlines of Europe.

It is important to stress that Near Eastern mercantile activity in the Mediterranean did not develop in a vacuum. It was built upon an already existing network of seaborne exchange relations stretching far back into the neolithic. In a sense, coastline communities were the pioneers of international relations because their existential circumstances anticipated the paradox of cultural isolation combined with the need for interaction. In the island clusters of the Cyclades, for example, where tiny farming communities were scattered in low densities across a semi-arid archipelago, total autarky was never an option. Things like exogamy and aid in adversity were essential for survival. But seaborne neolithic exchange was not necessarily important just for the value of the goods in themselves[171]. Sometimes the goods exchanged were simply marble tokens. What was equally important was the mutual recognition of the need to keep in touch, rather like the exchange of Christmas cards. Neolithic exchange in the Mediterranean was often not so much for the goods in themselves but for the invisible baggage of news, information and the stimulation of new ideas that came with them. This is why neolithic Crete and the Cyclades display cultural artefacts resonant

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[170] Relative to the great oceans. The Mediterranean was no millpond and still has to be treated with respect by sailors today.

[171] Cyprian Broodbank, 'Ulysses without sails: trade, distance, knowledge and power in the early Cyclades', *World Archaeology*, Volume 24 No.3.

with mainland Greece and Anatolia. They were neither closed to, nor dependant upon the surrounding world. They were simply connected. So when Egyptian ships began to skirt the Levantine coast, or when Syrio-Palestinian ships hugged the coast around Anatolia heading toward the Dodecanese, these expeditions would not have been completely blind. They would have set off with a pretty clear idea of what they were looking for and where they were going. There was a subtle interplay between autochtonous and diffusionist forces. Long distance navigation by the foreign ship would have depended upon the captain's ability to tap the resources of local knowledge accumulated through the interconnecting network of shorter journeys that had been pioneered with the paddle and the canoe.

Trading networks there were already, but Near Eastern civilization did initiate a qualitative and quantitative shift in the nature of production for exchange in the Mediterranean from about 3000 BC. The theocratic elites of Sumer and Egypt were not particularly interested in keeping in touch. What they wanted was luxury goods to buttress the authority of the god-king and his state apparatus. It is possible that the first attempts to use the Mediterranean to this end were based at the Syrian site of Ugarit, sponsored by the appetites of Sumer[172]. Here was the coastal village on the Mediterranean that lay nearest to the Euphrates, offering a sea bypass around the Amanus to the 'silver mountains' of Anatolia. Later in history, Ugarit often seems to act as a nexus within an Anatolia-Syria-Mesopotamia axis, cousin rather than sibling to the Canaanite ports of Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre.

The first unchallengable historical records of mercantile activity in the Mediterranean, however, are between Egypt and Byblos. Byblos was a neolithic coastal village with a natural harbour that happened to be situated at the foot of the Lebanon. Being perched upon alluvial floodplains and flanked mainly by savannah and desert, Egypt was not rich in timber[173]. This had never bothered traditional Egyptian settlements much. For making things like boats and shelter they traditionally relied on their ingenuity with indigenous materials like papyrus. With the growth of cities like Hierakonpolis and Memphis, however, and for the palatial tombs necessary for their attendant elites, the appetite for timber as a superior construction material became more persistant. The foothills of the Lebanon above Byblos were rich in wood, particularly

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[172] Max Mallowan, 'The Development Of Cities From Al-'Ubaid To The End Of Uruk 5', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume 1 part 1, p.418-20.

cedar, which only grew in a few patches along the coastal mountains round the Mediterranean. Byblian cedar has been found in the 1st Dynasty tombs of Egypt. Early Egyptian annals such as the Palermo Stone mention 'Byblos boats', meaning vessels seaworthy enough to navigate the Mediterranean. They also mention cedar oil and resin, which has been found in the bandages that were used to bind the bodies of their mummified kings[174].

It was certainly possible to carry timber overland. The legends of Gilgamesh of Uruk mention his expeditions to the cedar mountains of Lebanon for timber earlier in the fourth millennium, and he would have had no choice in the matter[175]. But timber does have bulk and weight, which would have given the Egyptians an incentive to exploit the advantages of sea transport. The first 'Byblos boats' were made from papyrus, slightly adapted from those used to navigate the Nile, but after a while the Egyptians began to perceive the advantages of using the very timber they intended to import[176]. Under Sneferu of the fourth dynasty, around 2600 BC, an Egyptian text records the arrival of 'forty ships from Byblos laden with cedars', out of which the Pharaoh had three ships made. With the remaining offcuts the carpenters made doors for the royal treasury[177].

To begin with the local people around Byblos were probably just an essential source of labour in the forests were the trees had to be felled and then taken down to the shore. Later they appear to have been recruited to man the ships that brought the cedar to Egypt. A scene from the pyramid temple of Sahure (2500 BC) portrays a wooden boat manned by a crew who are all drawn in the fashion of the classic Egyptian stereotype of the Asiatic. But these stereotypes assume rather uncharacteristic postures. No longer are they cowering figures being smitten by Egyptian god-kings. Instead they adopt postures of obedience and suppliance. The caption above reads: 'Hail to thee, O Sahure, god of the living! May we behold thy beauty!'[178]. By supplying the Egyptian theocracy the people from the valley of cedars acquired an early presence in the development of seafaring skills along the Levantine coast. It also made sense for the Egyptians to encourage a shipbuilding capacity to be located next to the source of the

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[173] Lucas, *op cit*, p.488.
[174] Gerhard Herm, *The Phoenicians*, p.35.
[175] Redford, *op cit*, p.38.
[176] Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seafaring in the Ancient World.*
[177] Herm, *op cit*, p.34. & Donald Harden, *The Phoenicians*, p.40.

new material so that the timber did not have to be transported all the way to Memphis. The people of the valley of cedars thus also became excellent shipwrights[179].

Byblos highlights the differential nature of Egyptian foreign policy as it matured towards the peak of the Old Kingdom. The once proud kingdoms of Nubia to the south were now merely part of Egypt's backyard, important for tribute in the form of gold with a periodic rebellion that would be crushed. The Libyans to the west could sometimes be a nuisance, but would be brushed off without much effort and possessed little that was worth stealing. Meanwhile, the Asiatics to the immediate east had to endure sustained Egyptian campaigns of military aggression. Most likely they were simply close enough to be a potential threat to the security of the Delta and were reluctant to accept the Egyptian claims of monopoly over the mines of the Sinai. Perhaps there was also rivalry over their ability to control what were once crucial overland trade routes along the Levantine coast and up the Jordan. Anyway, once the sea route to Byblos starts to take off toward the end of the second dynasty, trade overland through southern Palestine goes into a steady decline. Egyptian epitaphs on the question of Asian smiting become noticeably more bombastic. Many towns are destroyed and abandoned and the place seems to become a pioneer in the political economy of underdevelopment[180]. Old Kingdom foreign policy toward the Asiatics of Byblos appears to have been rather different. It may be summed up as the strategy of 'creating a sphere of influence by setting up ties of mutual obligation'[181]. In practice this meant the regular despatch of embassies laden with gifts both for the god and the chief of the target area, whereupon the emissary would invite the local chief to reciprocate by offering the Egyptian god-king supplies of the required material, as is intimated in the tale of *The Shipwrecked Sailor*[182].

This foreign policy appears to have been highly successful. Most monarchs of the Old Kingdom are represented in the Egyptian gifts found at Byblos. The Egyptians got their timber and the elite of Byblos changed. They began to wear Egyptian dress and adorn themselves with Egyptian jewels[183]. It was in the interest of the Egyptian god-king to help the local elite develop its local power base and thus provide them with both

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[178] Redford, *op cit*, p.52.
[179] *Ibid*, p.40.
[180] Amnon Ben-Tor, *op cit*, p.18-20. Also Redford, *op cit*, p.33-37.
[181] Redford, *op cit*, p.40.
[182] Kaster, *op cit*, p.285.

the motive and the ability to ensure reliable supplies. Soon Byblos had its own temple constructed using masonry techniques derived from Egypt[184]. To protect this elevation the town was enclosed by walls, and the Egyptian records begin to speak of 'fortress Byblos'[185]. Simultaneously, Byblos also acquired the use hieroglyphic script that the Egyptians had brought with them. By 2300 BC Byblos was not just a source of timber, it was also an important Egyptian doorway to the east, which the Egyptians called *Qedem*. About 200km north of Byblos by sea lay the port of Ugarit, offering further contacts with Anatolia as well as with the overland routes to Ebla, Carchemish and Emar on the Euphrates. Eastwards from Byblos over the Lebanon lay the stepping stone towns of Damascus and Qadesh, a blistering 400km away from Mari. With the development of shipbuilding and seafaring skills there were also opportunities to the west. About 200 km west there was the island of Cyprus, soon to become a handy source of copper. From Cyprus one could hug the southern coast of Anatolia to the Aegean. Here Egypto-Palestinian embassies could choose to disburse their gifts along the coast of western Anatolia, Crete, the Cyclades or indeed the Greek mainland. Byblos became so useful that it found a place in Egyptian mythology and the Byblian goddess *Baalat* began to merge with the Egyptian goddess *Hathor*.

The only trouble with being rich in a place like Syria-Palestine was that it was a dangerous place to flash the cash, especially when your only guardian is about to go through a major internal crisis which will bring about the end of the Old Kingdom and take Egypt into the First Intermediate Period, 2234-2040 BC. Joseph Kastar summarizes the First Intermediate thus:

> 'we find that the strong central authority of the king that obtained during the Old Kingdom breaks down completely, and Egypt resolves itself into its constituent districts or provinces, called *nomes*, with the power wielded by the various nome chiefs, each the authority in his own petty domain. We have lists of royal names of the Seventh to Eleventh dynasties, but these kings are shadowy figures with, apparently, merely nominal rule.'[186]

Redford cautions that paucity of evidence makes it the 'height of sophomoric hubris' to imagine that we can find causes for the decline of the Old Kingdom[187]. Then he draws

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[183] Herm, *op cit*, p.35.
[184] Redford, *op cit*.
[185] *Ibid*, p.43.
[186] Joseph Kaster, *op cit*, p.26.
[187] Redford, *op cit*, p.59-63.

our attention to three important trends. Firstly, central government begins to suffer from a progressive shrinkage of the tax base. For some obscure reason lost beneath the debris, the Egyptian state suddenly feels compelled to give away so many tax breaks that it can no longer afford to finance anything. Secondly, there is a general loss of respect for central authority which appears to have discredited itself in some way, and powers become devolved to the regions. Thirdly, the Egyptian tradition of *maat* begins to break down. Rich manorial families in the provinces feather their tombs whilst famine stalks the land and the crime rate soars[188]. As the pillars of theocratic government in Memphis fall into terminal crisis the national frontiers cease to be policed, and Egyptian texts begin to complain of 'Asiatic' incursions. In short, during the First Intermediate Period Egypt was hardly in a position to formulate domestic policy, let alone pursue a foreign policy. The god of Byblos was on her own.

Sometime between 2300 and 2100 BC Byblos was sacked, and the temple of *Baalat-Hathor* was destroyed by force and burnt[189]. One theory holds that the key agents of this destruction were impoverished marauders from Southern Palestine who had been the chief victims of Egyptian 'Asiatic' campaigns of the Old Kingdom, but there were plenty of other potential marauders around at the time. Being so well connected by trade routes Byblos had became embroiled in the political economy of the Near East as a whole and it had become part of the buffer zone caught between Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Mesopotamia the Sumerian age of anarchical city states was already drawing to a close. Urukagina, the desperate legal reformer of Lagash, had been stamped out by Lugalzaggisi the *ensi* of Umma[190]. Lugalzaggisi then proceeded to try to extinguish the Sumerian tradition of particularism. Official records in Nippur put it like this:

> 'Enlil gave to Lugalzaggisi the kingship of the nation, ...put all the lands at his feet, and from east to west made them subject to him; then from the Lower Sea along the Tigris and Euphrates to the Upper Sea, he put their routes in good order for him. From east to west, Enlil permitted him no rival; under him the lands rested contentedly.'[191]

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[188] See 'The Admonitions of Ipuwer', in Kastar, *op cit*, p.206-213.

[189] Herm, *op cit*, p.31.

[190] The legal reforms of Urukagina appear to have been motivated by the belated recognition of a legitimation crisis that was undermining the loyalty of his subjects in the defence of his kingdom. They initiated a Mesopotamian tradition that may be compared to the Egyptian tradition of *maat*.

[191] Roaf, *op cit*, p.89.

Through the human warlord Lugalzaggisi then, the god Enlil was attempting to construct a theocracy that would rival Egypt, linking the Persian Gulf via the two rivers to the Mediterranean. Certain elites in Sumer had obviously woken up to the fact that they were not living in invincible cities anymore and had to unite, though it seems they realised this too late.

Twenty five years later a high-ranking Semitic official in Kish overthrew his Sumerian master in a palace coup and proclaimed himself Sargon: meaning 'the king is legitimate'. Sargon then proceeded to defeat Lugalzaggisi and incorporate the Sumerian city-states into his dimorphic Akkadian empire:

> 'The fall of Lugalzaggisi... ends an age. The Early Dynastic period is over, and after it the face of Babylonian history changes. The cleavage is apparent in almost every aspect of civilization. For the first time another element has assumed the power and imposed its language upon the official and private records. An epoch of small local states was succeeded by the creation of a wide dominion, henceforth to remain, with intermittent lapses, the pattern of political history in Western Asia until the end of the Persian empire.'[192]

Once Sargon had made himself sovereign over the whole of Mesopotamia, he followed the example of Lugalzaggisi and marched west to try and secure the foreign policy objective of a corridor to the Mediterranean:

> 'It is clear that it was not military glory, in the first instance, which drew them so far from their homes, but a real combination of political and, above all, economic necessities. They needed to have access to the 'Upper Sea', the Mediterranean, just as they had access to the 'Lower Sea', the Persian Gulf. To be more precise, they needed to secure for themselves the riches of the west, which had always been indispensable to their country, where they were not produced - wood, stone and metals.'[193]

In his annals Sargon claims to have extended his rule as far as the 'forest of cedars' and the 'mountains of silver'. It is thought that this refers to the Amanus and the Taurus mountains respectively. It is not thought that Sargon bothered to conquer as far south as Byblos, though he may have encouraged those who had a grudge against Egypt to do so in a form of conquest by proxy, as is often the way in peripheral buffer zones. One of

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[192] C.J. Gadd, 'The Cities Of Babylonia', *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume I Part 2, p.144.

[193] C.J. Gadd, 'The Dynasty Of Agade And The Gutian Invasion', *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume I Part 2, p.322.

Sargon's Akkadian successors however, Naram-Sin, who tried to take a leaf out of the Egyptian book of political theocracy by shedding his steward-king status and promoting himself as god-king, seems to have come close to Byblos, claiming authority as far south down the Levant as Kadesh[194]. Byblos may or may not have fallen under the hegemony of the Akkadian kings during the First Intermediate Period. More likely it just kept a very low profile, ducking behind the mountains of Lebanon. What we can say is that a large portion of the Levant was under Mesopotamian hegemony. We can also say that the 'Upper Sea', as the Mesopotamians called it, or the 'Great Green', as the Egyptians called it, had already become a major area of concern for foreign policy as far as the great powers of the Bronze Age were concerned.

That the Mesopotamians called the Mediterranean the 'Upper Sea' suggests that they found the business of maintaining access to it to be an uphill task. The ambition of ruling such an extensive territory with so many particularistic components exhausted Akkadian political culture[195]. At the risk of stating the obvious, the Nile fans out onto the Mediterranean whilst the two rivers of Mesopotamia do not. Being 200km away from the upper reaches of the Euphrates and without the aid of the horse, the corridor to the Mediterranean was amongst the first losses in the chronicle of Akkadian decline and fall. Internal disunity weakened Akkadian immunity to predatory raids by Gutian chiefdoms from the Zagros mountains in the east. Concentration on the Gutians in the east tempted the Akkadians to lower their guard in the north and west. Whereupon Hurrian, Anatolian and Canaanite chiefdoms each spotted their opportunity in turn to destroy Akkadian authority throughout Anatolia and Syria-Palestine.

By 2040 BC, when king Mentuhotep from Thebes emerged victorious out of a series of struggles with the kings of other cities and reunited Egypt, taking her out of the First Intermediate Period and into the Middle Kingdom, Akkadian hegemony over Asia had already been dead for at least sixty years. After consolidating the unification of Egypt, Mentuhotep II began to revive some Old Kingdom foreign policies[196]. First, he sent an expedition west to smite the Libyans. Then he sent expeditions east to reassert control over the Sinai. Next he turned his attentions to Nubia, making sure that Egyptian mining and trading interests there were secure. Finally, he moved to fill the power vacuum in Syria-Palestine, using the old double-edged strategy of gift combined with

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[194] *Ibid*, p.327.
[195] Knapp, *op cit*, p.92.

military raid, thus re-establishing spheres of influence in Byblos, Sidon and Tyre along the Levantine coast. After the death of his father, Mentuhotep III built fortresses along the eastern side of the Nile delta to protect it from Asiatic incursions. Mentuhotep IV then revived the practice of sending Red Sea expeditions to the land of Punt.

The foreign expeditions of Mentuhotep IV appear to have been organized and led by his loyal vizier and head priest, Ammenemes. Redford suspects that Ammenemes used these foreign expeditions to enhance his own prestige at the expense of the king[197]. We have reason to believe that this is the same man as Ammenemes I, the king who mysteriously emerges to found the Twelfth Dynasty during another bout of civil strife. Curiously, when the priests write the *Prophecies Of Neferti* they choose not to mention the king's glittering career in the temple-civil service prior to his divine coronation, but the advice that Ammenemes later offers to his son Sesostris may be pertinent:

> 'Be on your guard against subordinates, of whose plotting one is not aware. Trust not a brother, know not a friend, and make yourself not intimates.'[198]

Having once been a loyal subordinate himself we may surmise that Ammenemes knew what he was talking about. Bitter memories of Ammenemes as the usurper may have contributed to the harem conspiracy that assassinated him thirty years later in 1962 BC. The fallout produced by this event provided the inspiration for the *Tale Of Sinuhe*, a political thriller now regarded as one of the great classics of Egyptian literature.

Sinuhe tells us that he was a top harem official (probably working in the field of procurement), accompanying a military expedition to Libya led by the royal prince and heir apparent Sesostris I. When the expedition returns home after a successful campaign, secret messengers from the capital arrive to intercept. Prince Sesostris rushes off to the capital leaving his army behind wondering what on earth is going on. As rumours begin to fly, Sinuhe overhears that king Ammenemes has been assassinated by a conspiracy in the harem. Being a harem official Sinuhe fears he will become implicated by the plot, so he flees for his life. He becomes a fugitive and crosses the Egyptian 'Walls of the Ruler' at Sinai, built 'to repel the Syrians and to defeat the Sand-

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[196] Grimal, *op cit*, p.157.
[197] Redford, *op cit*, p.71-74.
[198] Kaster, *op cit*, p.176.

Crossers'. As he tries to cross the Sinai, Sinuhe is overcome by thirst and tells himself 'this is how death tastes'. Then he lifts up his heart:

> 'for I heard the sound of the lowing of cattle and I spied some Syrians. A distinguished chieftain among them, who had been in Egypt, recognized me. Then he gave me water and cooked milk for me. '[199]

Sinuhe's luck has chanced upon the old nomadic trade network that still stretches from Egypt to Syria. The network takes him as far as Byblos. Being a member of the Egyptian upper class Sinuhe knows this trading port well, but the city of Byblos is too loyal to the Egyptian crown to be a safe haven for a refugee, so he finds contacts that can help him flee to Qedem for a year and a half. Then:

> 'Amu-nenshi a ruler in Palestine took me in. He said to me, "You will fare well with me; here you will hear the speech of Egypt". He said this since he knew my character and had heard of my capacities. The Egyptians who were there with him bore witness for me.'[200]

Over the years this Palestinian chief appears to have recruited a little band of Egyptian exiles. Amunenshi clearly takes a keen interest in Egyptian affairs. He knows that Sinuhe was a top civil servant whose flight from Egypt must mean that there is something up at the Palace:

> 'For what reason have you come to this place? What is it? Has something happened at the Palace?'

Amunenshi wants intelligence. Could there be any signs of internal division and weakness within Egypt? Sinuhe may be a fugitive but he is also a true patriot. He is not the sort to divulge information that might cause harm to the Egyptian state. He blandly announces that Ammenemes is dead and denies any knowledge of an attempted coup. Amunenshi then proceeds to ask Sinuhe for his assessment of the current political situation in Egypt:

> 'What, then, will the land be without him, that excellent god, the fear of whom pervaded the foreign lands like the goddess of war in the year of pestilence?'

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[199] Kaster, *op cit*, p.291.
[200] *Ibid*, p.292.

Sinuhe tries to disinform Amunenshi that Ammenemes' son Sesostris has achieved a smooth succession to the throne, no problems at all, and then bursts into patriotic song to ensure that Amunenshi is left in no doubt about the internal harmony and military capability of the new king:

> 'He it was who subdued the foreign lands while his father was within the palace. Mighty indeed is he, achieving with his strong arm; a valiant one, and there is not his equal! He slakes his wrath by smashing skulls; and no one can stand up to him. He is robust of heart at the moment of attack; and does not let sloth rest upon his heart. Bold of countenance is he when he sees the melee; to attack the barbarian is his joy. He girds his shield and crushes the foe; and does not strike twice in order to kill! But he is lord of charm and great of sweetness; and through love has he conquered! His city loves him more than itself; it rejoices in him more than in its god; men and women salute and rejoice with him now that he is king! He conquered while still in the egg, and his face was turned to royal deeds since he was born. He makes multiply those who were born with him; he is unique, the gift of the god. He is the one who makes wide the boundaries; he will seize the southern countries, and the northern ones with ease, having been created to smite the Syrians and to crush the Sand-Crossers. How this land rejoices now that he is come to rule!'

Having done his duty to dispel Syrian rumours that the Egyptian state may be divided and weak, Sinuhe then advises Amunenshi to cultivate diplomatic contact with the new king who 'will not cease to make happy a land which will be loyal to him!'. Amunenshi wryly contrasts the happy state of Egypt with Sinuhe's decision to become a refugee:

> 'Well, assuredly then, Egypt is happy, knowing that he flourishes there. And yet behold, you are here, and you shall stay with me. I will treat you well.'

Amunenshi clearly thinks that Sinuhe is a valuable addition to his Egyptian collection and quickly moves to assimilate him, appointing him chief of a local tribe and marrying him off to his eldest daughter together with a rich dowry of land that produces figs, grapes, honey, olives, barley, wheat and 'all kinds of cattle without limit'. Sinuhe thrives in his new life. His wife bears him sons who grow up to become local chiefs. He becomes a powerful man by making his territory safe for merchants and couriers and by proving his worth on the battlefield: 'I became great there'.

The *Tale Of Sinuhe* is a stunning glimpse into the mind of the Twelfth Dynasty priesthood. It was used as a standard text for copying by temple schoolboys for generations. Whilst learning to read and write, the schoolboys are initiated into a world of court intrigue, suspected plots, god-king assassinations, and subtle decision-making

in foreign relations. In order for the Middle Kingdom dynasty to survive, its gods seem to have decided to share the secrets of consciousness widely amongst a large number of middle ranking officials. The mind of Sinuhe may still be bicameral, but his second chamber has clearly been entrusted with an impressive range of powers. Like Sinuhe, Middle Kingdom schoolboys are expected to develop a strong sense of self, with wills that can speak and act independently of their spiritual realms containing the voices of their gods. The decision of Sinuhe to desert, flee Egypt, and take refuge in Palestine is a profound expression of the need for a whole class of officials who are equipped to take initiative outside the routine thought processes of the theocracy in order for it to survive the new challenges that confront that theocracy. The figure of Amunenshi represents one such challenge. Clearly, by the second millennium BC, there are alternative poles of consciousness in Syria-Palestine that require recognition. This is why the Pharoh needs a court of officials and advisors such as Sinuhe, but his consciousness is still carefully constrained by the message that even the estranged refugee priest ultimately remains loyal to the gods of his homeland, and no matter how successful the emigre may be abroad he will always yearn to return to civilization. When the emigre does decide to return, the Egyptian state is forgiving and ready to welcome its long lost son with open arms.

Another constraint injected into the consciousness of the Middle Kingdom schoolboy was the construction of a city upon the political economy of mortality. Sinuhe's greatest fear is that he will die and be buried abroad without the necessary funeral rites that will conduct him to the immortal city of the afterlife:

> (Sinuhe) 'Old age has befallen me, and infirmity has overtaken me. My arms are weak and my legs have slackened. My heart is weary; I am near to departure, and they will take me away to the City of Eternity!'
> (Sesostris I) 'Indeed, you have begun to grow old, and have lost your virile powers. Be mindful of the day of burial, of passing to a revered state...You must not die in a foreign land! The Asiatics shall not escort you to burial. You shall not put a sheepskin and a mound made over you! This is too long to tread the earth. Be mindful of illness, and come back before it is too late!'

When Sinuhe tries to find out what 'the memory of me is in the Palace' Sesostris himself writes to Sinuhe to tell him that he is prepared to forget the past and that the faithful Sinuhe would be welcomed back into the fold with honour. He is offered an estate and a seat at court plus a state funeral with all the trimmings. Sinuhe the homesick emigre is delighted, he leaves his Palestinian chiefdom behind in the charge of his barbarian son

and returns to Egypt. He thus secures the ambition of every Egyptian priesthood schoolboy, the eternal pension: 'a funerary domain was made for me with fields in it, as is done for a foremost courtier'.

Sinuhe dies a happy man, so we are told. But as with any other story the *Tale of Sinuhe* invites an infinity of supplements. For Sinuhe's tale to have been imaginable there must have been other fugitives like him during the periodic bouts of Egyptian political turbulence that punctuated the third and second millennia BC. What happened to them? What about the people who really did attempt to stage a coup against the 12th Dynasty? Doubtless many of them would have been killed before they even had time to contemplate the possibility of escape. Others probably would have gone to ground within Egypt itself. Some may have tried to make it to Nubia or Libya, where there were clearly downtrodden communities which might have had reason to shelter dissidents from the Egyptian state[201]. One or two may even have tried to make it to Punt. But political fugitives often gravitate towards expatriate communities where old favours can be called in or where somebody knows someone who might be able and willing to help. Like Sinuhe, many of the more well-to-do refugees would have aimed for Byblos. It was probably not a safe place to stay in the long term, but in the short term it was the place to find your feet and get good advice about where to hide next. Sinuhe was obviously advised to flee to Qedem which, as we have already noted, was the Egyptian catch-all term for 'the east'. Qedem could mean a Syrian trading town such as Ugarit, Ebla or Carchemish, or even as far as Mesopotamia itself. Other refugees may have been able to get a passage to the silver mountains of Cicilia in Anatolia. But the refugee who really wanted to disappear might have been well advised to try their luck along the western coast of Anatolia, or Crete and the Cyclades. In the grand preamble to Sinuhe's message to Sesostris telling him of his intention to come home, he happens to mention 'the isles in the midst of the sea'[202].

The *Tale of Sinuhe* also tells us that there were foreign rulers about like Amunenshi who had developed a habit of collecting and assimilating Egyptian refugees. Cui bono? What was in it for them? To begin with, Amunenshi of Syria-Palestine was clearly after intelligence about Egypt. Had Sinuhe given Amunenshi confirmation that Egypt was divided and weak, he may well have considered mounting a predatory

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[201] Kuhrt, *op cit*, p.120.
[202] Kaster, *op cit*, p.299.

expedition such as those that the Egyptian texts complain of during the First Intermediate Period, or indeed the later Hyksos invasions during the Second Intermediate Period (1674-1566 BC). This kind of intelligence is usually only of short term value, however, because the defector will exhaust his reserves of useful information pretty quickly. For the longer term the Egyptian emigre could try to become a useful source of intelligence by cultivating foreign contacts. Sinuhe talks of having made efforts to attract couriers, merchants and other travellers coming and going from Egypt, and boasts that they would 'tarry because of me'[203]. The generous host of lodgers like these could have provided a valuable news gathering service. Some of the Egyptian refugees would also have had useful military experience. Sinuhe claims to have served Amunenshi as a chief military advisor and commander though, being a literary role model, his assistence obviously had to be directed against other 'rulers of foreign lands' rather than against the very state that had alienated him. In real life of course, many of Sinuhe's colleagues may not have been quite so fastidious. Another incentive for a chieftain like Amunenshi to harbour fugitives like Sinuhe was that there was always the possibility that palace machinations in Egypt might produce a reverse. When Sinuhe returns to Egypt to become a member of the court entourage it is clear that Amunenshi's policy of hospitality has paid off. The humble barbarian has earned a friend in one of the most powerful courts of the Bronze Age world.

Political, economic and military considerations then may have encouraged chieftains in Syria-Palestine to offer hospitality to someone like Sinuhe. But the thing which would have given the Egyptian or indeed the Mesopotamian refugee a warm welcome amongst elites even further afield, such as in Anatolia or the Aegean, was his education. Right from the first beginnings of civilization states have tended to reserve their most charitable immigration policies for those who possess knowledge which is in short supply. Sinuhe, for example, having once been a top official, would have been able to furnish the best education Egypt had to offer[204]. From boyhood he would have known how to read and write in the Egyptian script, and how to reckon and calculate using mathematics. As a promising student he would then have graduated to further education, which the Egyptians called 'the House of Life'. Here he would have learned his accounting, calendrical and administrative skills. He would also have received a basic grounding in what we might call 'organizational ethics'. In this field Sinuhe

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[203] *Ibid*, p.294.
[204] Bowen, *op cit*, p.22-42.

undoubtedly shone, for he had been selected to specialize in a particularly sensitive area of the Egyptian bureaucracy. Above all, his temple training would have given him a working knowledge of how to build the kind of temple-palace bureaucracies that could organise complexity and manage the development of craft specialization within an urban division of labour. This kind of expertise would have been useful in Crete during the twentieth century BC, contemporary with the Egyptian Twelfth Dynasty, where the Minoans were developing their first temple building projects at sites like Knossos.

The archaeological evidence left us by Minoan civilization on Crete and the Cyclades fits quite well with a model of the dissemination of *tekhne* carried upon the winds of trade and dissidence. The precise nature of the dialectic of Bronze-Age development between the Near East, Crete and the rest of the Aegean has been the subject of a lively and at times rather intemperate debate. Only a highly provisional narrative may be attempted here.

One thing that has been proved beyond reasonable doubt is that if the early civilizations of the Aegean were a consequence of dissemination from the Near East, such dissemination could only have germinated upon the fertile soil of an indigenous political economy where neolithic settlements had been thriving for some considerable time[205]. Levels of human settlement on the island of Crete are among the deepest in Europe, beginning as early as the sixth millennium BC, displaying similarities with contemporary cultures in Anatolia[206]. Being an island culture before the development of large scale, long distance sea transport, however, Neolithic life on Crete lagged behind Anatolia and Greece and subsisted at a mean level comparable with Strange's desert islanders until late in the fourth millennium. The economy of these communities was based upon an agriculture of cereals, goats and sheep supplemented by the fruits of the sea. As yet there was little evidence of social stratification or craft specialization[207]. Most cultural influences at this time appear to have come mainly from mainland Greece and Anatolia via small scale regional exchange networks, upon tiny fishing boats braving the seas between the Cyclades and the Dodecanese.

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[205] See Colin Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilization: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium BC.*
[206] Rodney Castleden, *Minoans: Life in Bronze Age Crete*, p.29.
[207] Knapp, *op cit*, p.198.

Then, shortly after 3000 BC, developments on Crete started to gather pace. The development of the Mediterranean galley, pioneered at hubs like Byblos, enabled seafarers to increase the range and velocity of cultural exchange between the communities of Egypt, Syria-Palestine, Anatolia and the Aegean[208]. One by one the Cretan settlements collected what would become the classic building blocks of Bronze-Age civilization in the Mediterranean. Cretan agriculture was supplemented with the fig, the date, the olive and the grape. Olives and grapes are thought to have been particularly important in the formation of an agricultural surplus because they flourished on the rocky ground of the hillsides rather than upon the plains, which were more suitable for grain, thus opening up new areas of land for cultivation[209].

Agricultural specialization to exploit regional variations in terrain depended upon the formation of local exchange, however, as different farms would have had surpluses in some products and shortages in others. In response to this need for exchange the Cretans built centres which could take delivery, store and redistribute supplies. To manage these centres an organizational elite began to emerge. Meanwhile, Near Eastern ships began to wander into the coves of Crete bearing gifts. Anatolian and Syrian metal goods begin to appear in the Early Minoan layers of sediment, together with Egyptian Old Kingdom stone bowls and ivory products[210]. These gifts would naturally have been presented to the incipient Minoan elites. Luxury goods brought both pleasure and prestige to the Minoan ruling classes. A desire to acquire more of these foreign goods motivated the Minoan elites to intensify local production in order to extract bigger surpluses for foreign exchange[211].

The major Minoan industries recruited for this export drive to the Near East appear to have been textiles, wine and olive oil[212]. In one Egyptian Middle Kingdom tomb Minoan envoys turn up bearing folded cloths, whilst large concentrations of spindle whorls and loom weights have been found in Early Minoan contexts at

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[208] Martin Bernal, 'First by land, Then by sea: Thoughts about the Social Formation of the Mediterranean and Greece', in Genovese & Hochberg (eds), *Geographic Perspectives in History* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989), p.15-16.

[209] Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilization: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium BC*, chapter 15.

[210] Renfrew, *op cit*, p.446-7.

[211] Knapp, 'Thalassocracies in Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean trade: making and breaking a myth', *World Archaeology*, Volume 24 No.3, p.340.

Knossos[213]. The export of Cretan wine and oil to the Near East has been deciphered from textual records found at Ugarit, Ebla and Mari[214]. The records also sometimes mention grain, which seems bizarre when we consider the prevailing soils and climate of Crete, but serves to show what a profound impact the gift-bomb can have upon a local elite. It would not be the first or last time in history that a young state has been tempted to risk the starvation of its own people in order to proffer a surplus for foreign exchange.

Meanwhile, the grape and olive trade stimulated a native pottery industry, partly through the production of amphorae for storage, shipment and transport, but also in the intensified production for export of the many products which complemented the consumption of wine and oil, such as drinking cups, serving jugs and lamps[215]. The tournette was in use in Crete by 2500 BC, whilst the simple fast wheel was in use by 2000 BC[216]. This compares with ceramic innovation in Mesopotamia at about 5500 BC and 4000 BC respectively[217]. Then, as now, it was often easier to emulate than innovate. Branigan found many Cretan pottery artefacts from the third millennium reminiscent of Levantine ware, also suggestive of dissemination from east to west, but it was not very long before Minoan ceramics took on a dynamic of its own and influences began to feed back in the opposite direction. The spiral patterns on the frescoes of the palace at Mari and on the Egyptian scarabs of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, for example, are thought by some to have been inspired by the designs on imported Minoan pottery[218].

In exchange for textiles, wine, oil, grain and pottery, Minoans were able to import metal ingots in the sort of quantities that could sponsor native metallurgy. At 3000 BC the consumption of metal products in Crete was limited to axes, awls, pins, hooks and beads[219]. By 2000 BC a thriving industry was producing gold and silver cups, jugs, lamps and ornaments, some of which were fine enough for export. Likewise, proficiency with copper and bronze was also furnishing Crete with knives, razors, axe-

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212 F. Matz, 'The Maturity of Minoan Civilization', *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume II part 1, p.163 (Matz also suggests timber, but amongst other authors consulted only Sinclair Hood appears to concur).
213 Renfrew, *op cit*, p.351-4.
214 Knapp, *The History and Culture of Ancient Western Asia and Egypt*, p.202.
215 Renfrew, *op cit*, p.282-287.
216 Castleden, *op cit*, p.64-5 & Renfrew, *op cit*, p.346.
217 Moorey, *op cit*, p.148.
218 Matz, *op cit*, p.159 & 163.
219 Renfrew, *op cit*, p.311.

adzes, chisels, sickles, hammers and saws[220]. The Minoan bronzesmiths also began to produce some very distinctive daggers and spearheads, providing the incipient ruling class with new coercive opportunities for domestic purposes[221]. The first Cretan seals, a key indicator of the development of property relations, are thought to be primitive copies based upon samples of Levantine design. The first experiments with writing begin to appear upon broken shards of pottery, possibly inspired by syllabaries developed in Syria and Anatolia, and which eventually matured into what is now called 'Linear A'[222].

It was the adze-axes, saws and chisels which enabled the Minoans to construct their labyrinths from blocks of limestone dressed with gypsum, supported with stone columns and beams of pine and cypress[223]. The first one was completed at Knossos in about 1930 BC, in the same century as the founding of the Egyptian Twelfth Dynasty, the assassination of Ammenemes and the fictional flight of Sinuhe. By this time the town of Knossos was supporting around 12,000-18,000 souls[224]. The stone construction at Knossos was followed by others at Mallia, Zakro, Phaistos and Kydonia. Traditionally these labyrinths have been called 'palaces' in deference to the Greek legends which surround the figures of king Minos and his maverick mephisto, Daedalus, but Castleden makes a strong case for seeing them as Bronze-Age temple complexes[225]. They were probably a bit of both, being temples founded by dynastic elites who also lived over the shop in a bicameral semi-divine capacity. Let us provisionally call them labyrinths.

In a pattern that will now be familiar from our examination of state formation in Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, Anatolia and Egypt, the labyrinths of Crete housed financial organizations that collected an agricultural surplus and used it to sponsor the development of crafts in the towns, producing goods that were then traded with the outside world. With these labyrinths Crete moved from the Early Minoan to the Middle Minoan Period, from a society of prosperous small communities into a cluster of states ruled from central places. When an earthquake destroyed the original labyrinths on

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220 Castleden, *op cit*, p.90-91.
221 Renfrew, *op cit*, p.321-323.
222 See Castleden, *op cit*, p.100-103, & Bernal, *op cit*, p.162-164.
223 Renfrew, *op cit*, p.348-9.
224 Castleden, *op cit*, p.68.
225 Castleden, *op cit* and also *The Knossos Labyrinth: A New View of the 'Palace of Minos' at Knossos* (London, Routledge, 1989).

Crete around 1700 BC, the Minoan political economy managed to bounce back with a lavish reconstruction programme that took the culture into its most powerful and prosperous period. New labyrinths were built on an even more ambitious scale.

So far we have considered Crete in isolation from the rest of Greece. As with Crete, neolithic settlement along the strandlines of Greece had been developing from the 6th millennium. As with Crete, it is generally agreed that agriculture was introduced here from elsewhere by people who brought many of their domesticates with them: wheat; barley; dogs; sheep and goats[226]. As with Crete, they appear to have brought the *tekhne* of pottery with them as there seems to be little in the way of aceramic antecedents. And as with Crete again, the most plausible scenario has the first neolithic immigrants hailing from the Near East via Anatolia, using their agricultural knowledge learned elsewhere to coax a subsistence from the 'narrow twists of fertile land'[227].

Unlike Crete, however, settlers in north-western Greece were fortunate enough to chance upon the fertile plains of Macedonia and Thessaly, where the most precocious densities of early neolithic settlement could prosper[228]. Gradually, once the new inhabitants had acclimatised to their new environment, they began to diversify the base of Aegean agriculture, cultivating the fig, the vine and the olive, and adding the option of cattle and pigs to their repertoire of livestock. It was this diversification that enabled the subsequent development of the more arid and previously less fertile regions of Attica, the Peloponnese, the Cyclades and Western Anatolia, so that by the beginning of the third millennium it was southern Greece which was becoming the major area of growth in the Aegean in terms of population and prosperity. But there was a problem: the dagger, the longship and piracy.

The *tekhne* of metallurgy had been present in the Aegean from early in the fourth millennium, producing the familiar supplements to neolithic life such as copper axes, awls, beads and fish hooks. From the beginning of the third millennium the bronze dagger begins to make an appearance. The earliest ones start to appear around Troy in north west Anatolia. According to Renfrew 'the possiblity of influence from the Near East cannot be excluded'[229]. Daggers then begin to turn up in the Cyclades and Crete,

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[226] Vermeule, *Greece In The Bronze Age*, p.4-22. Renfrew, *op cit*, p.50 & 270-280.
[227] Vermeule, *op cit*, p.4.
[228] Renfrew, *op cit*, p.227-8.
[229] *Ibid*, p.321.

followed by the rest of Greece. To begin with there is ambiguity about the precise meaning of these artefacts, as wear analysis suggests they could have been used for many purposes, but gradually this ambiguity falls away as the dagger starts to lengthen and turns into the dirk.

Another innovation introduced to the Aegean during the third millennium was the longship. The earliest concrete evidence for their presence is their representation on 'frying pans' found in the Cyclades[230]. This coincides with a marked increase in the number of fortified settlements in the Aegean, which also begin to desert the coasts and move inland up onto higher ground[231]. Renfrew deduces that the abundance of Aegean coastline produced a destructive incentive for piracy whereby easy pickings were available at little cost to those who had gained precocious access to the fruits of the bronzesmith and the shipwright. The cycles of devastation begin from the beginning of the third millennium, but look particularly grim from about 2200 BC to 1900 BC. It was the radical depopulation of the areas worst hit by piracy which provided subsequent opportunities for successive waves of Indo-European immigration from the north.

Early 20th century models of Indo-European immigration tend to conjure up images of ruthless warrior hordes, but a more realistic picture is probably one of pathos given the poor levels of *tekhne* attributed to them. We know that many forms of immigration tend to gravitate toward desolate areas where previous locals are either dead or no longer prepared to live. But immigrants are also fast learners. They have to be. Once they were established prevailing circumstances would have taught the newcomers various strategies for coping with the violence. One method was to try to establish a relationship with the aggressor. Pragmatic elders, for example, might attempt to forestall the inevitable seasonal raids with formal agreements to pay tribute. Another option was to prepare some resistance in the hope that this would encourage the men from the longships to move on to easier pickings elsewhere. These would have been communitarian options for the short to medium term. A longer term aim, which may have become more attractive after many years of summer raids, was to try to join the club and become another player in the game of piracy.

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[230] *Ibid*, p.357.
[231] *Ibid*, p.263-264.

Being relatively isolated from the rest of the Aegean, Crete was generally immune to the destructive effect of piracy throughout the Early and Middle Bronze Age, as is evident in the apparent lack of fortifications, making it a relatively attractive island of stability upon which Aegean contact with the Near East could focus. Meanwhile, development on the turbulent mainland of Greece and western Anatolia lagged far behind, but towards the middle of the second millennium the destructive impact of the dagger and the longship was beginning to simmer down into a patchwork pattern of Indo-European speaking fiefdoms. Some of the more successful buccaneers of the Aegean were starting to reinvent themselves as monarchs ready to do business with the civilized world. The 'Shaft Graves' of Mycenae offer us a tantalising glimpse of one such dynasty in transition[232]. These tombs were in use from about 1700 to 1500 BC, holding a grand total of forty three bodies. Two sets of graves have been excavated, one found to be older than the other. The more recent graves boast far richer inventories of treasure, which has been interpreted as a clear sign of an incipient ruling class on the ascendant. Much of the early wealth appears to have come from a proud family tradition of plunder. This is partly evident in the armouries of bronze daggers, dirks and spears which the dead carry with them, but also in some of the designs inlaid on the weaponry and silverware, painted on pottery or carved into stone. A striking example is the 'Siege Rhyton' silver drinking cup, which celebrates a Mediterranean battle scene complete with besieged citadel, olive groves, assorted soldiers, dead bodies, terrified women civilians and, just out of view due to the ravages of time, a ship[233]. Some of the grave goods, however, particularly in the second set of graves, have cosmopolitan ingredients which indicate the growing significance of trading contacts: gold and ostrich eggs from Egypt; lapis lazuli from Mesopotamia; ivory from Syria-Palestine; silver from Anatolia; faience from Crete and amber from the Baltic.

Crete was the primary agent of contact with the Near Eastern world during the Shaft Grave period. By 1700 BC Minoan *tekhne* had advanced far beyond any of their Aegean neighbours. It was natural that their products should be in demand there[234]. At the same time the Minoan gods may have been galvanised by any one of a number of foreign policy objectives. Firstly, the emerging chieftains of Greece and Western Anatolia would have been a potential market for Cretan manufactures. This Minoan desire to diversify their client base was aggravated by prolonged bouts of political

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232 Vermeule, *op cit*, chapter IV.
233 *Ibid*, p.100-105.

instability in the Near East at the time, which lead to a depression in trade to the Levantine ports[235]. Secondly, the Aegean was a possible source of raw materials such as basalt from Sparta or silver from Attica[236]. Thirdly, the mainland chieftains were a potential source of stability in the region, offering the promise of improved security for Minoan trade missions heading for Aegean, Ionian and Adriatic seas. Fourthly, some of the chieftains of Greece and Western Anatolia may have been groomed for the purposes of military alliance. Any Minoan embassies returning from the Near East throughout the Middle Bronze Age would have brought back alarming news of the Hyksos in Egypt, the Hittite forays from Anatolia, followed by Egyptian New Kingdom and Hurrian aggression in Syria-Palestine[237]. Such reports would have shaken the Minoans out of any sense of splendid isolation they might have previously enjoyed. As the Cretan reputation for wealth in wine, oil, pottery and textile exports spread throughout the Near East, the Minoans had reason to suspect that it was only a matter of time before the first predatory forays arrived. It made sense to domesticate a few carefully chosen barbarians from the Aegean who were no strangers to violence and who could be trusted to help see off any unwanted guests.

The temple centres of Crete set up subsidiaries on many Aegean islands stretching from Kythira to Rhodes, plus a few offices on the mainland such as Iasos and Miletus on Western Anatolia[238]. These subsidiaries were the stepping stones by which the Minoans were able to despatch so many of those gifts which the barbarian chiefs proudly took with them down into their Shaft Graves. In return the chiefs were more than ready to help protect the subsidiaries which supplied the goods. They were also happy to intensify the output of any Helladic produce which the Minoan emissary declared an interest in. In order to supply horses for the chariots that would become the civilized means of war of the Late Bronze Age for example, but which were expensive to breed in terms of land for grazing, local peasants had to be evicted from some of the scarce strips of fertile plain in order to accommodate them. If Greek mythology has any relevance to the Bronze Age at all, locally produced slaves were another invisible export. But perhaps more than anything else, the Helladic chiefdoms were prepared to produce soldiers and battleships on demand whenever the Minoans required their

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234 Castleden, *op cit*, p.121.
235 Vermeule, *op cit*, p.114.
236 Castleden, *op cit*, p.119.
237 For an overview of these developments: Amelie Kuhrt, *op cit*, volume I.
238 Castleden, o*p cit*, p.120.

services[239]. Such deals were consummated with diplomatic marriages. The Minoan embassy-brides would have also brought weaving skills and civilized tastes, plus a dowry entourage of potters and bronzesmiths. At some stage they also sent scribes, because the Minoan Linear A script was adapted for Helladic Greek to produce what we now call Linear B.

Minoan foreign policy was an extraordinary success for about two hundred years. The New Temple Period was an era of security and prosperity for the Cretan elite. Their island palaces were powerful enough for the Egyptian court to rank the Minoans almost on a par with the Hittites, Hurrians, Assyrians and Kassites. The irony of all foreign policies, however, is their inevitable propensity to produce unforseen consequences. It was only natural for the Minoans to focus all their security concerns upon the Near East, but in the meantime their allies in the Aegean were becoming more prosperous and their gods increasingly ambitious, as is evident in the Tholos tombs which were replacing the barbarous Shaft Graves during the sixteenth century.

Southern Greece was equally suited to the production of wine, olive oil and textiles. By 1500 BC Helladic pottery was as good if not better than Minoan and, with the advent of Linear B, the Myceneans now had the scribal capacity to organise Mediterranean polyculture and a complex division of labour. They also had bronzesmiths and access to reliable supplies of copper and tin. Through joint ventures they had become familiar with Near Eastern markets and had developed contacts in the Levantine ports. They also had a longstanding militaristic tradition of predatory forays and daring raids. Sometime after 1500 BC, numerous Minoan subsidiaries were destroyed or abandoned. The palace of Knossos appears to have suffered minor damage and its scribes suddenly start to use Linear B instead of Linear A. All the evidence points to a predatory merger[240]. The domestic policy of alienation toward the local population meant that the elimination of the native Minoan ruling class by foreigners was probably accepted with minimal Cretan resistance: 'the masters come and go, life remains the same'. But the new gods proved to be more footloose, less prepared to reinvest and rebuild. In about 1400 BC Knossos and the other Cretan palaces were all destroyed, possibly by earthquake, never to be rebuilt again. Daedalus had been

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[239] Vermeule, *op cit*, p.145-6.
[240] Sandars, *The Sea Peoples*, p.58.

relocated. New temple-palaces began to bloom in Messenia, Lakonia, Argolis and Attica in southern Greece.

(2.10) Male and Female Pudenda: 'They put to death the men of military age, made slaves of the women and children, and gave the land to the...'.[241]

> 'It is unlikely that, in Homeric times, Helen's face – contributing factor though it may well have been – was the primary reason for launching a thousand ships and causing King Agamemnon to lay siege to Troy. More likely, the Greek's crucial motivation was their desire to seize control of the lucrative trade route that passed through the Dardanelles.'

Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations*, p.4.

When Herodotus rambles his way through Egypt in Book II of his *Histories*, about halfway he suddenly changes tack from 'results of my own direct observation and research' to accounts proffered him by the Egyptian priests who he claims to have interviewed. The priests begin by telling him about Menes, 'the first king of Egypt'. Herodotus seems mildly interested. Next the priests read out to him a list of three hundred and thirty monarchs. A queen Nitocris on this list arouses his curiosity, and he is fed a juicy story of revenge and murder. Herodotus then proceeds to yawn his way through the rest of the list until he gets to Sesostris. What never fails to get his historiographical salivary glands going are tales of great men making great conquests. The Egyptian priests duly decide to serve him one:

> 'Sesostris, the priests said, sailed first with a fleet of warships from the Arabian gulf along the coast of the Indian Ocean, subduing the coastal tribes as he went, until he found that shoal water made further progress impossible; then on his return to Egypt he raised a powerful army and marched across the continent, reducing to subjection every nation in his path. Whenever he encountered a courageous enemy who fought valiantly for freedom he erected pillars on the spot inscribed with his own name and country, and a sentence to indicate that by the might of his armed forces he had won the victory; if, however, a town fell easily

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241 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Penguin Edition), p.328. Standard reference: Book V, 32.

> into his hands without a struggle, he made an addition to the inscription on the pillar - for not only did he record upon it the same facts as before, but added a picture of a woman's genitals, meaning to show the people of the town were no braver than women. Thus his victorious progress through Asia continued, until he entered Europe...'[242]

Of course, as a historical source Herodotus has to be treated like high explosive. Being the 'father of history' Herodotus was also appropriately known as the 'father of lies'. The helpful notes which accompany the Penguin Edition inform us that the legend of Sesostris is an amalgamation of the kings Sesostris I and Sesostris II, and that there is no evidence to support the curious tale of the Egyptian war memorials. Modern scholars strongly suspect that the Egyptian priests of Herodotus' day puffed up the conquests of the Twelfth Dynasty in order to puncture the vanity of Persian kings like Darius and Xerxes, who claimed to have conquered where no monarch had conquered before[243]. Writing fresh after the Persian wars of course, Herodotus may have been more than willing to suspend his powers of incredulity. Herodotus goes on:

> 'Most of the memorial pillars which King Sesostris erected in the conquered countries have disappeared, but I have seen some myself in Palestine, with the inscription I mentioned, and the drawing of a woman's genitals."[244].

There is evidence to support the claim that 12th Dynasty monarchs campaigned extensively in Syria-Palestine, but what we are primarily interested in here is the curious career of the cunt as an international icon of surrender and subjection[245]. Three centuries later, when Manetho wrote his *History of Egypt,* working from journals and annals preserved in the Egyptian temples, he too stumbles upon the Twelfth Dynasty tale of genital graffiti. By now the story has been embellished a little:

> 'In nine years he (Sesostris) subdued the whole of Asia and Europe as far as Thrace, everywhere erecting memorials of his conquests of the tribes. Upon pillars he engraved for a valiant race the secret parts of a man, for an ignoble race those of a woman.'

How was it that the great Sesostris and his historians came to associate the balls and the penis with courage and valiance whilst the vulva was seen as the appropriate signifier of

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[242] Herodotus, *The Histories* (Penguin Edition), p.120-121. Standard reference: Book II, 102-3.
[243] Frank J. Yurco, 'Black Athena: An Egyptological Review', in Lefkowitz & Maclean-Rogers, *op cit*, p.72.
[244] *Ibid*, p.122, standard reference: Book II, 106.

surrender and subjection in foreign affairs?[246] That we can even ask the question is to assume that these associations have not been universally held. Before the Bronze-Age, for example, the semantic intent of Sesostris' graffiti would not have been possible. Neolithic cultures tended rather to venerate the womb as an icon of awesome power, as is evident in the earth-mother goddesses that have been found, and in the earliest creation myths which are invariably myths of birth[247]. Anthropologically speaking, research has revealed that the vagina is just as likely to signify the impotence of its opposite member in the face of overwhelming odds as it is likely to excite meanings of penile triumphalism[248]. Camille Paglia, for example, has had great fun with the North American Indian myth of the toothed vagina:

> 'The toothed vagina (*vagina dentata*) is a gruesomely direct transcription of female power and male fear. Metaphorically, every vagina has secret teeth... In sex, the male is consumed and released again by the toothed power that bore him, the female dragon of nature... Man honoured but feared her. She was the black maw that had spat him forth and would devour him anew.'[249]

Closer to home, on the couch of western culture, there is Freudian psychoanalysis, whose Viennese hang-ups remain pertinent simply because they are still taken seriously by an awful lot of people. Freud's fear of the female genitalia is evident, apparently, in his accounts of his dream life[250]. Clearly he thought that these dreams were important. At least he was honest. Or was he? We shall skip the details.

Let us take it as given then that gender is a cultural construct and that as far as International Relations is concerned there is nothing naturally dominant about the balls and the dick and nothing innately submissive about the cunt, vulva, womb or vagina[251].

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[245] "**cunt** *n.* (vulg.) Female genitals; (derog.) person, esp. woman. [ME, = ON *kunta,* MLG, MDu. *kunte* f. Gmc **kunton*]" *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, p.249.

[246] "**vulva** *n.* (Anat.) External female genitals, esp. external orifice of vagina; hence ~AR *a.*, ~I'TIS *n.* [L, = womb]", *ibid*, p.1305.

[247] **womb** (woom) *n.* Organ in woman and other female mammals in which child or young is conceived and nourished till birth, uterus, **(fruit of the ~**, child(ren)); (fig) place of conception and development (*future events in the womb of time*). [OE *wamb, womb,* = OHG *wamba,* ON *vomb,* Goth. *wamba*]", *ibid*, p.1342.

[248] **vagi'na** *n.* (*pl.* **~ae** *or* **~as**). **1.** Canal between womb and external genital orifice of female mammal; similar canal in insect etc; hence **vaginI'TIS** *n.* **2.** (Bot) Sheath formed round stem by base of leaf. **3.** Hence **~AL** *a.* [L, = sheath, scabbard]", *ibid*, p.1283.

[249] Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae*, p.9, 13 & 14.

[250] Paul Roazen, *Freud And His Followers*, p.464.

[251] "**dick** *n.* **1.** (sl.) **Take** one's ~, swear, affirm, *(that).* [abbr. of *declaration*] **2.** CLEVER *Dick;* TOM, *Dick, and Harry.* **3.** (vulg.) Penis." *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p.285. Also: 'Sex is

When seeking an explanation for Sesostris' graffiti we naturally turn to the feminist historians, simply because they have had cause to think most deeply about the political economy of our pudenda for longer than anyone else.

Elise Boulding and Gerda Lerner both choose to pick up the story way back in the Paleolithic, with the evolution of the home base and the primary division of labour that took place between males and females[252]. The invention of the home base was important because of the development of prolonged dependency in the infant[253]. This was determined by our evolutionary gamble upon bipedalism and brainpower. In order for the ape to be able to walk on two legs the hips had to narrow. On the other hand in order to pack more brainpower per body the head had to bulge. This posed a profound design problem for the female pelvis, to which any woman in childbirth will testify. The improvised solution was to rely much more upon brain development in the child after birth and dramatically improve the quality and longevity of nurture. Other evolutionary adjustments meant that human infants also lost their hair and their ability to cling, so they had to be protected from the cold and carried by hand. Given the mortality rate it was essential for females to devote most of their adulthood to pregnancy and motherhood. All these factors limited female mobility and made necessary the home base to which food would be carried for sharing and preparation. Some hominids then diversified into big game hunting, which required more mobility than ever[254]. The first primordial division of labour thereby evolved, whereby men did the bulk of the big game hunting whilst women took control over the camp and did the small game hunting and gathering[255].

At this stage there was no question of dominance or subordination. The division of labour between men and women just made practical sense. The two lifeworlds complemented each other and there was no sense of one being submissive to the other.

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the biological given for men and women. Gender is the cultural definition of behaviour defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time.' Lerner, *op cit*, p.10. See also p.238.

252 Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History: A History of Women Through Time* (Revised Edition, Sage, London, 1992), Volume 1. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford, OUP, 1986).

253 Lerner, *op cit*, p.38-40. Boulding, *op cit*, p.58-62.

254 Boulding, *op cit*, p.65-66.

255 We are talking in abstract terms. There will always be someone who can come up with an obscure anthropological example where men and women *share* in the fun of big game hunting. I have decided to put my trust in the judgement of two respected feminist scholars.

The roles of men and women had become separate but equal[256]. Within this division of labour both men and women developed the appropriate skills essential for group survival. Boulding suggests that the skills developed by women tended to be reproduced inclusively, because men were in a position to learn them as children whilst under the tutelage of their mothers[257]. Skills developed by men may well have offered more opportunities for the growth of an exclusive knowledge habit, the first hunting trip being a common rite of passage into male adulthood.

Nevertheless, female skills were as manifold as male skills and certainly as essential. Female and child gathering would supply up to 80% of the human diet by weight, and combined considerable botanical knowledge with conservation skills. Observations made by anthropologists living in hunter-gathering societies reveal that the women will teach their children where to find the most efficient quantities of resource bearing plants and trees in a given area. The women also teach how to leave emergency rations in place 'for next time'[258]. There was also a female reserve knowledge of survival skills, involving edible plants that were not normally used, being tough to chew, less tasty and so on, but which might see the next generation through prolonged shortages of the normal foods. The mystery of menstruation is also thought to have prompted women to record some of the first astronomical observations, using notched sticks or slates to notate relations between cycles within their own bodies and the lunar cycle beyond[259]. These calendrical findings could then be used to predict other natural cycles, such as pregnancies and seasons.

Boulding reasons that the camp was an important base for human innovation and that because women spent more time in and around the camp they were well placed to have been the primary innovators there. In hunter-gathering societies women are often skilled builders, making shelters out of trees, plants, mud and animal hides. Keepers of the home base are likely to have had the deepest motivation to develop the domestic use of fire, and the camp was a natural workshop where people could sit down and explore the potential of animal skins as garments. Being the primary gatherers, women would have been the first to spot the need for storage[260]. Seeds were nutritious

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256 Lerner, *op cit*, p.18 & 29.
257 Boulding, *op cit.*
258 *Ibid.*
259 *Ibid*, p.71 & 78-81
260 *Ibid*, p.87-88.

and easy to store, but could only be fully exploited if the women could teach each other how to weave containers out of withies, grind them from stone or mould them out of clay. Seeds were hard to digest without preparation, so the camp also had to develop the *tekhne* of food processing. Here humans conducted the first experiments with parching and boiling seeds, using containers over the campfire. The relative immobility of the camp also made it the natural site for research and development into heavy tools. Here humans found out how to use grindstones to make flour. These skills came in handy when meat started to become increasingly scarce as a result of incipient population pressure upon a dwindling supply of game. They formed the essential preconditions for the development of agriculture.

Women became aware that the men were staying away for longer at a time while coming back with less meat, and they began to consider how they could make up for this shortfall by making their own activities more productive[261]. They began to use the ecological knowledge they had built up over the generations to make timely interventions which would dramatically improve the fertility of nature:

> 'It would be inevitable that grains from sheaves of einkorn carried in from a distant field would drop in well-trodden soil just outside the home base or perhaps in a nearby pile of refuse. When the band returned the following year to this camp site - perhaps a favourite one, given that not all camp sites were revisited - there would be a fine stand of einkorn waiting for them right at their doorstep. Because of the construction of the seed, einkorn easily plants itself, so it was a good plant for initiating humans into agriculture. We might say that the plants taught the women how to cultivate them.'[262]

Some of the game hunted was brought back alive to the camp. Confused baby goats and lambs tottering around the camp after their wild mothers had been eaten would have provided the first experiments in animal domestication and training. By keeping a stock of animals close to camp the women and children could raise meat instead of just having to wait for it. Gradually, the success of agriculture persuaded people to settle down and turn the camps into permanent villages.

Both Boulding and Lerner distance themselves from the branch of feminist thought that believes it has found a 'golden age' of matriarchy in the transition from the

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[261] *Ibid*, p.95.
[262] *Ibid*, p.97.

Paleolithic to the Neolithic[263]. Even so, both authors assume that the productive skills of women placed them in positions of considerable power during a period when the traditional hunting expeditions of the men were suffering from static or diminishing returns.

Boulding divides women's activities on the typical Neolithic village into three spheres: the hearth, the fields, and the courtyard[264]. Hearth activities included the cooking, feeding and care of infants. Field activities included: the gathering of fruit and nuts; the planting, cultivating and harvesting of crops; caring for sheep and goats; collecting fuel for the fires and finding the materials for building. The courtyard was where women spent much of their time together and where the productive, financial and knowledge based powers of the village tended to concentrate. This was where the communal food processing would get done, where women would make the textiles, do the basket weaving, brewing, pottery, stoneware and jewellery. It was also the place where the economic surplus would be stored and where village meetings, ceremonies and work routines would be organized. Lastly, it was the place where the women would exercise their control over the upbringing of their children, where many of the skills and beliefs of the next generation would be inculcated. The village courtyard tended to place women together at the centre of political and economic life. The hunting or fishing trips of the men tended to marginalise them away from the hearths, fields and courtyards for long periods or until the evenings when the day's work was done. By then, many important decisions would have already been made.

The decline of hunting and the rise of agriculture is likely to have been a difficult time for men. A major source of meaning was slowly being taken away from them. By the time historical records begin, hunting is already becoming a symbolic privilege of the male nobility. The exclusive skills of hunting were crucial for male identity because his experiences of childhood dependency would have taught him to associate woman with a profound fear of powerlessness. Tenderness and love have probably always been the major ingredients of mothering, but many boys are also likely to have emerged from childhood with an acute sense of the dark side of matriarchy. By our standards abuse was endemic, infanticide was the recognised means of population

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263 Boulding, *op cit*, p.121-123. Lerner, *op cit*, p.27-35. For an example of the kind of thing that Boulding and Lerner choose to distance themselves from: Monica Sjoo & Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering The Religion Of The Earth.*

264 Boulding, *op cit*, p.113.

control, and rejection by the mother meant certain death[265]. Increasingly prolonged runs of meagre returns from hunting trips would have brought men face to face with these old fears. The general failure to impress back at home base meant that those men who were lower down in the pecking order were liable to public humiliation, maybe even the harsh reality of just fading away from communal life. Under matrilineal and matrilocal kinship structure a husband could easily be thrown out if he did not please his wife or her family. He could expect to have a thin time of it if he failed to persuade another woman to take him in[266]. It is not hard to imagine how many men would have been on the lookout for new roles to compensate for the loss of the old. The dissemination of the plough as a means of soil preparation is thought to have been a major breakthrough. Plough work required the strength of men and was not an occupation for pregnant women or lactating mothers[267]. Care of the oxen and the use of the plough became the male preserve which gave men something to bargain with in agricultural affairs[268].

As the Neolithic progressed there was an erosion of female power over production, finance and knowledge. One factor of decline was the existential obstacle of motherhood upon women's ability to respond to a multiplication in the division of labour[269]. As long as craft production was on a village scale women could hope to maintain their status as 'Jane of all trades'. But when surpluses were used to finance specialization it was the men who were able to take up the skills they had learnt as children from their mothers and develop them further in the city temples and workshops. Meanwhile, the women were left behind in the village courtyards, still using the old communal skills to bring up their children just as before. Boulding suggests that most women would have been so busy in their day to day lives that they simply did not have the time to look up and take a strategic look at what was happening around them. The relative decline of hunting meant that men had the leisure to think carefully about how to respond to any increase in the division of labour. As they did so, they carried over from the old hunting tradition the habits of knowledge exclusion that had been so crucial in the formation of male identity. Many women probably saw very well that this was a defensive move from their fathers, brothers, lovers and sons, and so may have even actively encouraged it. Initiation into the trade secrets of the city temple and the

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[265] *Ibid*, p.99-100. Also Lerner, *op cit*, p.39-40.
[266] Boulding, *op cit*, p.101.
[267] Lerner, *op cit*, p.51.
[268] Boulding, *op cit*, p.139-140. Lerner, *op cit*, p.49-51.
[269] Boulding, *op cit*, p.12, 112 & 126-127.

workshop became the new rites of passage which allowed young men to declare independence from the call of mother, strengthen their confidence and validate a sense of worth.

Another way to maintain status was to cultivate the male potential for aggression. We may postulate that childbearing and other physiological factors did place women at a disadvantage when it came to the provision of organized violence, and that men who could provide it were often appreciated[270]. However, the asymmetric distribution of human aggression has probably been made to do more work than it should in modern thought about prehistory. Evolutionary arguments based on the male potential for aggression are often made by rather feeble middle class men who have never seen women really fight. Nor is there conclusive evidence that conflict in the Neolithic was a universal problem. When assessing the various archaeological and anthropological arguments, of course, Hobbes and Rousseau should always be on the shelf to sensitise us to our propensity to find what we wish to see, but as far as Mesopotamia is concerned we have already followed Nissan's advice that Ubaid conflict was marginal. Where violent conflict did occur, primitive societies could not always rely upon the luxury of a male warrior class. And where there was a male warrior class, this already qualifies as a form of civilized behaviour. If we apply strategic analysis to Strange's scenario of violence upon her desert island, for example, all things being equal, we may deduce that the prevailing group will be the one whose women can summon up latent reserves of aggression as well as the men. Clausewitz agrees[271]. So do the modern adherents of gender integration in the military. Boulding suggests that this is the grain of truth that lies behind many of those scandalised Greek and Roman yarns about the Amazonians[272]. To sum up, the male ability to contribute violent solutions to problems of conflict were a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the early creation of power differentials between the sexes.

According to Lerner, a major factor that can explain the story of Sesostris' graffiti was the commodification of the reproductive capacities of woman[273]. Sexual exchange was the primordial form of international relations because even

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270 Lerner, *op cit*, p.45-46.
271 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, 'Superiority Of Numbers', p.264-269.
272 *Op cit*, p.263.
273 Lerner, *op cit*, p.46-53.

communitarians have genitals that are cosmopolitan by nature[274]. In time this is something that Strange's castaways will have to think about quite seriously. All primitive societies that have thrived have had to practice some form of sexual exchange. Partly this is a biological imperative because of the risk of genetic inbreeding within the community[275]. But over time humans learned that sexual exchange could also serve as a means to gain skills from and forge alliances with other groups. Our need for nurture meant that sexual exchange was culturally regulated within kinship structure. Anthropological observations reveal that the early regulation of sexual exchange tends to fall somewhere between two poles: matrilocal and patrilocal[276]. Hunter-gathering and horticultural economies will often develop kinship structures which are matrilocal, but as they shift toward agriculture they show a general propensity to become patrilocal. Lerner suggests that the shift toward patrilocality may be partly explained by Malthusian factors of population control. In late hunter-gathering societies childbearing women were a potential liability, so good diplomacy would seek to top up with more men who could hunt extensively and help secure control over scarce resources. In agricultural societies childbearing women became an economic asset because farming was labour intensive. The production of more food depended upon the availability of labour. Given that men do not produce children directly, the tribe holding more women could increase the labour supply more rapidly than the tribe with more men. Under such circumstances the shift from matrilocality to patrilocality would prove to be an advantage to those communities that achieved it.

Lerner stresses that women were active participants in the switch from matrilocal to patrilocal exchange. We need not suffer from any romantic delusions about female solidarity here[277]. Lerner cites anthropological examples where queens arrange inter-communal marriages to increase their own wealth and influence[278]. Only later did female exchange fall into the hands of men. In any case, to be selected for a career as a diplomatic bride may well have originally been seen as a privilege, conferring honour and status. Many marriages also held out the prospect of being

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274 'When the famous Arletty was accused of having had sexual relations with members of the German occupation forces, her answer is said to have been: "My heart is French, but my fanny is international."' Peter Sloterdijk, *op cit*, p.148.

275 Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, p.37-38.

276 Matrilocal exchange is where a married couple will go to live with the wife's family. Patrilocal exchange is where the couple will live with the husband's family.

277 On the existential possibility of a woman's inhumanity to another see: Phyllis Chesler, *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman.*

upwardly mobile, involving promotion to communities that were higher up in the world pecking order. However, using the work of Levi Strauss, Meillassoux and others, Lerner argues that overall the exchange of women had consequences far beyond those which women or men originally intended. The act of displacement from kith and kin can leave humans feeling exposed and vulnerable. This is so for both men and women. But once the tradition of patrilocality was up and running it began to dawn on people how, under similar conditions of displacement, women could be made more vulnerable than men. This made them easier to subordinate and assimilate. The two things went together and made women less risky for use as diplomatic pawns:

> 'Supposing grown men were exchanged among tribes, what would ensure their loyalty to the tribe to which they were traded? Men's bond to their offspring was not, then, strong enough to ensure their submission for the sake of their children. Men would be capable of violence against members of the strange tribe; with their experience in hunting and long distance travel they might easily escape and then return as warriors to seek vengence. Women, on the other hand, would be more easily coerced, most likely by rape. Once married or mothers of children they would give loyalty to their children and to their children's relatives and thus make a potentially strong bond with the tribe of affiliation.'[279]

Under patrilocality the community would give away a daughter for marriage with the same kind of solemnity as the modern statesman signs a treaty. It was a token of commitment. The daughter was the ideal bargaining chip because on the one hand she was reasonably dear to the donor family and thus a potential hostage if the alliance turned sour. On the other hand her reproductive potential could be used to quickly assimilate her into the new community and thus serve as a bridge between them both. Given that the exchange was consummated by marriage, it is not hard to imagine how the vulva became associated with the idea of male ownership. The by-product of the exchange of women was that it reified their sexuality and fertility, and thus helped to usher in the formation of abstract property.

Even so, the diplomatic marriage was still seen as a partnership, and as such implied the existence of mutual obligations. Man now had rights in woman that woman did not have in man. But as yet woman was still only mother, wife or pawn. She was not yet also a slave. This was the next stage in the subordination of women, according to Lerner, where the vulva takes on the additional connotations of surrender and

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[278] Lerner, *op cit*, p.48.
[279] *Ibid*, p.47-48.

domination[280]. Many authorities have argued that the practice of slavery originated out of war and conquest[281]. Most historians dealing with the subject of ancient slavery also note that the great majority of those first enslaved were women[282]. Early in the formation of primary civilizations it became common practice to kill the males of a beaten enemy and then enslave the women and their children. Lerner argues that this was because:

> 'The crucial invention, over and above that of brutalizing another human being... is the possibility of designating the group to be dominated as entirely different from the group exerting dominance. Naturally, such a difference is most obvious when those to be enslaved are members of a foreign tribe, literally "others". Yet in order to extend the concept and make the enslaved into *slaves*, somehow *other* than human, men must have known that such a designation would indeed work. We know that mental constructs usually derive from some model in reality and consist of a new ordering of past experience.'[283]

The exchange of women as diplomatic pawns had given men the habit of seeing woman as a commodity. So when it came to war, the victors naturally saw the defeated in terms of the enemy and his property in women. This property could be divided up amongst the victors. Men had learned over the years the mental construct and the technique which could both be developed to coerce the women of the defeated communities into slavery. The means for extending this enslavement to male prisoners of war had not yet been worked out and was too dangerous, so they had to be killed.

Orlando Patterson has isolated three major techniques that processed captured women toward the acceptance of enslavement[284]. First, the slaughter of the menfolk made it clear to the women that their new status was a substitute for violent death, and that this was conditional on submissive behaviour. Second, the women and children were put through a social process of natal alienation. That is to say they were stripped of any claims to social existence apart from that of ownership by the master: their men were killed, their homes were put to the fire and their land was given away for resettlement by others. The mothers and children would be separated from their kin, as the victors divided up the booty. Then they would be severed from their geographical bearings by being transported many miles away from homes that no longer existed

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[280] Lerner, *op cit*, p.77-100.
[281] *Ibid*, p.76.
[282] *Ibid*, p.78.
[283] *Ibid*, p.77.
[284] *Ibid*, p.78.

anyway. Thirdly, male ownership over the body of the female slave was established by the systematic use of a disempowerment ritual pioneered under the system of patrilocal exchange:

> 'The impact on the conquered of the rape of conquered women was twofold: it dishonoured the women and by implication served as a symbolic castration of their men. Men in patriarchal societies who cannot protect the sexual purity of their wives, sisters, and children are truly impotent and dishonoured. The practice of raping the women of a conquered group has remained a feature of warfare and conquest from the second millennium BC to the present.'[285]

> 'Physical terror and coercion, which were an essential ingredient in the process of turning free persons into slaves, took, for women, the form of rape. Women were subdued physically by rape; once impregnated, they might become psychologically attached to their masters. From this derived the institutionalization of concubinage, which became the social instrument for integrating captive women into the households of their captors, thus assuring their captors not only their loyal services but those of their offspring.'[286]

Combining previous experience with the capacity for experiment, men learnt that with such methods women could be persuaded to endure enslavement and would adapt to it as best they could. It started in Mesopotamia and Egypt, then it spread to Syria-Palestine, Anatolia and the Aegean. The cultural impact of this upon the classical world is breathtaking. Herodotus begins his account of the Persian wars with the question of 'women stealing'[287]. Homer's heroes are consummate professionals in the business of female enslavement, as we shall see later. The whole plot of the *Iliad* revolves around the question of how best to divide up the booty of a conquered city without conflict. This was the wisdom used during the Peloponnesian war so succinctly summarised by the war weary Thucydides: 'they killed the men of military age, made slaves of the women and children, and gave the land to the Plateans'[288].

This is not to say that there were no male slaves, even as early as Sumer. By experimenting with the enslavement of women and children, men soon came to understand that all human beings had the potential for tolerating enslavement. The first adult male slaves would have been the captured children who subsequently became

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[285] *Ibid*, p.80.
[286] *Ibid*, p.87.
[287] Herodotus, *op cit*, p.1-5, standard reference: Book I, 1-6
[288] Thucydides, *op cit*. (Lerner cites three examples, *op cit*, p.85-86, but the Greek historian's text is littered with them).

mature slaves, or the male progeny of rape who were thus born into slavery. Having grown up with their chains, subordination would have been etched into their very bodies. By the beginning of the second millennium slavery in women and men was becoming widespread. The slave trade in men and women thrived particularly well along the Mediterranean coast, where sea transport opened up new opportunities for subordination and reduced transaction costs. But because male slavery was an extension of female slavery, the iconography of sexual domination was carried over to the male slaves.

The practice of castration is particularly interesting in this respect, another innovation credited to the Sumerians which has been widely copied throughout the civilized world. Here the symbol of male power is physically removed from the slave. But castration was only necessary for the sensitive parts of the temple or palace bureaucracy, because most male slaves were thought to be like women anyway: that is to say, effeminate people whom it was possible to enslave. Communities which assessed the odds and decided to yield were 'no better than women' because power had become conceptually related to sexual violence. This explains why the Sesostris legend of male and female pudenda had resonance for historians like Herodotus and Manetho. The balls and the penis had become instruments of domination. Distinctions of subordination became laced with genital overtones because the *tekhne* of human property had been pioneered in the realm of sexual violence.

Where did the enslaved women and children come from? In Mesopotamia the Akkadian cuneiform sign for 'female slave' was 'woman' plus 'mountain', which would suggest anywhere along the mountian chain that stretches right from western Iran to south-west Anatolia[289]. During the Uruk phase the first chattels were probably taken from the settlements lying along the upper reaches of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Later on, some of the slaves would have come from inter-city rivalries within Mesopotamia itself. Many more would have then been provided by the secondary states which had begun to encircle the Mesopotamian delta. By the turn of the second millennium there are also recorded instances of an internal source of slaves within the city state itself. This was the problem which the communitarian Greeks were to confront a thousand years or more later. Slavery outside the community inevitably leads to slavery inside the

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[289] *Ibid*, p.86.

community. By the time that the *Laws of Hammurabi* were written, early in the second millennium, the legal infrastructure was in place for the father to pawn his own family:

> 'Hammurabi's Laws, ~117: *If a debt has brought about the seizure of a man and he has delivered his wife or his son or his daughter for silver, or has delivered them as persons distrained for debt, for three years they shall serve in the house of the buyer or distrainer; in the fourth year their freedom shall be established.*'[290]

In Egypt the women and children would originally have come from the three main spheres of Egyptian military action: Nubia; Libya and Syria-Palestine. In our discussion of the story of *Sinuhe the Egyptian*, for example, we noted that Sinuhe was a harem official attached to a military campaign in Libya, and that he was probably working in the field of procurement. With the defeated males, according to Sinuhe, the good king Sesostris 'slakes his thirst by crushing skulls'. After this the first task of the harem-military-attache was to act on the king's behalf when it came to the division of the spoils. His next task was to ensure that the selected women were returned to the palace in good condition. That was the Middle Kingdom. By the New Kingdom (1566-1080 BC), the slave racket is so familiar that it is being parodied:

> 'When the victory is won His Majesty distributes the plunder for the return march to Egypt; (but) the Asiatic woman is exhausted by the march and is put on the shoulders of the soldiers.'[291]

The greed of the master becomes his burden. Arguably this subtle hint of satire anticipates the relationship between Xanthias and Dionysus in *The Frogs*[292]. Meanwhile, as far as the selfish gene is concerned, men and women have an equal number of chromosomes...

(2.11) Civilization is mortal: 'Would that I were not born amongst the fifth age of men, but either dead earlier or born later!'[293]

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[290] Quoted in Saggs, *op cit*, p.157.
[291] Redford, *op cit*, p.221.
[292] Aristophanes, *The Frogs*: 1-41.
[293] Hesiod, *Works And Days*, translated by M.L. West, (Oxford, OUP, 1988).

One day in about 1200 BC a merchant ship was sailing from the Levant towards the Aegean. The vessel was laden with a ton of metal cargo, ready made ingots of copper, tin and bronze, plus a miscellaneous assortment of metal goods for scrap. On board was a merchant who owned a cosmopolitan set of standard weights that enabled him to trade with merchants from Egypt, Syria-Palestine, Cyprus, Anatolia, Crete and mainland Greece. He also carried a personal cylinder seal, which means he must have had some deposits of wealth stashed away somewhere in at least one of his ports of call. The merchant was also a tinker who could work the metals himself, carrying anvils, hammers, rubbers, polishers, a whetstone, a hammer and a punch. Some of the crew were supplementing their income by doing a little trade of their own on the side, carrying coloured beads, pottery and other bric a brac. It was a fairly routine voyage on a well known shipping lane that took advantage of a westward current which runs along the coast of Anatolia. But when the ship approached the southernmost point of the Anatolian peninsula, Cape Gelidonya, things started to go wrong. Perhaps the westward current was unusually strong on that particular day, or maybe an unexpected southerly wind took the crew by surprise. Whatever the reason, when attempting to sail between two islands near the mainland the ship ran onto some rocks and sank in nearly thirty metres of water. The prospects for the survivors were not good. The two desert islands nearby consisted of barren rock with no fresh water.

We know all this because the shipwreck in question was excavated in 1960 by a team of marine archaeologists led by George Bass and Peter Throckmorton[294]. Later in his career Bass led the excavation of another Bronze Age wreck slightly further along the coast at Ulu Burun[295]. This ship appears to have sunk slightly earlier, in the fourteenth century BC, and carried a much more diverse cargo. This included: copper, tin and silver ingots; bronze tools and weapons; gold and silver jewelery; glass ingots with colouring materials; glass beads; purple dye for textiles; unworked hippopotamus and elephant ivory; logs of Egyptian ebony; an eclectic selection of pottery and fifty two amphorae containing about a ton of resin which is thought to have been intended for aromatic purposes. Analysis has also confirmed that the ship carried oils, fruits, nuts,

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[294] George Bass, (1967), 'Cape Gelidonya: A Bronze Age Shipwreck', *Transactions Of The American Philosophical Society*, NS 57.8.

[295] Bass, (1986), 'A Bronze Age Shipwreck at Ulu Burun (Kas): 1984 Campaign', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 90, p.269-297. Also: Bass, Pulak, Collon & Weinstein, (1989), 'The Bronze Age Shipwreck at Ulu Burun: 1986 Campaign', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 93, p.1-29.

spices and other organic products both for trade and shipboard use[296]. The presence of the merchant is indicated once again by standard weights designed for scales, but also by the discovery of three cylinder seals. One of the seals is Mycenaean. Another is from Kassite Mesopotamia. The third is an Old Babylonian seal recycled for fourteenth century use with an Assyrian retread. Perhaps the most sensational find was a diptych. This consists of two wooden leaves that fold together by an ivory hinge. The wooden leaves were recessed and scored with crosshatching to hold a beeswax writing surface. The beauty of the diptych was that the beeswax could be melted to produce a fresh surface, providing a convenient form of erasure. The diptych thus became popular as a teaching tool for apprentice scribes, for diplomatic and business correspondence, for temporary jottings, dictation and first drafts[297]. Its presence in the wreck suggests that Linear A and B were probably not the only scripts sloshing around in the Aegean during the Late Bronze Age.

Taken together, the two shipwrecks help provide a vivid picture of the international political economy of Late Bronze Age civilization in the Mediterranean between about 1400-1200 BC. It is a time of intensive trade, travel, interdependency and cultural interaction. This interaction is complex and multi-directional, and cannot be contained within the traditional paradigms of 'thalassocracy' or 'pax egyptica'. The Gelidonya ship, for example, belongs to an independent merchant venturer risking his life for a fortune on the high seas. In this case he happens to be Syrian but, judging from his cosmopolitan set of weights, he might just as easily have been Anatolian, Egyptian, Cypriot, Cretan or Greek. The Ulu Burun wreck lies toward the other end of the trade spectrum. Its cargo of elite luxuries is described almost verbatim in several of the letters found in the Egyptian diplomatic archive at el Amarna, which suggests that this vessel involves the agency and direct intervention of the state[298]. Furthermore, royal merchants are working in collaboration with merchants from other states, as is suggested by the Mycenaean, Kassite and Assyrian seals found on board the Ulu Burun wreck. If they had not been sunk, the goods on board the two wrecks would have been destined for Helladic citadels such as the ones found at Mycenae, Tiryns, Athens or Pylos[299]. These were the major centres which could proffer sufficient quantities of surplus in the form

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[296] Cheryl Haldane, (1993), 'Direct evidence for organic cargoes in the Late Bronze Age', *World Archaeology*, Volume 24 No.3, p.348-359.
[297] Bass, (1989), *op cit*, p.10-11. Leila Avrin, *Scribes, Script And Books*, p.68-9, 143-4, 165-7.
[298] Bass, (1986), *op cit*, p.293. Haldane, *op cit*, p.348-9.
[299] Pylos was not a citadel, but a palace without defensive walls.

of oil, wine and pottery, which both vessels would have been laden with on their return voyage to the Levant. These were the Aegean centres which housed the specialized craftsmen who could work with exotic raw materials such as ivory and thus support the appetites of chieftains trying to ape the opulence of the Near Eastern palace.

The two shipwrecks also provide us with clues that can help us understand the fragility of Bronze Age civilization in the Mediterranean which was to have such catastrophic consequences in the Aegean after 1200 BC. The goods found on both wrecks show that the specialization of labour within the production structures of the Helladic citadels was highly dependent upon the security of transport and trade, both within the Aegean and with the Levantine ports of the Near East[300]. Greek soils were never fertile enough to support the densities of population achievable on the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia or Egypt. The larger Mycenaean towns were no bigger than a fair-sized village of Early Dynastic Mesopotamia[301]. To satisfy their appetite for symbolic capital in the form of luxury goods and strategic capital in the form of bronze weaponry, the Helladic chieftains had to support their craftsmen with enough food to live and the raw materials with which to work. When it came to wealth in subsistence terms, Greece thus had to become technically overpopulated if its gods were to become players in the Bronze Age international political economy. The citadel-towns were probably self-sufficient in food during good years, but would need assistance to overcome the bad years. We need to bear in mind that the population of Greece during the 14th and 13th centuries BC was more dense than it would be until the fifth, when imports of grain to cities such as Athens were common[302]. When it came to wealth in the form of raw materials for Bronze Age manufactures, the Helladic economy was poor in the crucial area of metals and many other prestige materials. The drive to export productive surpluses in textiles, oil, wine and pottery was thus crucial to finance the Helladic political economy, and the major source of supply and demand for all these imports and exports lay in the Levantine ports of Cyprus and Syria-Palestine.

Security over trade along the Levantine coast during the 14th and 13th centuries BC was dependent upon a delicate Late Bronze Age world order. We only have space

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[300] The following account of collapse is mainly inspired by the historiographical legwork of Sandars, *The Sea Peoples*, plus the theoretical acumen of Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*.

[301] Renfrew, *op cit*, p.244.

[302] Vermeule, *op cit*, p.257.

here to outline a few contours of this world order. To the east, authority in Mesopotamia was divided between Kassite Babylonia and Assyria. In the 14th century the foreign policies of these two powers were mainly preoccupied with the urgency of local affairs, tending to concentrate upon relations toward each other, and upon the rise of the Elamite state in Iran and the decline of the confederation of Hurrian states called Mitanni, based in the Jezireh[303]. To the west, authority over the eastern Mediterranean was dominated by the Hittites of Anatolia and New Kingdom Egypt. The Egyptian and Hittite diplomatic archives testify that all these states communicated with each other in Akkadian, by now the conventional diplomatic language of the Near East. By this time the ancient world had become so extensive, diverse and fluid that the pantheon as a form of intertheocratic organization was unworkable, so the gods delegated the conduct of diplomacy to their leading human representatives who, by recognizing each other as relatively autonomous subjects, now shared with each other the secrets of conscious being. This secret knowledge was shared by using the metaphor of the family together with all its connotations of kinship and rivalry. Thus diplomatic communications had a universally recognised means of codifying intertheocratic relations through the patriarchal terms of 'father', 'son' or 'brother'[304]. To address another king as 'my father' implied the acceptance of seniority, to address him as a 'son' implied its assumption, whilst the address of 'my brother' was a claim to mutual equality. Another key indicator of world order was that warfare between these states and their proxies was conducted according to an accepted set of rules and procedures. The widespread use of the chariot, for example, required certain rules of engagement, being unsuitable for rough ground[305]. Dynastic marriages between all the major powers were particularly common at this time, so that dynasties everywhere became inter-related and were in fact, a true family[306]. Another convention that helped to develop an intertheocratic ruling class was the practice of accepting the sons of vassal rulers for tutelage by the overlord. Many kings of Syria-Palestine, for example, were alumnae from the top colleges of the Egyptian court.

Although the Hittite and Egyptian courts were rivals jockeying for power over Syria-Palestine for most of the Late Bronze Age, the stalemate between these two

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[303] **'Jezirah**: Area between upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern Iraq and Syria. It is the Arabic term for island.' Knapp, *op cit*, p.282.
[304] Saggs, *op cit*, p. 182.
[305] Sandars, *op cit*, p.32.
[306] Saggs, *op cit*, p.181.

hegemons provided a source of stability within which mercantile trade in the Mediterranean prospered. The network of strategic alliances between 1400-1200 BC were dynamic and complex, but a crude rule of thumb would place the crucial port of Ugarit on the Syrian coast under Hittite protection, whilst the ports of Byblos, Sidon, Acre and Tyre were typically under the hegemony of Egypt[307]. Meanwhile, Enkomi and Kition on the copper rich island of Cyprus were isolated and wealthy enough to maintain a measure of independence until the close of the 13th century, keeping both the Hittite and Egyptian courts sweet with handsome payments of tribute. Within this security structure the vassal ports of the Levant were allowed a degree of commercial autonomy that enabled them to become important centres of mercantile power. Given the mutual need for exchange, the two superpowers tended to respect their commercial neutrality, and thus they became affluent cosmopolitan freeports. Ugarit, for example, boasted merchants using Hittite, Egyptian, Akkadian, Hurrian, Canaanite and other scripts. It was this rich mixture of scribal traditions which provided the synergy that inspired the first forerunners of the alphabet[308]. Bass reasons that the wrecks at Ulu Burun and Cape Gelidonya would have left from Ugarit, Byblos, Sidon or Tyre and then stopped off at Enkomi or Kition before heading toward the Aegean.

By 1200 BC this Late Bronze Age world order was beginning to fall apart. The older models of Bronze Age collapse have tended to seek external causes for this breakdown in the form of barbarian hordes such as the 'Dorians', 'Gasga tribes' and 'Sea Peoples'. More recent models of collapse tend to look more toward internal causes, working from the reasonable assumption that the decision makers of the Late Bronze Age are unlikely to have been any more rational than our own. The dynasties had managed to improvise a conscious alternative to the pantheon but, to be succinct, levels of complex economic interdependency had been achieved by the late 13th century BC which were beyond the political competence of the ruling dynasties to sustain. The 'father-son-brother' paradigm of intertheocratic relations was simply unable to find an adequate response to the demands which the Late Bronze Age made upon it. The ruling classes of the Late Bronze Age consequently destroyed their webs of interdependency through the pursuit of sibling rivalries they could no longer afford, and in doing so, destroyed themselves.

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[307] One school of thought has the Hittite sphere of influence sweeping down the Levant at the expense of Egypt during the reign of Akhenaten, including the loss of Byblos. But see Kuhrt, *op cit*, p.196-7.

[308] Knapp, *op cit*, p.189-191.

The collapse became such a bewildering torrent of actions and interactions that it is impossible to find a truly satisfactory point from which to begin a narrative, but Sandars chooses the battle of Kadesh as the point where the political equilibrium between Hittite Anatolia and Egypt took its first wobble, though as yet the impending chaos was about as far off in the future as a typhoon caused by an eddy from the wings of a butterfly. In the spring of 1286 BC Ramses II led an army from Egypt toward Syria-Palestine with the aim of recovering the hegemony it had enjoyed there during the 15th century. Meanwhile, Muwatallis, having been forewarned by an Egyptian razzia the year before, plus a provocative defection by the frontline state of Ammuru, led his Hittite forces from Anatolia toward Syria-Palestine with the intention of defending gains made there against Egypt during the 14th century. Ramses II was a young man with the high expectations of his court weighing on his shoulders. In his haste to take the city of Kadesh he led his army straight into an ambush laid by the Hittites, and was fortunate to be able to turn what could have been a total rout into an orderly retreat. The battle of Kadesh had resulted in a clear victory for Muwatallis, but the war turned out to be a defeat for both sides.

When Ramses II returned home the spin-doctors immediately got to work, turning the retreat from Kadesh into a crushing victory, but the truth was not so easily manipulated back in Syria-Palestine. Benteshina, the hapless king of Ammuru, who had tragically been made an Egyptian offer he could not refuse and switched his vassalage from Muwatallis to Ramses II on the very eve of the conflict, was deposed by the Hittites and carted off to Anatolia as a traitor[309]. This fate was a salutary example to contemporary Syrian kings who may otherwise have been disposed to give Egyptian overtures a favourable hearing and contemplate secession from the Hittite embrace. Egyptian dreams of hegemony over the trade routes of Syria were finished, but things were even worse than that. As Ramses and his army fled, the Hittites harried them as far south as Damascus[310]. This spectacle of undignified retreat meant that the Egyptian aura of invincibility was shattered even in Palestine. The security value of vassalage toward Egypt slumped. Many Palestinian kings began to eye the north nervously, vacillate, or even openly rebelled and withheld their tribute payments. Egyptian recognition of its widespread slump in authority over Palestine is evident in a strengthening of its

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[309] Redford, *op cit*, p.183 & 185. Compare with: Goetze, 'The Hittites And Syria', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume II part 2, p.252 & 254.

fortifications around the north eastern Delta[311]. After three years of licking his wounds and making sure that the perception of Egyptian weakness did not spread to Nubia and Libya, Ramses II spent the next eleven years worth of summer campaigns besieging the towns of Palestine, trying to regain the ground lost at the battle of Kadesh.

Despite the glorious victory at Kadesh the years of war with Egypt also had serious consequences for the Hittite king Muwatallis. His forces were overstretched. Back in Anatolia a number of Gasga chieftains had taken advantage of the temporary depletion of Hittite forces to make predatory raids on the northern frontier. The gravity of the Gasga threat is evident in the fact that Muwatallis had already moved his capital from Hattusas to a more southerly site as a precautionary measure before his departure to fight the Egyptians[312]. This move turned out to be fully justified when Hattusas was taken and sacked. Exhausting campaigns in the north against the Gasga were going to be necessary to re-establish authority there. But there was an even greater threat brewing to the east. Whilst the Hittites were fighting the Egyptians the Assyrian king Adadnirari seized his moment to conquer the Hittite vassal states of Mitanni, stopping just short of Carchemish on the Euphrates. By this time Assyria had been knocking on the door of 'brother' status for over a century, but now that the buffer states of Mitanni had been eliminated Muwatallis and Adadnirari were neighbours. Hittite control over the strategic trade route down the Euphrates to Mesopotamia was under threat. Given that the Mitanni had paid tribute to Muwatallis, the Hittite ability to protect its vassal states against Assyria was now in question.

After annexing the Mitanni Adadnirari sent a carefully nuanced diplomatic letter to Muwatallis, addressing him as a 'brother' and 'requesting' to be allowed to visit the Amanus 'silver mountains' which lay within Hittite territory. If this was an offer of rapprochement from Adadnirari, on the proviso that his annexation of Mitanni be accepted along with the recognition of status as a brother with right of access to the Hittite silver markets, Muwatallis was having none of it. In his letter of reply Muwatallis admitted that Adadnirari had a perfect right to call himself a 'great king' having seized Mitanni, but:

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310 Goetze, *op cit*, p.254.

311 Redford, *op cit*, p.185.

312 Goetz, 'Anatolia From Shuppiluliumash To The Egyptian War Of Muwatallish', *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume II part 2, p.129.

> 'as for brotherhood, and your visit to the Amanus mountains - why should I write to you about brotherhood? You and I - were we perhaps born of the same mother or father?'[313]

The rebuff is an indication that Muwatallis intended to take on Assyria in his next great campaign, leaving his brother Hattusilis behind to defend the northern territories against the Gasga. But fate intervened. Muwatallis died suddenly in 1282 BC without leaving a legitimate heir. A succession crisis ensued. Constitutional procedures were invoked to install the eldest son of one of his concubines to the throne, namely Urkhi-Teshub, who assumed the royal title of Mursilis III[314]. A campaign to check the Assyrian threat was soon out of the question however, because Mursilis III suspected that his uncle Hattusilis had designs on the throne. Hattusilis had acquired considerable prestige both through his role in the victory at Kadesh, and through his successful command of recent victories against the Gasga. He had also begun to cultivate friends who had had quarrels with Muwatallis and Mursilis III.

When Mursilis III finally moved to check his uncle's power by reducing the territories under his control ('he took them all away from me and made me small') Hattusilis responded with a well planned coup which split the Hittite alliance. Most of the nobility took the uncle's side, but the Arzawa-lands in western Anatolia supported Mursilis III. When Hattusilis finally defeated Mursilis III and proclaimed himself king in 1275 BC, most of these western lands disappear from the Hittite records and we have to assume they took advantage of the civil conflict to secede from Hittite control[315]. Hattusilis had achieved his ambition, but his state now faced enemies on four fronts: the Egyptians along the Levant; the Gasga chieftains to the north; the Assyrians to the east; and the Arzawa lands to the west who were busy recruiting allies from the Aegean to help consolidate their secession. In desperation Hattusilis moved with swift adroitness to try to repair the damage. First, he negotiated a mutual defence treaty with Kassite Babylonia against the event of Assyrian aggression. This was of limited use in the long term because the Kassite dynasty was on the wane, but it checked the Assyrians in the short term and brought Hattusilis time to campaign in the Troad and protect the vital tin route to the Balkans[316]. Second, Hattusilis despatched an embassy to Egypt proposing a

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[313] Kuhrt, *op cit*, p.354.
[314] Goetz, 'The Hittites And Syria', *op cit*, p.256-7.
[315] Macqueen, *op cit*, p.49.
[316] *Ibid*, p.49-50.

treaty of peace[317]. Having spent eleven exhausting years trying to claw back authority in Palestine and sensing that the strength of Assyria was becoming a mutual threat, Ramsses II responded positively to the Hittite overture. A treaty between the two old enemies was agreed in 1269, leading to a half century of unprecedented peace and prosperity on the Levant, an indian summer of open borders and thriving commerce.

However, the Hittite regime was still under pressure from Assyria, the Gasga and the western lands. Hattusilis was constantly on the defensive. Whenever he moved to check one opponent the other two would threaten while his back was turned. Part of the problem was the proto-feudal security structure upon which the Hittites relied. This worked well during periods of expansion when the king could use the power of patronage to motivate his staff, but when things were going badly the inevitable cutbacks sowed dissention in the ranks[318]. After pausing for breath with the death of Adadnirari in 1275 BC, the Assyrians consolidated their hold over the states of Mitanni. The new Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, eliminated the old vassal kings of Mitanni and replaced them with Assyrian officials, and populations were uprooted and resettled. Hittite forces temporarily managed to arrest the Assyrian advances in Syria around the city of Carchemish, but then Shalmaneser's forces began to inch their way up the valleys into Anatolia on the eastern side of the Euphrates. Eventually they managed to seize control of the copper mines of Isuwa. This was a serious strategic blow to the Hittites, Isuwa hitherto being their primary source of the metal[319]. When Hattusilis died in 1245 BC, his son Tudhaliyas IV resorted to the invasion of Cyprus in order to secure control over an alternative source of copper. To do this he had to enlist the fleet of the vassal state of Ugarit and thus become dependent upon a maritime power. We may imagine that this act would not have been popular with the Helladic kings of the Aegean, for whom Cyprus was an important source of copper and a gateway to the flourishing markets of the Levant.

Sometime after the accession of Tukulti-Ninurta to the Assyrian throne in 1244 BC, the new king took a campaign across the Euphrates deeper into Syria. On one stela Tukulti-Ninurta claims to have taken prisoner and deported 28,000 Hittite subjects[320]. Tudhaliyas tried to retaliate by leading an army across the Euphrates in the opposite

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317 Redford, *op cit*, p.189-90.
318 Sandars, *op cit*, p.32.
319 Macqueen, *op cit*, p.50.
320 Knapp, *op cit*, p.194.

direction, taking the fight to the Assyrians. The result was a resounding defeat[321]. The fallout from this and other losses produced another bout of internal disunity within the Hittite dynasty and its records complain of sinister conspiracies. At one stage Tudhaliyas' cousin Kurunta, the king of Tarhuntassa, appears to have attempted a coup to seize the Hittite throne. This attempt was eventually put down, but did nothing to enhance Hittite authority abroad. The vassal states of Syria started to become lax in making their tribute payments. The king of Ugarit prudently began to enter into diplomatic correspondence with the king of Assyria[322]. From here on, the decline of the Hittite state is evident in the way the records become more sporadic. After the death of Tudhaliyas in about 1215 BC the throne passes to his son Arnuwandas, of whom we know nothing except that he was reduced to trying to buy off the raids of the Gasga with tribute and that he died after a short reign of about five years. By now the perennial war efforts had exhausted the immunity of the Hittite political economy to natural disaster. Harvests were failing and Egypt, presumably alarmed by the strategic implications of Hittite decline, was now seeking to prop up its old foe by sending aid shipments of grain to ward off famine[323]. The last king of the Hittite state, Suppiluliumas II, clung on for about five years, after which the records fall silent and the Hittite capital of Hattusa was destroyed.

The reason we have devoted so much space to the decline of the Hittite state is that its fall, when it came, removed a source of stability in the Mediterranean, leading to a political and economic crisis of extraordinary ferocity. The last annals and diplomatic letters of the ruling dynasties of Hittite Anatolia, Ugarit and Cyprus suggest a widespread breakdown of international security obligations amidst a background of chaos, confusion and mutual recrimination. In one letter that has survived the last Hittite king complains bitterly of an alliance betrayed:

> 'You were not beside me. Did I not go alone to Nihirija and when the enemy tried to capture a part of Hurri Land (Hatti), and I was left totally deserted in the town of Alatarma.'[324]

The last tablet in the Hittite archive boasts of a victory against an unidentified enemy, but the context of the battle reveals how desperate things had become. The battle is over

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321 Gurney, *The Hittites*, p.31.
322 *Ibid.*
323 Macqueen, *op cit*, p.50-51.
324 Sandars, *op cit*, p.139.

Cyprus. The Hittites are clearly struggling to maintain authority over what had been their major source of copper since the Assyrian advance in eastern Anatolia:

> 'I mobilised, with speed, I Suppiluliumas the Great, I reached the sea. The ships of Alashiya (Cyprus) came up against me and gave battle, three times at sea... when I arrived on dry land the enemy came against me to do battle in multitudes...'[325]

The most disturbing thing about the enemy is that he seems to erupt from outside the margins of the 'brother-father-son' paradigm. He has no 'I' to whom a diplomatic letter might be addressed, and cannot be identified as a legitimate subject in the great game of war and diplomacy. If the ships of the enemy are from Cyprus, where is the king of Cyprus who was supposed to be a Hittite vassal? He is locked inside his citadel writing to the king of Ugarit, trying to place responsibility elsewhere:

> 'Greetings to yourself, and to your country. As to those matters concerning the enemy. It was indeed men of your country and your boats that did it, your people were indeed responsible for that offence, but don't complain to me. The 20 boats that the enemy left previously in the mountainous parts did not stay there, but they went off suddenly, and now we don't know where to look for them. I write to inform you, and to put you on your guard.'[326]

Sovereignty seems to be breaking up. Part of the problem was the cohorts of mercenaries the Late Bronze Age kings habitually used in their wars against each other. When the vassal kings became increasingly exposed as their hegemon fell, many of these mercenaries began to spot opportunities to improve their income by raiding on their own account. Some of the raids may have been sponsored by local kings too, on a strictly non-attributable basis of course, because once Hittite hegemony crumbled local rivalries previously subdued could tentatively begin to surface. Two other letters exchanged between the kings of Cyprus and Ugarit testify to the breakdown of security obligations. The last king of Ugarit has written to the king of Cyprus asking for help. The king of Cyprus replies:

> 'Thus says the King to Hammurabi King of Ugarit. Greetings, may the gods keep you in good health. What have you written to me 'enemy shipping has been sighted at sea'. Well now, even if it is true that enemy ships have been sighted, be firm. Indeed then, what of your troops, your chariots, where are they stationed? Are they stationed close at hand or are they not? Who presses you behind your enemy? Fortify your towns,

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[325] *Ibid*, p.141.
[326] *Ibid*, p.142.

> bring the troops and the chariots into them, and wait for the enemy with feet firm.'[327]

Things have reached the stage where alliances can no longer be honoured. The king of Cyprus knows he cannot afford to put his own kingdom at risk by sending any of his forces to help the king of Ugarit. All he can offer is advice. It is a simple case of every king for himself. The king of Ugarit replies with a mixture of desperation and sarcasm:

> 'To the king of Cyprus. My father, thus says the king of Ugarit his son. I fall at my father's feet. Greetings to my father, to your home, your wives, your troops, to all that belongs to the king of Cyprus, many many greetings. My father, the enemy ships are already here, they have set fire to my towns and have done great damage to my country. My father, did you not know that all my troops were stationed in the Hittite country, and that all my ships are stationed in Lycia and have not yet returned? So that the country is abandoned to itself...'[328]

Hammurabi has fulfilled his international obligations by sending his security forces off to help others in need, and is about to suffer the consequences. The above letter was probably never sent. It was found still in the kiln for firing in the palace at Ugarit. The pirates took the great Bronze Age cosmopolis and it was sacked and put to the fire. As for the king of Cyprus, his instinct for self-preservation kept his kingdom intact for a while, but it was not long before the raids picked him off too.

These disturbances along the Syrian ports had grave consequences for many of the Helladic temple-palaces of the Aegean. Their wealth was based upon trade links with these ports, but these trade links were being cut and the Levantine markets destroyed. The Helladic ruling elites were no longer able to exchange their cash crops and specialized manufactures in order to obtain the imports of grain and Near Eastern luxuries to which they had become so accustomed. The only assets they had left was their swords and their longships:

> 'All that was left to them was to rob their neighbours, to live the life of the corsair for as long, but *only* as long, as the amassed wealth lasted among the strongest.'[329]

A great wave of beggar thy neighbour sieges and destructions ensued in the Aegean. As if by some sort of deadly knockout tournament, the Greek citadels and temples fell.

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[327] *Ibid*, p.142-3.
[328] *Ibid*, p.143.

Some of the Helladic warlords took their swords and ships to the Near East and became part of the great movement known as the 'Sea Peoples', which culminated in two great battles commemorated by Ramses III, the king of Egypt. The Sea Peoples were soundly defeated, but the swathe of destruction they left in their wake crippled the remaining Levantine markets, leaving the remaining Aegean palaces even more isolated, adding fresh impetus to local piracy. Welfare obligations were naturally one of the first things to go. This was of particular importance in the Aegean because the normal climactic and ecological pattern was one of local shortages, not widespread famine[330]. Such shortages suddenly became major disasters once the local trade and welfare structures had broken down. The local disasters sparked off a series of desperate and sometimes violent emigrations, which scholars are still trying to unravel through the philological study of dialects[331]. War, famine, plague and the emigrations thus combined to produce a vicious cycle of depopulation and displacement. Snodgrass has offered three sets of figures representing the numbers of Greek settlements known to archaeology through succeeding centuries which help us gain an idea of just how dark the 'Dark Age' was:

> Occupied in the thirteenth century: c.320 sites
> Occupied in the twelfth century: c.130
> Occupied in the eleventh century: c.40[332]

Imagine a thirty years crisis like the one that hit the beginning of our 20th century which, instead of bottoming out to mature into an extraordinary recovery, proceeds to deepen and persist for another three hundred years. Snodgrass advises caution, but estimates a reduction in the Aegean population of at least three quarters, probably worse. Little wonder that Hesiod, writing toward the close of this age, did not feel particularly chipper, and readily accepted a historical paradigm of almost infinite regress.

As the centralised palatial economies of the Aegean collapsed in upon each other, the four sources of social power disintegrated and the Helladic ruling classes began to melt away. Specialized, organised polyculture was abandoned and the treasuries left derelict. Agriculture reverted to small scale cultivation and pastoralism

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[329] *Ibid*, p.184.
[330] *Ibid*, p.24.
[331] Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece*, p.298-304.
[332] *Ibid*, p.364-367.

with a barter household economy. The fortified citadels were left to rural squatters and the once mighty soldiery was reduced to a dwindling rabble of petty banditry. Many forms of *tekhne* vanished altogether, including the scribes who used Linear B. However, there were a few elements of continuity within this general picture of discontinuity. The specialized production of pottery continued, though only for local use and generally in regressive forms which the archaeologists have called 'submycenaean'. This pottery has been described as 'narrow in range and utterly derivative', and in many cases shows 'some deterioration in technique' or even 'actual incompetence on the part of the potter'[333]. Other skills survived the fall of the palaces by returning to the life of the itinerant craftsmen. This is probably how metallurgy survived, though the loss of the copper and tin routes forced many of the worst hit communities to fall back on the old substitutes of bone and stone for many years. One way the smiths made up for the scarcity of bronze was, of course, to resort to the use of iron. A number of technical difficulties had to be overcome before the use of iron could actually be preferable to the use of bronze, but being more liberally distributed across the surface of the earth's crust, iron ores could actually be found in the Aegean and so it became by default an acceptable substitute[334]. Another *tekhne* that survived the fall of the palace by becoming itinerant was the singer with his lyre.

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[333] *Ibid*, p.34, & 38-39.
[334] *Ibid*, p.230-231.

4: *Sophia*

3.1. Desert Island Story

> 'The next part of the story is about what might happen if, and when, the three groups find out that they're not, after all, the sole survivors from the sinking ship. This is where the reader joins in, and the desert island stories become an allegory of political economy.' (*States and Markets* p.3)

We have seen how Strange's desert island story postulates the possibility of three communities developing autonomously, in complete ignorance of each other. The first is a fortress community, giving priority to order and security. The second is a commune, giving priority to justice and equality. The third is a market community, giving priority to wealth and efficiency in production. Having split the subject of her desert island story up into these three sets, the next thing Strange does is to invite the reader to reflect upon what might happen when the three groups discover each other. Three scenarios are offered to suggest how relations might develop between the three separate groups.

The first scenario imagines that Martin's fortress society, being forewarned by the footprints, sends out patrols to survey the island and thus become the first group to discover the existence of the other two. Martin reasons out a game plan:

> 'We can't afford to let Jack's lot get too rich, and we can't risk the mothers and the lovers slipping away to join the students...we have to act first.' (Page 4)

This action takes the form of an ultimatum issued to the other two groups: 'join us, or else...'.

The second scenario has the students discover Martin's group first whilst hunting for wild goats. They take a dim view of the kind of people who can only think of building a stockade so soon after having been lucky enough to be stranded in what is, after all, a desert island paradise:

> 'They figure out what they think is going on and decide they had better prepare for the worst. Freedom and equality have to be compromised. Socialism has to wait.' (P.4.)

They prepare for war until they feel strong enough to issue their own ultimatum: 'be liberated or we attack'.

The third scenario has the third group make the initial discovery that they are not alone on the island. After putting the first two groups under surveillance they also decide that they do not like what they have seen. Fortunately the kinship system they have built can deal with the problem:

> 'they decide to double their 'security tax', appointing Mac to organise an army of paid volunteers.' (p.4)

This innovation enables the majority of the group to liberate themselves from the prospect of having to be present at the scene of violence. With ruthless efficiency the mercenary force gets straight down to business and launches a surprise night attack on Martin's group whilst their watchmen are asleep. Next follows a take-over of the commune, 'increasing the size of the market and the opportunities for specialization in the division of labour'.

Strange observes that all three scenarios contemplate the possibility that the relations which develop between the three groups will become violent, and we are invited to reflect upon whether these three scenarios of prospective violence are realistic or pessimistic. A latent potential for peace is also mooted, or at least for the containment of conflict, by the means of a game of diplomacy between an anarchical society of states, each making and breaking alliances over trade and defence, although this potential is not worked out for us in the form of a scenario.

(3.2) Three Lessons

Whatever the outcome of the three scenarios we are presented with, or of any other scenario which we may care to develop, the first lesson that Strange draws from her desert island stories is that different societies, in ordering their political economy, will give different values priority over others. This much is obvious she concludes, and Strange's inference would also appear to be consistent with her previously noted

intrinsic value order: of security, wealth, freedom and justice[1]. Values clearly lie at the core of Strange's vision of how the international political economy works. The second lesson Strange draws from her desert island story is that judgement over values is a purely subjective matter, and that theories of international political economy are rooted in personal preferences, prejudices and experience. We are all stranded, apparently, rather like Strange's desert island castaways, in a fragmented moral universe[2].

A third lesson, perhaps less obvious, or rather perhaps so obvious that it may seem hardly worthwhile to mention, and thus *less obvious because it is so obvious*, is that different societies, when ordering their political economy, employ language to forge values, and that they also use language to try to give their values priority over those made by others. Paulo Freire, a man who has thought more deeply about pedagogy than most, calls this lesson 'the tramp of the obvious'[3].

Scholars of International Relations, good materialists one and all, are not famous for devoting a great deal of thought to this banality of language. Speculation about language seems to carry with it connotations of things metaphysical that do not need to be taken account of in the hard-headed world of 'realpolitik'. And yet this is bizarre, for it would be hard to think of any kind of international political economy developing without the material fact of language. Let us try to illustrate this by retracing our steps through Strange's desert island story, marking out our own tramp of the obvious. Let us begin where Martin says he has found tracks that look human and concludes that there is a mysterious 'other' trampling around on his island:

> 'Martin gets everyone together one evening and tells them he has been exploring the hills behind.' (p.1)

Strange's allegory makes the obvious point here that in a predominantly oral society, where social interaction has to be composed by the power of speech, in order to forge collective values its people have to be gathered together so that they can be in each other's presence. Unless Martin can maintain the power to 'call people to assembly' his ability to boss his group about will dissipate because of the fact that he cannot

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[1] See chapter two.

[2] Alistair MacIntyre calls this approach to value theory: 'Emotivism'. See *After Virtue.*

[3] Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education* (South Hadley, Bergin and Harvey, 1985), pg.55, quoted in 'A Forward' by Ann. E. Berthoff, in Paulo Friere and Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, pg.xv.

physically be present in more than one place at any one time. In an oral society an efficient command structure thus relies upon the ability to regulate formations of presence. Speech, which manifests itself in material form by the means of a series of different sounds emanating from the diaphragms, lungs, throat, mouth and nose of the human body all in co-ordination, requires people to be presented within its field of amplification. Without presence Martin's persuasive powers would simply fall on deaf ears. To structure a society efficiently around a given set of values under oral constraints, the formation of these values has to be witnessed collectively in speech by all members of the group. As long as his group are all assembled and present together in one place at one time, Martin can demonstrate to us that he knows how to do things with words.

> 'Friends...we may be in danger. We must cut down some trees and build a stockade. We must fashion some spears, organize a watch and send out some patrols.'[4]

Martin is trying to forge the common value of security in his group with his 'speech-act'. But rather than praising the virtue of security in a strictly logical manner, and then describing the rational action necessary to attain this virtue, he carves out a more felicitous route. A bias is hidden within the syntax of his speech. By holding up first before his assembly the spectre of the supplement of security, namely 'danger', and then describing the actions necessary to avoid it, his 'we may' is far more easily glossed into a 'we must'. 'So' (the pedant might ask), 'what is the semantic relationship between human footprints and danger?' Martin does not care to proffer an explanation for one. Any other castaway could just as easily have interpreted the very same footprints to signify 'rescue'[5]. But what Martin does know, probably, is that pedants tend to be thin on the ground and that unless his inference is challenged immediately after it has been produced it stands a good chance of turning into an implicit assumption. Once this implicit assumption has been achieved the value of security will have been forged. As anyone who petitions for the development or employment of the means of violence knows, the value we attribute to security is directly proportional to the fear of its supplement.

In spite of Martin's pragmatic ruse there are some in the group who are not convinced. This we know because it is written in the story that 'there's a bit of a

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[4] Strange, *op cit*, pg.1.

discussion about that'. But Martin has another advantage in his bid to impose priority for his own values over those held by others in the group. We learn that 'the crew are used to taking orders from Martin'. Order is a very special word in the Western lexicon. In this context of Strange's desert island story it is used to denote that Martin's crew are examples of what in Latin was once called *instrumentum vocales*[6]. Their capacity for consciousness has been underdeveloped to the point where Martin's voice has the power to oblige Mike, Jack and Terry to act as if their bodies were the mere instruments of Martin's will.

Using the terminology of the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, we could say that Martin is endowed with symbolic capital[7]. Part of the baggage which Martin and his crew have brought with them to their desert island without hardly even being aware of it is a habitus, or a structured mode of communicative behaviour which put Mike, Jack and Terry into a subordinate relationship to Martin. They have been inculcated with a set of communicative dispositions which are structured to embody Martin's speech with power. Those who have served in the armed forces would immediately understand what Bourdieu is going on about. The habit of taking orders from an officer has been drilled into the crew members' bodies to such an extent that it feels instinctive[8]. Strange is making the point here that these structured dispositions, which manifest themselves in language, can often be highly durable and transposable. They are capable of surviving and regenerating linguistic practices of symbolic power in times and places other than those in which they were originally acquired. Here we can observe that the command structure of the sunken ship is quietly reproducing itself on Strange's desert island, and this takes place in spite of the fact that the ostensible reason for that command structure has been lost irrevocably beneath the 'stormy water'. Even some of the former passengers, we learn, are gradually getting 'used to doing as they're told'.

In the second group an assembly of presence takes place on the lifeboat during the three days and nights at sea, before its members even reach the island. But their speech acts are made from within a structure of communicative action which is very

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[5] This is the same point Cynthia Weber makes about Realism during her discussion of another desert island story, see *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction.*

[6] See Perry Anderson, *Passages From Antiquity To Feudalism*, pg.24.

[7] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power.*

[8] In the city of Plymouth, where many senior citizens have served time in the armed forces, it is still possible to observe civilian jokes on the theme of military 'drilling'. Of these, the most common is a loud authoritative bark: 'MAKE WAY FOR A COMMANDING OFFICER' at the sight of a queue in the post office, bank, shop, etc.

different from the first group. A fellow called Jerry appears to be able to make speeches which have more symbolic capital than those of his companions by virtue of him being the oldest, and we are told that he leads the group. However, the school from which the students have come must be something rather special, for it has inculcated in them the ability to:

> 'talk endlessly, as students will, about their predicament and what they'll do if they ever find land.'

Their absent professors would probably be delighted by the manner in which the students, unsupervised, are using their power of assembly to agree upon a common set of values by which they choose to live with one another. Habermas would argue that the priority this group gives to justice and equality is anticipated already in the way that everybody talks, a hypothesis grounded in his universal pragmatics. Bourdieu would counter Habermas with the observation that the linguistic habits of the students have been inculcated by an institution. Their schooling has inculcated a set of dispositions which are structured to embody their collective assembly with power. To assume that they are using a model of language which occurs naturally in society, Bourdieu has argued, is to suffer from 'the illusion of linguistic communism' typical of many social applications of Sassurian and Chomskyian linguistics[9].

The people from the third lifeboat are a much more disparate group. No one seems to take overall charge and there is no initial assembly of presence enabling debate about how relationships between members of the group might be organised. Everybody does their own thing, catches their own fish and cracks their own coconuts. However, after a few days the mothers start to complain that their diet of coconuts upsets the children's stomachs. Clearly the members of this group, no matter how individualistic in character they may be, are at least homogeneous in the sense that they can speak the same language. We know this because the mother's complaints prompt Jack to propose his solution to the group of using the bag of nails as a tool for kinship. Without the kinship of language, or the means of translating between different languages within the group, it is difficult to see how the mothers complaints could register, or how Jack's plan could get off the ground. Anyone who had not been privy to the linguistic agreement to base their kinship system on a bag of nails would be reluctant to exchange

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[9] See Thompson's 'Introduction' to Bourdieu, *op cit,* Pg.1-31.

his fish for nails, on the not unreasonable assumption that the aspiring purchaser hoping to make the exchange had been swallowing too much sea water.

The banality of language, its colossal obviousness, also intrudes into proceedings when the three groups discover that they are not the only ones on the island and relations between them are established. In the first scenario, as we have already noted, Martin issues the following ultimatum to both:

'Join us, or else...'

As we can see, the transposability of symbolic capital cuts both ways. Mike, Jack and Terry have been inculcated with a predisposition to take orders, but Martin has been inculcated with a disposition to hand them out. Any situation which might call for an alternative approach clearly presents a bit of a challenge. But what language is his ultimatum spoken in and will the other two groups be able to understand it? Was it in French, the language of diplomacy until after the first world war? Or was it in English, the *lingua franca* of twentieth century modernity? Or was it delivered using one of the 90% of the world's 5000 or so remaining languages of the world that are currently estimated to be on the verge of extinction? Whatever language Martin uses, he surely cannot be indifferent as to whether the other two groups will be able to understand his orders.

In the second scenario, as has already been noted, Strange has the second group issue their own ultimatum. As with the first scenario, the diplomatic language used by the students is not specified. But whatever language has been used, it clearly does not play by the same rules as the one used whilst 'talking endlessly' in that assembly of presence which took place in the lifeboat:

'Be liberated, or we attack...' (p.4)

Given their propensity for dialectics, perhaps our students will also find some time to talk about their language of liberation. If they succeed in their project to 'liberate' the other two groups, what sort of pedagogy will be required to inculcate the liberated with the linguistic skills needed to ensure 'equality in taking decisions; the same rules for everybody'? Martin's crew for example might not be used to the conventions of the seminar room. If the students are sincere they might try talking to the crew about what they mean by liberation, but their innocent love for talking endlessly could simply serve to remind the crew of a deep bitterness, of opportunities in life that they never had.

They may not like Martin very much, but at least he doesn't patronise them with sweet words that mean nothing to them[10].

In the third scenario the last group does not bother with talk at all. The surprise attack in the night does the talking for them, but this recourse to violence has only deferred the question of language until a later date. After they have liberated the first group from Martin's lonely rule, and the second group from its smelly commune, how are they to bring about the new island order they seek of an increased market and greater specialisation in the division of labour? The conquered groups will need to be taught a few things about nails in a language they can understand if they are going to conform to the laws of the market. Before the invisible hand can work its magic there first needs to be an audible tongue.

Recent research has suggested that the extraordinary ability of children to learn how to use language creatively so early in life is possible because of a 'universal grammar' that human evolution has written into our genes[11]. If this is true, it means that the potential for language is part of our biological identity. We are born spluttering with the ability to learn a language which enables us to tell, discuss, think, order, organise, argue, claim, complain, suggest, sell, bargain, decide, negotiate, threaten and issue ultimatums. All of these things are done in the first six pages of *States And Markets* and they are all done with words. They are part of what makes Strange's castaways seem like real people with the power of volition rather than just the automatons of some obscure political theory. We may deduce then, from our little tramp of the obvious around Strange's desert island, that each group of noble savages has at least one thing in common. Language is a part of the baggage that all of our castaways have brought with them to their desert island without even having to think about it. Perhaps by analogy we can see why it is not very surprising that many scholars of Political Economy and International Relations also take their own use of language for granted. They too bring language with them to whichever 'island of theory' they happen to be interested in without even having to think about it. It is not among the list of things that the social theorist has to remember to pack, just something that seems to tag along anyway. But if values really do lie at the core of our understanding of the global political economy, and if language is one of the means by which humans forge values and give them priority

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[10] Many tyrants from Napoleon to Pinochet have been very good at exploiting this kind of resentiment.

over others, then it follows that language should be a central concern in the study of International Relations and IPE.

A plausible recent theory about how evolution managed to hardwire the grammar of language within our brains focuses upon its function as a force for social cohesion[12]. Dunbar argues that language evolved as a more efficient substitute for grooming (a commonly observed form of bonding in primates) as the size of human groups increased relative to that of other hominid groups. Amongst evolving hominid groups, the theory argues, the process of natural selection favored those who could build and maintain large groups, because in competition for food and territory the cohesive large group could dominate the smaller one[13]. The earliest utterances of proto-language were thus, according to Dunbar, primitive versions of gossip, verbal stroking, slapping and jousting that reproduced, sorted and serviced the complexity of human relationships needed to maintain the unity and cohesion of larger and larger groups. Once language had begun to evolve, however, it could be carried over and developed for other cognitive purposes in the realm of hunting and gathering or generating operational models of the physical world. For example, if an individual encountered a problem whilst engaged in some communal project, it could ask for help, and someone might be able to produce a helpful utterance to help the enquirer see a solution to the problem[14]. Once these query and response habits had become established, it would have been possible for an individual to accidentally ask a question when no one else was within earshot. Upon hearing its own request, the question provokes an answer from a sub-system in the brain of the human that asked it! This is because evolution had bundled together a modular nervous system of different tools for different tasks. But now, as an accidental side effect of being able to ask questions of others, the human learns how to provoke itself into answering its own questions. Given that evolution had built plasticity into the neuronal networks of the human brain, such acts of auto-stimulation began to thread internal wires linking up its various modules, allowing the new model hominid to jettison the vocalization and listening process.

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[11] John Lyons, *Chomsky*.

[12] Dunbar, E, *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*.

[13] Donald, M, *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition*, p.140.

[14] The following 'just so' story comes from Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, p.194-199.

For the thought processes of the modern subject, of course, nowadays we have the architectural model of a modular mind that knows it can talk silently with itself. But in the first few thousand years of human experience these answers that seemed to spring from nowhere may well have often been very puzzling, if not awe inspiring moments. What grounds did the first human mind have for leaping to the conclusion that these hallucinated voices actually sprang from himself? Clearly, it would have been easy for him to assume that these words of wisdom came from an other, supernatural source. It is this basic insight into the diversity of ways ancient humanity might have apprehended the identity of its own thought that led Jaynes to come up with his hypothesis of the bicameral mind.

The story of how humanity began to explore its mind and openly claim all its thoughts as its own is a long one, and is a story that hasn't even finished yet. In retracing the very few first steps of this journey, we shall definitely be seeking to undermine the view that talking about the values of wealth, security, freedom and justice cannot hope to change minds and that reasoned debate about them cannot hope to settle anything.

3.3. Homeric *sophia*: 'All men honour and respect the bards'[15]

The ancient Greeks spent quite a lot of time thinking about the relationship between language and power. They had a word for it. They called it *logos*. The story of *logos* begins with the minstrels who entertained the Helladic kings and queens of the Late Bronze Age. We know that there were minstrels in the Aegean Late Bronze Age because they were celebrated in so many representations such as the one found on a fresco at Pylos, or the sculptures from the Cyclades[16]. The ivory remains of a lyre have also been found in a Late Bronze Age tomb in Crete. Its owner was buried with a gold ring and gold beads, indicating that his *tekhne* yielded this particular musician considerable status. Other frescos, pottery and figurines attest that the Late Bronze Age Greeks also liked to dance. What all these fragments of evidence cannot do is actually reproduce the music, songs and dances which accompanied the food and wine, but if the example of many other cultures is anything to go by the songs would probably be familiar to us in the sense that they would have mused upon the timeless themes of love,

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[15] *Odyssey*, 8:480.
[16] Renfrew, *op cit*, p.434-435.

sorrow, remorse, anger, joy, fear, desire and worship[17]. Some of the more sophisticated songs in the minstrel's repertoire would have juggled together a combination of these ingredients within extended ballads of comedy, tragedy or adventure. The bards would also be expected to play those tunes designed to engender group identity and loyalty: the communal anthems which dutifully sang the praises and glorious deeds of the great and the good, past and present.

When the Helladic palaces began to collapse during the 12th century, making for a drastic contraction in complexity in terms of production, finance, security and knowledge, the bards began to lose a major source of patronage. A large number must have perished amidst the general devastation and depopulation, just like the craftsmen of so many other forms of *tekhne*. Other minstrel families would have lost their instruments and forgotten the old songs as they returned to the land where they eked out a meagre subsistence. A small number, however, survived, slowly adapting the old songs to suit what few sources of patronage there were to be found. The main sources of patronage now were the *oikos* and the *polis*. *Oikos* is usually translated as 'household', a convenient shorthand term, but is more accurately translated as 'family estate' (whence 'economics', from the Latinised form *oecus*)[18]. The *oikoi* were the primary units of production and finance that emerged from the wreckage of the Bronze Age. The typical *oikos* lay in a hamlet living off the agricultural wealth of its surrounding fields. The focal point of the *oikos* was the house of the *basileus*, often translated as 'king' or 'prince', but more accurately oligarch. From his base in these hamlets the *basileus* would accumulate and redistribute any micro-surplus there was to be had. The early *polis* was usually a cluster of *oikoi* living close enough to each other to make use of a communal citadel which was, in many cases, the site of a former Mycenaean citadel[19]. To begin with this citadel was not generally inhabited on a day to day basis but the place where the *oikoi* would congregate in the event of a sudden need for security, a meeting place or *agora* where the local *basileis* could thrash out matters of common concern, also a sacred site complete with a shrine for a god that commemorated communitarian values.

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[17] Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, p.19-35.

[18] Finley, *The World Of Odysseus*, p.58.

[19] Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece*, p.31-33. Lack of time and space has persuaded me to conform to the tradition of marginalising the background social formation of *ethne* from this narrative, but the reader is advised to bear in mind the following: 'Just as the polis as a state-form was not the peculiar property of Greek lands, so too it was not universal in them. Alongside it there continued to flourish a very different conception of the state, the ethnos.' Certain aspects of the classical *polis* are difficult to comprehend without a basic awareness of its context within a supplementry *ethne*. See Snodgrass, *ibid*, p.42-45.

The *oikoi* were not homogenous. Some were bigger than others in terms of land, labour and coercive muscle. For security the smaller *oikoi* tended to cleave toward the more powerful *oikoi* in clan type structures. Some of the more powerful *oikoi* may well have been rich enough to patronise a resident bard as well as a potter or smith. As a rule, however, most households had neither the means nor the need to independently finance the more specialised skills on a permanent basis. Like many of the smiths and potters, many minstrels thus became *demioergoi* (public workers) after the collapse of the palaces, wandering from *oikos* to *oikos* and from *polis* to *polis* in search of work[20].

In the *polis* the bards found opportunities to perform at the public fairs sponsored by the local *basileis* to demonstrate their public largesse and honour their communitarian gods. Within the *oikos* the bards could find employment at the symposium, where the *basileis* would lay on an extravagant display of food, wine, women and song to help provide a convivial environment within which to conduct business, cement bargains, and to impress their cronies (*hetairoi*) with the power of their hospitality and thank them for services rendered. Later, some bards became employed on a more long term basis by a cluster of *oikoi* to tutor their children in the art of music.

The bards were professionals. What they did gave them food to eat. When people have to sing for their supper they are not in the business of singing songs that people do not want to hear. When people do not know where their next meal is coming from they are not likely to teach the children songs that their parents would not wish them to sing. The songs continued to plough the old themes of love, sorrow, remorse, anger, joy, fear, desire and worship, but gradually the musician adapted his repertoire to achieve maximum resonance within the *oikos* and the *polis*.

The more successful songs were the ones which appealed most to the *basileis* controlling these two life-worlds. A tradition of bardic rivalry, probably encouraged through the sponsorship of schools and festivals by the *basileis*, inspired musicians to compete with each other to produce songs that could cast dramatic spells over their audiences for longer periods. To do this they exploited their natural sensitivity as musicians to the rhythms of the human voice to develop mnemonic formulas which

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[20] Finley, *op cit*, p.36-37 & 55-56, and Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution*, p.23-25 & p.41-46.

enabled them to extend many of the old ballads into narratives of epic length. Another way the minstrel could compete for fame was to compose songs in praise of the norms, customs, virtues or values that the *basileis* found particularly admirable. In this way the songs of the bards became the favored media of pedagogy through which the *basileus* could reproduce, reflect and experience his world. As well as providing entertainment the *tekhne* of the minstrel thus acquired normative authority. The actions, speeches, qualities and flaws of the gods, heroes and heroines of the bard's songs became a mental vocabulary for the formation of a nascent Hellenic consciousness. The repertoire evolved into a compendium of orally preserved statements which the *basileis* used to reproduce a sustainable sense of self, identity and agency. The bard thus came to command honour and respect as a source of divine *sophia*, the medium of the muse through which the sons and daughters of the *basileis* were expected to imbibe the received wisdom of previous generations[21].

With their formulaic verse the minstrel fraternity was thus able to produce many epics which furnished a kind of normative database. The fact that the minstrels were illiterate and reproduced their songs through oral mnemonics is an important point which can help us to understand the early Hellenic mind.

In our modern age we take memory for granted. It is easy to underestimate how much our knowledge structure relies upon powerful mnemonic systems that are external to flesh, bones and brains, but these means were not available to the bards. In his book *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong has identified eight major points of difference between a knowledge structure based upon speech from one based upon writing[22]. Firstly, an oral knowledge structure tends to be additive rather than relational. That is to say its components are joined together in ways that are convenient for a speaker. An easy way to do this is through a mythical narrative whereby information can be threaded together. In an oral culture the pre-dominant connective is generally 'and', the term most useful for keeping a narrative flowing. Writing enables a more elaborate grammar (if, but, then, thus, while), which can thus carve out more diverse relations between the components of thought. Secondly, an oral knowledge structure tends to be aggregative rather than analytic. That is to say it will rely heavily on formulas to spark up the

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[21] This interpretation of Homer follows Eric Havelock, in *Preface To Plato & The Greek Concept Of Justice*.

[22] See pages 37-57. Actually Ong lists nine points, but I felt that points 5 & 9 were close enough to be merged for the sake of economy without doing too much damage to the subtlety of his thought.

memory, which become tiresome clichés in a written culture. For example a soldier has to be a 'brave soldier', the dawn 'rosy-fingered', an oak a 'sturdy oak'. When a cliché crystallises in an oral culture, it is an asset, it is kept intact and is cherished. The cumulative effect of these formulaic expressions is a resistance to logical analysis. Without writing, breaking up thought for analysis is a high risk procedure because such thoughts are more likely to be forgotten. Thirdly, the oral knowledge structure will tend towards redundancy. That is to say the pragmatics of oral composition requires such a high level of repetition that it tends to act as a drag on linear thought. Fourth, an orally based knowledge structure tends to be conservative or traditionalist. Knowledge that is not repeated aloud often enough will tend to be forgotten, so an oral society must invest a lot of its energy in saying again and again what has been learned arduously over the ages: not an ideal environment for the iconoclast. Fifthly, oral knowledge structures will stay close to the human *lifeworld*. This means that concepts and categories remain situational rather than abstract and can only exist within the narrative context of life and agency. All explanations for everything will thus tend to be anthropomorphic. Sixth, orally based knowledge structures are agonistically toned. Explanations for things will thus drift toward the melodramatic, for example through the simulation of violent conflict, extreme happenings, extravagant gestures, and all the other memorabilia that help to make a narrative punch its way into the brains of listeners. Seventh, oral knowledge structures are empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced. That is to say the action of knowing will involve close identification with the known and there is little scope for the division of subject from object. Eighth, oral knowledge structures are homeostatic. That is to say information tends to be stored in synchronic rather than diachronic context. The ancestral past has to be remembered as if it were a perpetual present.

Over time the conservative requirements of orality meant that the successful epics elbowed others aside, until the Aegean repertoire began to crystallise into a canonical cycle of seven or more, including the *Little Iliad*, the *Cypria* and the *Seven Against Thebes*, of which only tantalising fragments and allusions have survived the ravages of time[23]. The two epics which were to become the most celebrated and which consequently did survive were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Being the foundation stones of western literature these two texts have accumulated many thousands of commentaries. We take it as given that the unfathomable depth of this scholarship mocks any posture

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[23] Finley, *op cit*, p.35.

of closure or originality. We take it as axiomatic that there is more than one way to appreciate Homer, and that the value of a classic lies in its propensity to outlive interpretations. Having made these provisos, we obtain license to argue that one reason why the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* became so celebrated by the *basileis* above all the other epics was because of their ability to furnish a memory of the laws, customs and values necessary for the early formation and reproduction of the *polis* and the *oikos*. In this respect the two narratives overlap and complement each other, though the *Iliad* focuses more upon relations within the *polis* and between *poleis*, whilst the *Odyssey* places more emphasis upon relations within the *oikos* and between *oikoi*. We shall glance first at the *Iliad*, then the *Odyssey*.

In her prologue to *States And Markets* Strange used a desert island story to introduce students gently to her analysis of the world political economy but during the Greek Dark Age, when there was little or no literacy, narratives like these were the essential vehicle of thought. Using the gods and heroes of the *Iliad* the Homeric minstrel can be observed juggling with the values of wealth, security, freedom and justice. The *Iliad* revolves around the question of conflict over these values, the consequences of this conflict, and the formal use of language to regulate and resolve conflict. Right from the start Homer tells us that this is the main theme of the *Iliad*, the disaster that awaits the community when its leaders fall out:

> 'Sing, goddess, of the anger of Achilles, son of Peleus, the accursed anger which brought uncounted anguish on the Achaians and hurled down to Hades many mighty souls of heroes, making their bodies the prey to dogs and the birds feasting...Sing from the time of the first quarrel which divided Atreus' son (Agamemnon), the lord of men, and godlike Achilles.' (1:1-6)[24]

The anger of Achilles takes place within the context of the Trojan war. In the thick of this war the Achaian soldiers successfully carry out a routine mission on an enemy city and then proceed to enslave its property in women. This wealth has already been shared out amongst the soldiers by the time an old man approaches the Achaian ships to beg for the return of his daughter. His name is Chryses. In his arms he carries the sacred totems of his city, and he explains that he is a rich priest who can offer unlimited ransom in return for the restoration of his daughter's freedom.

Chryses is an archetype whose pathos promotes the value of security. Many other characters may subsequently be observed reflecting on the dreadful consequences of defeat in war and the imperative value of the defensive walls of the sacred *polis*. But he is also there to signify the international convention of ransom. The convention of ransom is viable because it is in the interest of both sides. For the vanquished this convention offered a way for the wealthy members of a traumatised community to petition looting soldiers and bargain for the freedom of their children. From the point of view of the victor the convention of ransom is a means of looting more efficiently, enlisting the help of the vanquished to reveal wealth that may otherwise remain hidden away. When Chryses makes his offer of ransom it is made clear that he is addressing 'the whole body of Achaians' (1:13-14 & 1:77-78). This body supports the convention by duly expressing its opinion:

> 'All the other Achaians shouted their agreement, to respect the priest's claim and take the splendid ransom.' (1:20-22)

The only problem is that Chryseis, the priest's daughter, happens to have been a share of the booty that was apportioned to Agamemnon. Being the most powerful oligarch in the Achaian forces Agamemnon thinks he can afford to break the convention of ransom and ignore the opinion of his comrades, which he does. Agamemnon warns the old man not to breach the security of the Achaian camp again, on pain of death, and is taunted with his daughter's fate (1:28-31).

The old priest leaves the soldiers and prays to his god Apollo, the protector of his ransacked village (1:40-41). Apollo hears the prayer and brings down a plague on the Achaian camp, which first hits the mules, then the dogs, and then the soldiers.

It is clear that the wrath of Apollo is not for the sack of Chryse and the enslavement of its women, a legitimate act of war which is taken for granted by the minstrel, but for the violation of the convention of ransom. This is the first example of a mnemonic device that is used repeatedly by Homer. Havelock calls it the transgression formula[25]. In a world without writing normative arguments had to be memorised within performative statements. Justice *(dike)* is defined by characters who violate the norm and suffer the consequences until the status quo is restored. The *sophia* of the tale of

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[24] All quotations from the *Iliad* are from the translation by Martin Hammond unless otherwise stated.

Chryse is that Agamemnon has brought his community to the verge of disaster by failing to recognise an international obligation. He is the most powerful of the Achaian *basileis*, the *Iliad* leaves us in no doubt about that, but it is also apparent that his judgement is not always perfect. Unlike the Egyptian concept of *maat* where justice is the order that emanates from the mouth of the monarch, the Homeric ruler is mortal. He is human and makes mistakes. This was the message the last dying bards of the Bronze Age wished to pass on to their survivors in the Iron Age. Given that powerful men like Agamemnon are capable of errors of judgement that can have a detrimental effect upon the whole community of *oikoi*, social complexity has to be organized on a more flexible basis, and attention is therefore invested in the question of how these errors may be explained, forgiven and corrected.

On the tenth day of the plague Achilles begins to define the Homeric answer to this question. The goddess Hera surfaces within the mind of Achilles to suggest that he call for an *agora*, a collective assembly where the heroes come together to talk. There will be countless instances of the *agora* in session in the *Iliad*. Taken together, these instances provided the *basileis* with an idealised paradigm of oral procedure whereby *dike*, or justice, emerges from the collective winged words of an oligarchy. Oligarchic speech is winged because it is inspired by divine voices emanating from the Mount Olympus inculcated within the mind of a hero[26]. This paradigm of oral procedure may be summed up by the word *themis*. *Themis* is the constitutional goddess of law and order who convenes the gods to assembly on Mount Olympus (20:3-6) and whose name is thus invoked whenever a mortal assembly is summoned or dissolved (*Odyssey* 2:67-70).

In his opening speech to the *agora* Achilles introduces the only item on the agenda, the plague, and calls for the services of Kalchus the prophet to tell the assembly why 'Apollo has felt such anger towards us' (1:61-62). At first Kalchus expresses grave reservations about the request Achilles has made of him: 'I think I shall anger a man who holds great power over all the Argives and command among the Achaians' (1:77-78). He is afraid of the consequences of speaking out. Achilles swears to protect the security of Kalchus 'even if you speak of Agamemnon'. Emboldened by this promise, Kalchus proceeds to tell the assembly that it is Agamemnon's behaviour toward Chryses that has caused Apollo's wrath, and that the plague will now not be lifted until his

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[25] Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p.123-4.

daughter is returned without ransom. Agamemnon then stands to speak (1:98-118). He realises now that the *agora* was called to deprive him of Chryseis. He is furious and lets Kalchus know it. He is now willing to relinquish his property rights over Chryseis 'if that is for the best', but seeks compensation from his own community because the former offer of ransom no longer applies. Achilles then stands to address Agamemnon (1:119-27). Agamemnon's concern for wealth in the midst of a devastating plague is met with an opening barb of irony: 'Glorious son of Atreus, most acquisitive of all men'. Achilles argues that Agamemnon will have to wait for his compensation because the wealth gleaned from the sacking of cities has already been divided and hence the public purse is empty. The social upheaval that would result from a redistribution of wealth already shared just to satisfy the honour of Agamemnon is out of the question. Instead, Agamemnon will have to be content with the promise of more tomorrow: 'we Achaians will recompense you three and four times over if Zeus ever grants that we sack the well-walled city of Troy'.

This intervention is too much for Agamemnon. He feels that his power is being usurped. Achilles has provoked the anger of the most powerful oligarch amongst the Achaians on three counts: by daring to exercise his right as a *basileus* to convene an *agora*; by giving Kalchus the courage to speak out about the cause of the plague; and by having the temerity to challenge Agamemnon's claim to immediate compensation for the loss of his share of the sack of Chryse. Agamemnon threatens to replace her with Briseis, who had been enslaved to Achilles during an earlier mission on another smoking Trojan village. This threat provokes a coruscating verbal assault from Achilles (1:149-170). In one of the first recorded canine pejoratives, Agamemnon is called 'dog-face'. Achilles is angry with the hubris of Agamemnon, who thinks he can just pull rank and abrogate the laws of their community whenever it suits his own interest. As far as Achilles is concerned, Briseis is his property to keep: 'I have laboured hard for it'. Achilles implies Agamemnon is not at the front in the field of battle but first in the queue when it comes to the division of the spoils. Achilles argues that the legitimacy of Agamemnon's power is undermined by his greed. How is the Achaian army expected to follow Agamemnon's orders when the wealth is always divided in such a way that Agamemnon gets the greater share? Achilles threatens to leave the war and head for home: 'I have no mind to stay here heaping up riches and treasure for you and receiving

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[26] Julian Jaynes, *op cit*, p.71-75.

no honour myself'. The *sophia* being promoted as this drama unfolds is that the folly of injustice is a major cause of conflict.

In the heat of the moment Agamemnon fails to perceive the danger of his dispute with Achilles. He makes a show of being unconcerned at Achilles' threat of desertion. He is more concerned to reassert his authority and not to show any trace of weakness by backing down in the face of the challenge made by Achilles. Agamemnon makes it clear that his move for Briseis is to put Achilles firmly in his place. It is a public demonstration of power:

> 'So I shall take the beautiful Briseis, your prize, going myself to fetch her from your hut, so that you can fully realise how much I am your superior, and others too can shrink from speaking on a level with me and openly claiming equality.' (1:183-89)

This public humiliation almost brings Achilles to the point of violence. He is about to draw his sword when divine intervention in the form of Athena swoops down and cajoles him to 'use your tongue' instead (1:191-220). The divine chamber within the will of Achilles exercises its power of veto over his mortal chamber. Achilles obeys the Homeric intra-communal violence taboo and uses his tongue to repeat the accusation of cowardice and excessive avarice, but now Agamemnon faces the additional charge of stealing the wealth of people who dare to speak out against him: 'a king who feeds fat on his people with mere ciphers for subjects' (1:230-1).

Achilles then swears 'by this staff' that the whole community will regret Agamemnon's behavior. His use of the staff is symbolic. It is the sceptre of sovereignty which the *basileis* ritually hold when they stand to speak in the *agora*[27]. Achilles informs us that the Homeric sceptre is the totem of communal law and order: 'the sons of the Achaians carry it in their hands when they give judgements, those who guard the ways of justice under Zeus' (1:237-9). It is a means by which the social bargains which bind the society together are solemnified: 'an oath by this staff has the power to bind' (239-40). Achilles flings it to the ground in a dramatic expression of indignation at the way he thinks Achaian *themis* has been dishonoured. He thinks that Agamemnon has abused his powers by offending traditional rules about what is fitting and proper.

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[27] There is an oral residue to this day analogous to the staff or *skeptron* in the House of Commons, in all the rituals enacted around the 'mace'. Nowadays these rituals tend to strike

At this point in the quarrel Nestor 'the sweet spoken' stands up to speak in the *agora* and attempts to mediate between the two parties. Nestor represents the *sophia* of the elder who has 'already seen the passing of two generations'. He invokes his age and experience as a reason for his counsel to be listened to with respect. He predicts that unless the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles is resolved it will prove to be a disaster for the Achaians. Nestor's counsel is that for the sake of their community Agamemnon should renounce his claim to Briseis, and that Achilles should take care to show more respect for the authority of Agamemnon. Nestor is the spokesman for the central argument the bard is trying to promote: conflict between *poleis* has to be taken for granted, but conflict within the *polis* cannot be taken for granted at all, because success in external conflict with other *poleis* depends upon the ability to domesticate internal conflict within the *polis* itself. Communal conflict cannot be allowed to escalate into a destructive spiral because unity is strength. However, the mnemonic requirements of the transgression formula mean that the feud between Achilles and Agamemnon cannot be allowed to blow itself out yet.

Both adversaries try to put themselves in a good light by showing deference toward the *dike* of Nestor and the *themis* of the Achaian community, but also make it clear they are not yet ready to participate in a resolution of the conflict. Agamemnon makes a cursory nod to the wisdom of Nestor: 'Yes, all that you say, old man, is right and true', but then deflects attention away from his own behaviour by claiming that the outspokenness of Achilles is really a veiled bid for power: 'he wants to control all, rule all, to dictate to all' (1:284-5). Then, just in case anyone was thinking of coming out in support of Achilles, Agamemnon confidently reminds the assembly of the inevitability of his hegemony: 'there are some of us I doubt will obey him'. For his part Achilles moderates his abusive language toward Agamemnon but claims that the arrogance of power has legitimated his sense of alienation. There is an element of reproach in Achilles' address to the assembly (1:288-300). Intelligent governance needs dissent, and Achilles has performed a public service by calling for the *agora* and by giving Kalchus the security to tell the hegemon what everyone has been quietly thinking, but Achilles senses that the *agora* has not got the gumption to repay this service by protecting his property against the vengeance of Agamemnon. Everybody is busy keeping their heads down, and thus the *agora* is too craven to oblige Agamemnon to comply with Nestor's judgement over Briseis: 'you Achaians gave her, and you have taken her away'.

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people as antiquated, but in previous times when orality was a more dominant medium, such

Consequently Achilles proceeds to mark out the parameters of a form of civil disobedience worked out in conversation with the inner voice of his mother-goddess Thetis (1:351-427). He will not lift a finger to fight the violation of his property over Briseis, but will offer passive resistance by refusing to obey orders and withdrawing his armed forces from the war effort. And if Agamemnon is foolish enough to attempt to confiscate any more wealth from Achilles, civil disobedience will turn into civil war: 'in an instant your dark blood will drip from my spear'.

This is how things stand when the assembly is dissolved, but the *agora* has achieved the purpose for which it was convened. Agamemnon has given out orders to restore the freedom of Chryseis and Odysseus is despatched with a ship and twenty men to return her to Chryse along with a hundred oxen for sacrifice. This is a grand gesture of reparation. Once the Achaians have acknowledged that an international convention has been broken and signalled their willingness to make amends and comply, they are ready to be readmitted into international society. Reunited with his daughter, the priest Chryses is happy to provide the necessary ceremony to symbolise the return of the Achaians to the international fold:

> 'Hear me, lord of the silver bow, protector of Chryse and holy Killa, and mighty lord of Tenedos. As you heard my former prayer, and brought honour to me and great harm to the Achaian people, so now grant this my further desire - now at last drive the shameful plague away from the Danaans.' (1:452-456)

Barley grains are sprinkled and the oxen slaughtered in front of an altar to the god Apollo. The carcasses are ritually butchered, roasted, an extravagant feast ensues, followed by dancing and singing. The status quo is restored. The god is appeased. The plague relents. Odysseus returns with his embassy back to the camp. The Achaians are now free to resume the Trojan war and loot more cities. The god Apollo, whom Chryses calls the 'protector' of his city, has performed his task. He has not prevented it from being attacked and looted, but he has forced the Achaians to comply with a basic minimum standard of behaviour toward the defeated in war.

Meanwhile, Agamemnon fails to heed the counsel of Nestor and sends men to appropriate Briseis. Achilles gives Briseis up without a fight, but asks his mother-god Thetis to petition Zeus to assist the Trojans. As with Chryses the prayers of Achilles are

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rituals lent the spoken word extra gravitas.

answered. Divided and without the help of Achilles, Nestor's predictions prove true and the Achaians fare badly in the war with the Trojans. By book nine, when things are looking particularly bleak, Agamemnon is more ready to heed the counsel of Nestor in *agora* (9:95-113):

> 'Agamemnon...you are the king of many people and Zeus has entrusted to you the sceptre and the ways of law, to make judgements for your people. Therefore you more than any other man should speak the thoughts of your mind and listen too, and act even on another's advice, whenever a man's heart prompts him to speak for the good - yours will be the credit for all that he begins.'

Leaders are *sophos* to heed good counsel in the *agora*. They will enhance their legitimacy through the just decisions which result. Nestor then tactfully reminds Agamemnon that his advice was ignored earlier, and counsels it is not too late to appease Achilles 'with soothing gifts and kind persuasion'. In reply Agamemnon readily agrees with Nestor, and accepts that he has made a gross error of judgement:

> 'You have accurately recounted my disasters. I have been disastered, there's no denying it...Disastered as I have been, through giving way to wits pestilential, I desire in return to conciliate and give enormous gifts.' (9:115-120)

> 'Your talk of my blindness is no lie: I was blinded, I do not deny it myself...Since I was blinded, and listened to my hearts wretched persuasion, I am ready to take it all back and offer the appeasement of limitless reparation.' (9:115-120)

These two translations refer to the same lines of text. The first translation is by Havelock from *The Greek Concept of Justice*[28], whilst the second is by Hammond from the Penguin Edition. Hammond translates *ate* as blindness whilst Havelock translates *ate* as disaster[29]. Both are equally valid and each convey a valuable trace of the original meaning, but the aporia of difference between the two reveals how easily the anthropomorphic character of Homeric thought can get lost in translation. With an oral knowledge structure there are no dictionaries, so the most important reflective words of deliberation had to define themselves through divine personification.

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[28] *Op cit*, p.125.

[29] Compare with the use of 'blindness' and 'blindspots' in Roger Tooze and Craig N. Murphy, 'The Epistemology of Poverty and the Poverty of Epistemology in IPE: Mystery, Blindness, and Invisibility', *Millennium*, 1996, Vol.25, No.3.

Ate was the goddess who personified folly, 'rendering her victims incapable of rational choice and blinding them to distinctions of morality or experience', thus bringing them to the brink of disaster[30]. In the divine genealogy of the Hellenic bards *Ate* was the daughter of *Eris* the goddess of conflict, and thus were related to each other, not by a theory as we would understand it, but by kinship. The pragmatics of an oral knowledge structure and its bicameral means of reflection made it difficult to think about human folly and its consequences without the mnemonic assistance of divine personae. The figure of *Ate* helps Agamemnon to publicly come to terms with the fact that he has committed a gross error of judgement. By narrating this reflective achievement of Agamemnon, the bard stores one possible policy option within the mind of his *basileus*.

A series of reverses in the field of international conflict which pose a profound threat to the security of the Achaian forces have finally persuaded Agamemnon that it was folly to provoke a quarrel with Achilles by transgressing the heroic code of justice with regard to the distribution of wealth, so now Agamemnon is ready to play a full part in the resolution of the conflict. He lays out before the *agora* his inventory of soothing gifts. Agamemnon's offer may be distilled into four words: metals; land; horses and women. All four are key sources of social power in the Homeric world-view. After Agamemnon has finished speaking, Nestor the mediator stands to express approval. He thinks the Achaian community now has an excellent offer they can take to Achilles. He picks an embassy approved by the *agora* which then heads along the strandline 'of the sounding sea' toward the camp of Achilles.

Upon arrival, after the necessary formalities, Odysseus is the first member of the embassy to speak to the alienated Achilles (9:223-308). Firstly, Achilles is informed of the dire military situation faced by the Achaian alliance. The sackers of cities now even fear for the destruction of their own ships, without which the Achaians are doomed 'to perish here in Troy'. Then Odysseus reminds Achilles of his father's parting words when his prodigal son left for war:

> "'you must hold down your heart's high passion in your breast - good will between friends (*philos)* is a better thing. And if a quarrel begins its mischief, you should abandon it - this way the Argives, young and old alike, will show you greater honour.'"

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[30] Grant & Hazel, *Who's Who In Classical Mythology*, p.59.

'That was your old man's advice', Odysseus argues, 'and now you are forgetting it'. 'Please stop, let go the anger that pains your heart'. Next Odysseus repeats the inventory of wealth that Agamemnon has offered in recognition of his previous transgression of justice. Odysseus makes it clear he thinks these terms are generous, but tops this with an offer from the community of Achaians as a whole:

> 'But if hatred for the son of Atreus (Agamemnon) has grown too strong in your heart, for the man and for his gifts, then still have pity on all the other Achaians of the army in their affliction, and they will honour you like a god.'

In other words Odysseus accepts that Achilles' respect for the authority of Agamemnon may be damaged beyond repair, but argues that Achilles is still obligated by ties of loyalty to his community, and now has a superb opportunity to gain power over the hearts and minds of his fellow Achaians through the value of security: 'You could win the very greatest glory in their eyes, because now you could kill Hector'. The Trojan hero, Hector, has been tempted to over-expose his forces by the recent spell of Trojan success.

Now it is the turn of Achilles to transgress the Homeric normative code. In his reply Achilles makes it clear that he is not yet ready to play a full part in the resolution of the conflict (9:309-430). First he registers his lofty disgust for the cognitive dissonance that inevitably comes with the shabby business of compromise when cutting deals with a sworn adversary: 'I hate like the gates of Hades the man who hides one thing in his mind and speaks another'. If he accepts the bargain Achilles knows he will have to feign respect for the authority of a man for whom he has no respect any more: 'I know him well now'. Achilles tells the embassy bluntly he does not think Agamemnon nor the Achaian community can bring him back into the fold. His disillusionment with them both is too profound:

> 'it now appears that there is no thanks if a man fights the enemy relentlessly on and on. Stay at home or fight your hardest - your share will be the same. Coward and hero are honoured alike...And it has done me no profit to have suffered all that pain in fighting on endlessly with my life at constant risk...I have spent many sleepless nights, and won through many days of blood and battle, fighting with men over their wives. I have sacked twelve of men's cities from my ships, and I claim eleven more by land across the fertile Troad. From all these I took many fine treasures, and every time I brought them all and gave them to Agamemnon son of Atreus: and every time, back there by the fast ships he had never left, he would take them in, share out a few, and keep the

> most for himself. All the other prizes he gave to the kings and leading men stay safe with their owners. I am the only Achaian he has robbed.'

Once bitten twice shy: 'He has cheated me and wronged me. He will not work his cheating tongue on me again'. Achilles gives notice that tomorrow he will set sail for home with the booty he still possesses. He is not tempted by the inventory of wealth Agamemnon is belatedly offering him now that his political incompetence has finally caught up with him and got him into trouble. It is all too little too late because after all is said and done Achilles knows no amount of wealth can equal 'the worth of my own life':

> 'Men can raid cattle and sturdy sheep, and men can win tripods and bay horses by the head - but there is no raiding or winning a man's life back again, when once it has passed the guard of his own teeth.'

Achilles senses the mortality of the warrior more keenly than most, since his mother Thetis has foretold that he has a straight choice. He can fight on and die gloriously in Troy or go home and live to a humble old age, but the injustice of Agamemnon has left Achilles with no illusions about the value of military glory, so Odysseus' appeal on behalf of the Achaian community is also meaningless.

When Achilles has finished the meeting plunges into silence, 'shocked by his words and the great force of his refusal'. Eventually, the embassy plays its next card and Phoinix starts to speak (9:429-602). Phoinix is the old teacher who has seen his pupil grow from a small child: 'with no knowledge yet of making war or debate'. Phoinix begins by employing the pathos of his life story and invokes his feelings for Achilles as surrogate son: 'I brought you up to manhood, godlike Archilles, with heartfelt love'. 'I went through much trouble and much hard work over you'...(teaching Achilles to be)...'a speaker of words and a doer of deeds'. Rhetoric for the purposes of public speaking already forms an essential part of the heroic curriculum. Having cast these emotional hooks, Phoinix begins his attempt to reel the errant pupil in:

> 'Come then, Achilles, master your great passion. You should not have a heart that does not forgive...You see, the Repents are the daughters of great Zeus. They are lame and wrinkled and squint-eyed, and their business is to come behind the course of *Ate*. *Ate* is strong and sound of foot: she outruns them all by far, and is first to do her harm in every land where men live - and they come behind with their healing. When a man shows respect as the daughters of Zeus approach, they prosper him and hear his prayers. But if he refuses them and spurns them in the hardness of his heart, then they go to Zeus the son of Kronos and beg him that *Ate*

> should visit that man, so that he pays with his own hurt. You too, Achilles, should give the daughters of Zeus that respect which bends the minds of other men'

Here the agencies of the gods, which are the primary form of abstraction within the oral knowledge structure, are being employed for an argument about the causes of conflict. It is folly that is responsible for the destructiveness of conflict, which is so embedded in the human condition that it has to be accepted as a part of life, but in its wake creeps remorse, and if people engage with the consequences of conflict in a constructive fashion good fortune may be redeemed. However, if such opportunities are repressed the cycle of folly cannot be broken, which will eventually prove to be equally destructive for the person who has failed to break it. 'Now', Phoinix argues, if Agamemnon was not showing contrition by offering so many gifts 'but keeping up the fury of his resentment I would not ask you to put away your anger and defend the Argives'. But in fact Agamemnon has gone out of his way to make amends, Phoinix argues, sending an embassy in an unambiguous gesture of reparation, and so Achilles is obliged to reciprocate.

Then Phoinix buttresses his divine argument with a heroic argument, a cautionary tale drawn from the 'tales of past heroes'. This curious Russian doll effect, where a song is found within the song, can also be discovered elsewhere in Homer. Phoinix summarises a tale of war where a community called the Aitolians are being besieged by the Kouretes. Things go well for the Aitolians until their best soldier, Meleagros, gets involved in a blood feud whereby he deserts. When the enemy is at the gates the Aitiolians approach Meleagros trying to appease his anger offering him gifts, but he rejects them. Only when 'the enemy weapons were hitting thick on his own room', and his wife confronts him with the fact that the men will be killed, the city put to the fire, and the women and children lose their freedom, does Meleagros belatedly return to the fray to defeat the marauding soldiers. By this time his prestige amongst his community had fallen to the point that it no longer felt obligated 'to pay him those lovely gifts' that he had rejected. Phoinix uses the parable of Meleagros in the same way as the Greeks would be expected to quote from the 'anger of Achilles' when trying to resolve a communal conflict. There comes a point where resentment can become self-destructive, suggests the old mentor of Achilles. Eventually things will get so bad that Achilles will have to become reconciled with Agamemnon and rejoin the fray anyway, Phoinix argues, so Achilles would do best to come in from the cold now whilst the

Achaians will still honour him for having the generosity of spirit to do so of his own free will.

Achilles' reply to Phoinix is curt. The divine and heroic arguments are simply ignored and Phoinix is bluntly told to cut the paternal pathos and choose whose camp he would prefer to sleep the night and place his life: Achilles' or Agamemnon's. It is clear the embassy has failed. Aias the third member of the embassy now speaks to formally acknowledge the fact, but also to express the normative judgement which the minstrel wishes to share with his audience (9:620-644):

> 'Achilles has turned his heart's high passion to savagery in his breast. Cruel man, he has no thought for the love of his companions, how we honoured him more than any other by the ships. He has no pity - and yet a man will accept recompense for his dead brother, or his own son, from the man who killed him: the killer pays a great blood-price and stays on in his country, and the other's heart and high anger are kept down when he takes the payment. But the heart the gods have put in your breast is implacable and perverse, all because of a girl, one girl - but now we are offering you seven, the very finest, and much more besides...'

Achilles is nursing his resentment to the point where he is putting his own community at risk. He has become savage by placing himself beyond the reach of communal obligation and ceasing to value the opinion of his comrades. For the sake of the health of the community as a whole Achaians are expected to accept the *dike* of appropriate reparation even for crimes as grievous as the murder of a son or brother, but Achilles' pride is such that he is not even prepared to accept lavish reparation for an error of judgement over the property of a mere slave.

As if to emphasise the bard's message Achilles' reply to Aias (9:645-655) contrasts with his tone toward Odysseus and Phoinix in that it is almost apologetic, 'all that you have said seems much after my own feeling'. But once a conflict has been provoked resolution is not a simple matter. The anger of Achilles represents the existential fact that memories of injustice are not easily wiped clean. It is all very well for Agamemnon to say he is sorry and then impress everybody with the generosity of his offer of reparation, but it is Achilles who is left to deal with the feeling that Agamemnon should not have made the mistake in the first place. In order to stress that both parties of a communal conflict have a mutual interest in resolution, even if one of the parties feels he is innocent with regard to the question of cause, it is imperative that Achilles must not give ground until some tragedy has overtaken him and impressed the

bard's audience with the consequence of this folly. The requirements of oral mnemonics mean that the actions of heroes have to carry the argument. The transgression and remorse of Agamemnon must be balanced with the transgression and remorse of Achilles. And so: Achilles acknowledges the strength of Aias' communitarian reproach but confesses that he cannot quench his anger over the memory of how Agamemnon 'treated me with contempt in front of the Argives, *as if I were some migrant without rights*'. Achilles is still consumed with a desire for revenge. The embassy returns to the Achaian camp with the news that Achilles will not accept Agamemnon's offer of reparation and rejoin the war until the Trojans have killed many more Achaians and 'set the ships smouldering with fire'.

Achilles' wishes are fulfilled during the protracted fighting of the next day, but with tragic consequences, for his beloved friend Patroklos is drawn into the fighting by the crisis and is killed. When the news of this is brought to Achilles in book eighteen he cries out in pain, whereupon his mother-goddess, Thetis, suddenly appears to ask her son:

> 'Child, why are you crying?...Look, all that you asked has been brought about by Zeus, when you held out your hands and prayed that all the sons of the Achaians should be penned back by the sterns of their ships through want of you, and be put to terrible suffering.' (18:74-77)

It has been the dramatic destiny of Achilles to prove the arguments of Odysseus, Phoinix and Aias as set out in book nine. He explains to his mother that his failure to civilize his anger has brought about the death of a friend:

> 'Oh, that quarrels should vanish from gods and men, and resentment, which drives even a man of good sense to anger! It is far sweeter men than trickling honey, and swells to fill their hearts like smoke - such is the anger that Agamemnon has caused me now. But all this is past and we should let it be, for all our pain, forcing down the passion in our hearts.' (18:110-114)

As in other moments of crisis where the Homeric hero reaches a turning point in mortal volition, it is the gods who administer the shout that terrifies the Trojans by announcing the decision that Achilles shall return to war. By book nineteen Achilles is finally ready to play a full part in the resolution of the communal conflict (19:39-74). He runs amongst all the ships along the beach calling for an *agora* to formally renounce his resentment and declare his intention to resume hostilities toward the Trojans: 'I am ending my anger'. Many of the assembled have limped to the *agora* as if to underline the

lesson that has been learned: 'I think the Achaians will long remember the quarrel between us' (without which) 'many Achaians would not have sunk their teeth in the broad earth'.

The *agora* is still expressing its approval with the return of Achilles as Agamemnon stands to speak (19:80-145). Agamemnon expands upon his apology of book nine were his transgression of the judgement of Nestor was attributed to the mischief of *Ate*: 'she treads across the heads of men bringing folly to mankind'. Then he confirms his former offer of compensation and offers to display it for inspection, but quibbles over wealth have lost their previous meaning for Achilles now that they have lead to the loss of Patroklas, so he expresses eagerness to dispense with the ceremony of resolution and his desire to go straight back to the war. It is left to Odysseus to speak up in defence of the formal procedure. It is essential for the resolution to be collectively witnessed by as many people as possible:

> 'And Agamemnon, lord of men, should bring the gifts into the middle of our assembly, so that all the Achaians can see them with their own eyes, and your heart can have its pleasure'

The resolution is too important to be left to the parties concerned. There is no piece of paper that people can sign to prove that an agreement has been made. Therefore the agreement has to be sealed with a performance whereby it can become common knowledge. The wealth is brought from Agamemnon's camp and handed over before the assembly in a public gesture of reparation, and Achilles has to publicly express satisfaction with this reparation. A sacrifice is made to commemorate solemn oaths made by both Agamemnon and Achilles. The feud is thus formally brought to a close and the *agora* is dissolved. The Achaians prepare to return to war and, united again, anticipate a reversal of fortune.

Although the drama unfolds within the context of an Achaian army besieging Troy, the behaviour of this army in assembly serves as a paradigm of correct procedure in the Homeric *polis*[31]. The *Iliad* thus delineates a form of justice where the power of speech is promoted as the legitimate method for resolving disputes. This method attempts to replace physical conflict in a given community with negotiation under the

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[31] For a definition of the Homeric *polis* as the harbour of ships, the enclosure of city walls, and the site of assembly, see Stephen Scully, *Homer And The Sacred City*.

aegis of an assembly with an accepted set of rules, or constitution, arrived at by precedent[32]. Placing the paradigmatic *agora* within the context of an allied effort in war, as emphasized by the famous 'catalogue of ships' in book II, enabled the bards to represent the skills of political assembly as practices common to all Greek *basileis*. Simultaneously, the context of war helped to dramatise a Homeric way of thinking about the human capacity for folly. With *Ate* the bards could offer the listener a renegade divinity through whom the experience of folly could be acknowledged and shared. Lastly, the bards offered a paradigm of bicameral mental deliberation at moments of crisis in human volition.

The *basileis* would also sponsor songs which helped them to reflect about the *oikos*, and about relations between *oikoi* within and across the boundary lines of the *poleis*. The wartime tale of the *Iliad* was thus balanced with the peacetime tale of the *Odyssey*:

> 'Tell me, Muse, the story of that resourceful man who was driven to wander far and wide after he had sacked the holy citadel of Troy. He saw the cities of many people and he learnt their ways. He suffered great anguish on the high seas in his struggles to preserve his life and bring his comrades home.' (1:1-5)[33]

By delaying the return of Odysseus for a further ten years after the close of the Trojan war, through a series of shipwrecks and other tribulations, the minstrels were able to deliver a normative code to help the *basileis* juggle with the values of wealth, security, freedom and justice in their dealings with each other.

Our journey through the *Odyssey* shall concentrate on the use of these values with particular regard to four major themes. Firstly we consider the way in which the crisis within the *oikos* of Odysseus caused by his prolonged absence promotes the authority of the master as a nascent source of consciousness that is beginning to assert itself against the will of the gods. Secondly we explore the way in which the wanderings of Odysseus promote the international custom of hospitality toward the *xenos*, or stranger-guest. Thirdly we note how the *Odyssey* maps the related images of the desert island, utopia and dystopia for future development by the western imagination.

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[32] Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p.148.

[33] All quotations from the *Odyssey* have been taken from the translation by E.V. Rieu & D.C.H. Rieu unless otherwise stated.

Fourthly, we consider how Odysseus was used as a vehicle for thinking about the ethics of deception as a means to an end in political and economic affairs.

The epic opens on Mount Olympus where an Pan Hellenic *agora* of the gods is in session. Immediately, our attention is drawn to a subtle shift in the balance of power between the two chambers of the bicameral mind. Ate, whose relationship with Mount Olympus was always obscure and seemed to be a god of no fixed abode, has disappeared. The gods have started to distance themselves from the decision making process of mortals. |Instead, they appear to concentrate more time on the determination of consequences. Zeus reflects upon the folly of humans who blame the gods for their troubles 'when it is their own transgressions which bring them suffering' (1:32-44). The goddess Athena thereby spots an opportunity to petition Zeus on behalf of Odysseus, and questions the cosmic justice of him having been shipwrecked 'on a lonely island far away in the middle of the seas' for the last seven years (1:45-63). Zeus protests that it is not he but his brother, Poseidon god of the seas and waters, who bears a grudge against Odysseus because he has blinded Polyphemus of the Cyclopes (1:64-79). Poseidon is absent from this particular *agora*, being 'on a visit to the distant Ethiopians', so the decision to release Odysseus from the Isle of Ogygia is passed unopposed. Hermes the Olympian messenger is sent to instruct Calypso, goddess of the desert island, to release Odysseus and despatch him homeward.

Meanwhile Athena undertakes to visit Ithaca, Odysseus' homeland, to galvanize Odysseus' son Telemachus. Upon her arrival she assumes the disguise of a stranger and waits at the threshold of the house. This is another subtle change of emphasis from the *Iliad* where the gods can instantly manifest themselves in mind and appear to feel less need to hide behind mortal disguise. Through the eyes of the disguised Athena we are treated to our first glimpse of the sorry state of affairs which has befallen the *oikos* of Odysseus in the absence of its master. Whilst Odysseus has been away his mother has died of worry for her son, his father has retired to the country in grief and his sister has been married off to another *oikos*, leaving his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus alone in charge of the family estate. Sensing a power vacuum at the centre of a wealthy estate, one hundred and eight eligible *basileis* from the surrounding *oikoi* have begun to circle around the household of Odysseus, seeking the hand of Penelope in marriage. In an effort to pressurise Penelope to marry, the suitors have taken up semi-permanent residence on the estate, abusing the ancient tradition of hospitality by eating and

drinking its wealth away in sumptuous feasts. Other bits and pieces of property are beginning to go astray too, such as authority over some of the slaves.

Whilst sitting amongst the Suitors dreaming of how his father might return to drive them all away, Telemachus spots the disguised Athena and leaps up to greet her: 'ashamed that a stranger should be kept standing at the threshold' (1:120-1). Telemachus is to be the first character to define the proper code of behaviour toward the visiting foreigner. The *xenos* is welcomed from the threshold into the hall, comfortably seated and then offered food and wine. Next he is asked the following questions:

> 'But tell me honestly who you are and where you come from. What is your native town? Who are your parents? And since you certainly cannot have come on foot, what kind of vessel brought you here? How did the crew come to land you in Ithaca, and who did they claim to be? And tell me the truth - I'd like to know - is this your first visit to Ithaca, or has my father received you before - he used to entertain in our house just as often as he visited abroad' (1:169-178)

Athena assumes the identity of Mentes, son of Anchialus and *basileus* 'of the sea-faring Taphians' (1:179-213). Telemachus is told that Mentes is captain of a ship bound for the foreign port of Temesa with a cargo of iron, 'which we mean to exchange for bronze'. He is also informed that the ties of guest-friendship between their families 'go a long way back', a claim which Telemachus can verify with his grandfather if he so wishes. Athena/Mentes thus becomes the first character to deliver the oral equivalent of the passport and visa.

If the *Iliad* can be interpreted as an oral encyclopaedia of intra-city propriety, the *Odyssey* may be seen as a corresponding encyclopaedia for inter-city propriety[34]. Odysseus is the archetypal 'sacker of cities', but his militarist credentials lend him the authority for his character to also be the vehicle for the promotion of inter-city relations that transcend war. The obligation of hospitality toward the *xenos* was essential if one wanted to participate in trade, as is evident in the testimony of Mentes. His *oikos* needs to exchange a cargo of iron for bronze, but in order to do so he needs to be able to draw upon the wealth of other *oikoi* on the way to sustain him through his voyage, and one of these happens to be the household of Odysseus. The relationship is one of reciprocity. Mentes claims that Odysseus has previously visited his own *oikos* too, on a trade mission for the procurement of chemical weapons (1:255-264). As we follow the

fortunes of Telemachus through books 1 to 4 we begin to perceive other qualities in the *xenos*. When justice within the community breaks down, the *basileus* who has cultivated a *xenos* in a foreign land has a ready substitute for kinsman, protector and ally[35]. The *basileus* who has entertained numerous strangers from abroad and thereby established ties of guest-friendship with many foreigners has earned both a passport to travel and a wide selection of potential bolt-holes when it becomes expedient to flee his own community. The inter-city convention of *xenos* thus provides the *basileus* and his *oikos* with extra-communitarian access to wealth, security and freedom.

Once the identity of Mentes is established and his status as *xenos* confirmed, Mentes enquires what the Suitors are doing in the *oikos* and the reason for their boorish behaviour (1:221-9). Telemachus explains that the prolonged absence of his father has aroused the predatory instincts of the surrounding *oikoi* (1:230-51). His house has lost the protection of its master and its wealth is thus perceived to be there for the taking. The stranger-guest expresses his sympathies, notes how important the presence of the *basileus* is for the security of the *oikos*, and urges Telemachus to call an *agora* to try to oblige the Suitors to back-off and go home. If this fails Telemachus is advised to set sail in search for news of his father. In the light of this news Telemachus can then plan his next course of action (1:252-306). Before Mentes departs, Telemachus the exemplary host carefully observes the custom of offering him a keepsake to leave with: 'the sort of present that one gives to a guest who has become a friend' (1:313). The guest-gift was a mnemonic device which helped two *oikoi* from different parts of the Aegean recall previous instances of hospitality and thus re-establish international relations of guest-friendship. The more fabulous the gift, the more memorable the bond of guest-friendship between the two parties. Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* furnish instances where *basileis* establish proof of old family ties of guest-friendship through the mutual recollection of guest-gifts exchanged. Perhaps the most extraordinary of these is the amiable exchange between the Trojan Glaukos and the Achaian Diomedes in the middle of a pitched battle in the *Iliad* (6:120-236).

The following morning Telemachus uses his prerogative as a *basileus* to summon an *agora*. An elder called Aegyptius formally opens the proceedings and asks the summoner to declare his suit. Is there a hostile army approaching, or is there some

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[34] Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p.177.
[35] Finley, *op cit*, p.102.

other matter of public concern which needs to be discussed? Telemachus leaves his seat, takes the staff and stands to speak in the middle of the assembly:

> 'Of an army's approach I have heard nothing to tell you. Nor is it some other question of public concern that I propose to bring forward, but my own private business, the affliction, the double affliction, that has fallen on my house.' (2:42-46)

The *oikos* has lost its father and the Suitors, who 'are actually the sons of those who are your leaders here', are pestering his wife and helping themselves to the rest of his property. Telemachus argues that without his father the *oikos* is too weak to rid itself of the Suitors, but that what they are doing is an injustice 'which you, gentlemen, should resent not only on your own behalf but as a scandal to our neighbours who live round about'. Telemachus appeals to the *agora* in the name of Zeus the god of the *polis* and Themis the goddess of law and order to protect the house of Odysseus. In a finishing flourish resonant with the anger of Achilles, Telemachus flings the staff of sovereignty to the ground and returns to his seat.

For a moment 'nobody had the heart to give Telemachus a sharp reply' as a wave of pity sweeps across the assembly. Then, on behalf of the Suitors, Antinous rises to claim that they are innocent of any injustice and that Penelope, Telemachus' mother, has been leading them on. Telemachus is informed that unless Penelope chooses one of them for marriage the Suitors will continue to besiege her former husband's estate. Telemachus replies that it is impossible for him to force his mother to marry someone whilst the fate of his father has still not been ascertained. Then, like Chryses and Achilles in the *Iliad*, Telemachus threatens to pray to Zeus to repay the Suitors for their transgressions. The reply of Zeus is swift. He despatches a couple of eagles to swoop over the assembly and, rather like Kalchus in the *Iliad*, an old soothsayer called Halitherses rises to interpret this as a warning to the Suitors that Odysseus is not dead and that he shall soon return. He appeals to the Suitors to back off before disaster overwhelms them. At this another Suitor, Eurymachus, rises to quash this appeal (2:178-206). The omen sent by Zeus is dismissed, Odysseus pronounced dead, and Halitherses is blatantly threatened with dire consequences if he continues to support the cause of Telemachus. An air of latent violence begins to pervade the arguments of the Suitors: 'we are afraid of no one at all'.

An old ally of the house of Odysseus, Mentor, then rises to speak (2:229-241). The behaviour of the Suitors is beneath his contempt. Instead he expresses indignation

at the timidity of the *agora* in response to the bullying tactics of the Suitors and its abject failure to uphold the ways of justice:

> 'Kindness, generosity, and justice should no longer be the aims of any man who wields the royal staff - in fact he might just as well devote his days to tyranny and lawless deeds... They are few and you are many. Yet not a word have they had from you in condemnation or restraint!'

A third member of the Suitors, Leocritus, rises to speak (2:242-256). Mentor is ridiculed for 'inciting the people to stop us'. He makes an open appeal to the human capacity for apathy: 'it is expecting much of men to take up arms over a *meal*, even with the odds in their favour'. The implication is that the abuse of the tradition of hospitality is something that a healthy *oikos* ought to be able to deal with itself. The problem with the case for Telemachus seems to be that, by his own admission, he is trying to turn a private tragedy into a public concern. Many *basileis* may feel genuine sadness for the fate which has befallen the house of Odysseus, but it is nearly twenty years now since he left Ithaca and most doubt he will ever return. Consequently the house of Odysseus has become a lame duck and there are limits to the extent to which an *agora* can be expected to intervene. Ithaca is not a rich island, and there is always going to be competition for good land. The *basileis* of Ithaca would normally expect an *oikos* as rich as the house of Odysseus to furnish a *basileus* who could make a major contribution to the security of the *polis*[36]. All Telemachus can offer is an *oikos* that is threatening to drag the *basileis* of Ithaca into a civil conflict. Leocritus argues that even if Odysseus himself returned to try and drive the Suitors from his house he would die in the attempt.

The assembly is dissolved having accepted the dismissal of Leocritus. The appeal by Telemachus to his own community through the *agora* has failed. The life of Telemachus is now at risk, so his next course of action is to seek extra-communitarian assistance by setting sail for Sparta in order to seek sanctuary as a *xenos* in the household of Nestor, ostensibly to search for news of the whereabouts of his father. When the ship reaches Pylos the sons of Nestor welcome Telemachus as a stranger-guest and he is offered food and drink. After the feast the *xenos* is asked to reveal his identity in the traditional way:

> 'Now that our visitors have eaten well, it is the right moment to put some questions to them and enquire who they are. Who are you, friends? From what port have you sailed over the highways of the sea? Is yours a

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[36] For example, see the famous *noblesse oblige* speech by Sarpedon in the *Iliad* (12: 310-30).

> trading venture; or are you sailing the seas recklessly, like roving pirates, who risk their lives to ruin other people?' (3:70-74)

Telemachus reveals his homeland, his identity and his mission. Nestor wistfully recalls the exploits of Odysseus on the Achaian campaigns in the Troad, thus acknowledging the mutual ties of friendship between the two houses, and tells of the numerous travails of the heroes as they return from war to homes that seem to have changed utterly from the ones they left. Life moves on when a soldier leaves for war and home will never be the same for him again. Upon his return he shall find himself a stranger in his own land. Of Odysseus, Telemachus learns little, but he is advised to visit Menelaus in Sparta in the hope that he has more news.

Upon arrival in Sparta the propriety of hospitality toward the stranger-guest is observed once again. As Telemachus and his companion approach the house of Menelaus a squire spots them and runs to ask his *basileus* whether the 'strangers at the gates' should be welcomed or sent away. The answer of Menelaus is contemptuous:

> 'you have not always been a fool; but at the moment you are talking nonsense like a child. You and I enjoyed much hospitality from strangers before we reached our homes and could expect that Zeus might grant us a life without suffering in time to come. Unyoke their horses at once, and bring our visitors to join us at the feast.' (4:30-37)

We give hospitality to strangers from other *poleis* without hesitation because this custom has saved our own skins in the past and it may have to do so again in the future, so the strangers must be ushered in, bathed, fed, watered and only afterwards identified: 'after you have dined we shall inquire who you may be'.

Once Telemachus is recognised, Menelaus and his wife Helen treat us to our first glimpses of the 'resourcefulness' of Odysseus. Helen wistfully recollects how, during the Trojan war, Odysseus gained valuable intelligence by dressing himself in rags and slipping through the gates of Troy disguised as a beggar. Menelaus fondly recalls the deceit of the wooden horse, which finally enabled the Achaians to sack Troy after ten years of failure. Menelaus also informs Telemachus that on his travels Proteus, the old man of the sea, once told him that Odysseus was marooned on a desert island somewhere 'in the vastness of the seas'. Before the departure of Telemachus, Menelaus complements his exemplary hospitality by offering as guest-gifts three horses and a chariot, which are politely declined. Telemachus explains that the island of Ithaca has not enough pasture for horses and the ground is unsuitable for chariots. He would rather

have treasure. Menelaus, charmed by the youthful directness of Telemachus over the subtle diplomacy of gifts, offers an alternative in the form of a mixing bowl of gold and silver previously given him as a guest-gift from 'the king of Sidon' (4:615-19).

The role of stranger-guest then switches from Telemachus to his father as we watch Hermes fly down to order Calypso to release the shipwrecked Odysseus from the desert island of Ogygia. She gives Odysseus a bronze axe, an adze and some drills with which to cut down some trees and make a raft. He is also given cloth for a sail and provisions for the journey. He sails off, navigating by the stars, until he is hit by a terrific storm which destroys his raft. He is tossed about for two nights and two days before he catches a glimpse of land. Miraculously escaping the rocks, he lands exhausted on the beach, happy to be alive. Odysseus wakes the next day to the sound of girls playing by the shore, and wonders:

> 'What country have I come to this time? What people are there here? Hostile and uncivilized savages, or kindly and god-fearing people?' (6:120-1)

The applicability of *xenia* is about to be extended here. Telemachus was fully clothed in the manner of a *basileus*, captaining a ship to Pylos and Sparta to seek out known family *xenoi* of the house of Odysseus in Nestor and Menelaus. But here Odysseus is naked, destitute, and does not 'know a soul in this city or this land' (6:176-7). He approaches one of the girls as a beggar, tells of his misfortune and pleads for help. His life depends upon the question of whether the natives are 'uncivilized savages' or members of an international society. This time Odysseus is lucky. He has fallen 'into the hands of a people favoured by the gods' (5:377). The girl informs Odysseus:

> 'since you have come to our country and our city here, you shall certainly not want for clothing or anything else that an unfortunate suppliant has the right to expect from those he meets.' (6:190-194)

In the international society laid down by our minstrel, the shipwrecked have a right to expect aid from those in a position to help. The girl calls out to her maids to chide them for hiding away from Odysseus in fright:

> 'Don't tell me you take him for an enemy. There is no man on earth, nor ever will be, who would dare to set hostile feet on Phaeacian soil. The gods are too fond of us for that. Remote, we are at the edge of the world and come in contact with no other people. This man is an unfortunate wanderer who has strayed here, and we must look after him, since all

> strangers and beggars come under the protection of Zeus, and to such people a small gift can mean much.' (6:199-209)

The folk utopia of the *Odyssey* is located near to the desert island in the sense that they are both isolated from the rest of humanity, disturbed only by the occasional shipwrecked sailor such as Odysseus, and are thus free from the normal insecurities wrought by intertheocratic relations. On the other hand the Phaeacians are intimately connected with humanity in the sense that they are thoroughly aware of and strictly comply with the norms of intertheocratic society. This society is partly regulated through the 'fear of the gods', particularly Zeus, who is both *Zeus polieus* (god of the state) and *Zeus xenos* (protector of stranger-guests). But the society which adheres to this norm of hospitality has also carefully weighed up the costs and benefits. A little welfare to help the unfortunate stranger-guest on his way does not have to cost the community much, but can yield high returns in terms of gratitude accumulated in foreign *oikoi*.

Odysseus is washed and fed and then escorted to the ideal city, replete with walls, a harbour, and an *agora* nestling beneath a communal temple dedicated to Poseidon (6:261-272). Guided now by Athena, Odysseus approaches the house of Alcinous, the principal oligarch of Phaeacia. Given that Phaeacia is utopia, the *oikos* of Alcinous is naturally blessed with wealth that stretches the Archaic imagination to its limit (7:82-134). Its halls are heavy with bronze, silver and gold. The place teems with slaves. The womenfolk produce textiles of outstanding quality. The corn is 'apple-golden'. The ample orchards, olive groves, vineyards and vegetable plots furnish an endless supply of produce all year round, winter and summer. Odysseus steps over the symbolic threshold of the palace and falls at the knees of the mistress of the house, appealing for an escort back to his homeland. The subsequent silence is then broken by 'the venerable lord Echeneus, a Phaeacian elder, an eloquent speaker, rich in the wisdom (*sophia*) of his forefathers'. He strongly advises Alcinous to welcome the stranger-guest, sit him comfortably and offer food and wine. Alcinous complies with this advice and also grants Odysseus a free passage back to his homeland.

The following morning a ship is fitted out and a crew picked ready for departure. To see the party off in style a day of festivities ensues, with field events and a feast complete with Demodocus the minstrel, who is versatile enough with his 'resonant lyre' to play both the edifying epic and the popular dance tune. Then, in a repeat of the formula which is now becoming familiar, Odysseus is asked to reveal his identity:

> 'Tell me the name by which you were known at home to your mother and father and your friends in the town and country around. No one, after all, whether of low or high class, goes nameless once he has come into the world; everybody is named by his parents when he is born. You must also tell me where you come from, to what people and to what city you belong' (8:549-555)

But Alcinous also wants to know where the stranger has been on his odyssey, what cities he has seen and what their peoples were like:

> 'Did you meet hostile tribes with no sense of right and wrong?, or did you fall in with hospitable and god-fearing people?' (8:573-77).

Alcinous thus makes the *sophia* of the *Odyssey* explicit. Odysseus is the archetypal *xenos*, the foreigner whose arrival and departure defines what it means for the *oikos* to comply with international standards of civilized behaviour[37].

In answer to Alcinous, Odysseus volunteers his name, 'I wish you all to know it so that I may always be your friend, though my home is far from here' (9:16-18). Then he declares his country, carefully plotting the island of Ithaca within its cluster and adding the iconic landmark of 'Mount Neriton'. Odysseus also stresses his homesickness. He is the cosmopolitan seafarer who yearns to return to his own community (9:27-38). Having revealed his true identity, Odysseus tells of his adventures prior to the shipwreck on the Isle of Ogygia. His first stop after the fall of Troy is Ismarus, where he sacks the city, kills the men and divides the wealth justly so that nobody goes 'short of his proper share' (9:40-45). This is the last gesture of the Trojan war, and the fair distribution of the spoils contrasts neatly with the behaviour of Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. The next berth is the land of the Lotus-eaters. Odysseus despatches three men ashore to 'find out what sort of human beings might be there'. They discover people whose hospitality is a trap in the sense that they offer their guests the lotus, a mythical fruit that induces a kind of narcotic paralysis whereby humans lose all desire to return to their native community. But Odysseus is made of sterner stuff. His desire to return to his native home is unyielding. He goes off in search for his men who have succumbed to the fruit, refuses to partake, and forces them against their will back on board the ships.

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[37] Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p.158.

The next port of call is the land of the Cyclopes. The desert island is located close to utopia, but both lands are also situated nearby to dystopia. Encamped upon an island with wild goats, Odysseus and his men notice smoke coming from the nearby mainland. Odysseus decides to take his ship and crew there:

> 'to find out what kind of men are over there, and whether they are aggressive savages with no sense of right or wrong or hospitable and god-fearing people.' (9:174-77)

In other words Odysseus does not need to visit the Cyclopes. He approaches them with the specific purpose of imposing a test of attitude and behaviour[38]. On arrival, Odysseus and his men discover an otherness against which the *basileus* can identify some key features of his own culture.

Firstly, the Cyclopes 'never lift a hand to sow or plough' (9:106-7). Their productive economy is based upon pastoralism and horticulture. Secondly, the Cyclopes 'have no assemblies for the making of laws, nor any established legal codes'. They are free from any sense of community: 'each man is lawgiver to his own children and women, and nobody has the slightest interest in what his neighbours decide' (9:111-16). Thirdly, the Cyclopes have no ships to give them 'the means of sailing across the sea to visit foreign towns and people, as other nations do' (9:125-131). This is presumably the primary reason for the fourth point of otherness, which is that the Cyclopes show no interest in observing the custom of hospitality toward the *xenos*.

Odysseus leads some of his crew to the home of one of the Cyclopes with the hope of receiving the customary 'gifts from my hosts' (9:228-9). As if to emphasize the otherness of beings without agriculture, assemblies and laws of community, the native Cyclops turns out to be a one-eyed giant. The Cyclops hails the visitors as stranger-guests and asks for their identity. Odysseus replies that he and his men are Achaeans making their way back from Troy, and that:

> 'We find ourselves here as suppliants at your knees, in the hope that you may give us hospitality, or even give us the kind of gifts that hosts customarily give their guests. Good sir, remember your duty to the gods; we are your suppliants, and Zeus is the champion of suppliants and guests.' (9:267-272)

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[38] *Ibid*, p.159.

In reply the Cyclops declares a complete lack of reverence toward the gods of international society. Guests and suppliants can expect no hospitality from the Cyclopes unless they feel it is in their interest to do so (9:274-281). The Cyclops then asks Odysseus for information as to where his ship is moored, whereupon our hero reveals his guile and cunning. Sensing that the Cyclops is up to no good, Odysseus lies, telling his host that he and his men have been shipwrecked 'on the borders of your land' (9:282-87). In the murky other-world that lies beyond the pale of international society, it can thus be a virtuous thing for the hero to utilise his human capacity for deception and deceit.

Odysseus' suspicion that the one-eyed giant is not going to honour the obligation of hospitality is confirmed when he seizes a couple of the crew, dashes their heads to the ground and proceeds to gobble them up. Odysseus and his men are trapped in a cave and, as the atrocities continue, it becomes clear that they are being kept as livestock to be butchered for the table. Their identities are being denied, and as far as the Cyclops is concerned the only thing of value is the meat upon their anonymous bodies. Then Odysseus, our lodestone for cunning in the world of theocratic relations, embraces his loss of identity and uses it for self-preservation. When Cyclops accepts an offer of wine from the visitor's knapsack, he asks the talking beefsteak to volunteer his name so that he can be offered a guest-gift. Odysseus lies:

> 'you ask me my name. I'll tell it to you; and in return give me the gift you promised me. My name is Nobody. That is what I am called by my mother and father and by all my friends.' (9:364-7)

With grisly humour Cyclops declares his guest-gift will be that he shall eat Nobody last, 'that shall be your gift'. But the tables are turned after Odysseus has blinded the Cyclops. The monster calls out to his neighbours that Nobody has injured him, so they assume he has fallen sick and that there is nothing they can do for him. Odysseus slips the bonds of socialization right down to the name given to him by his mother and father at birth, becomes a nobody, and escapes. It is only when Odysseus gives the game away by taunting the Cyclops with his true identity when back on his ship that he lands himself back in trouble. The Cyclops duly reports Odysseus to Poseidon, who wreaks terrible revenge.

The Cyclops episode, where Odysseus slips the clothes of identity to escape, reveals the emergence of a conscious ego beneath, defined only by his 'wiliness'. He

becomes the archetype of the traveler who leaves his life behind at home and finds himself through his anonymity abroad, living on little but his wits and his will. If he gets home, his identity will be partly determined by the narration of the odyssey that has occupied the majority of his adult life.

Odysseus' fleet then arrives at the island of Aeolia, where the locals are hospitable and help the guests on their way, a mnemonic contrast with the Cyclopes. Ten more days at sea then brings Odysseus within sight of his native island of Ithaca, but the mutinous thoughts of his men brings more misfortune, so they become wandering mariners once again. A disastrous encounter follows in Laestrygonia, another dystopia, whose inhabitants turn out to be cannibals. The whole fleet is destroyed except for the ship of Odysseus and his crew, who flee to the sea once again, until they land on the island of Aeaea, home of the goddess Circe who, after some persuasion, treats her guests well and entertains them for a year, until the crew grow homesick and persuade Odysseus to search for home once more. Circe regretfully informs Odysseus that the only way to get home is to travel to the underworld first to seek out the *sophia* of the dead. When they get to hear about it the crew grow understandably despondent at the prospect of this detour, but off they go, and upon arrival Odysseus gets some valuable advice. One nugget comes from the luckless Agamemnon. He advises Odysseus not to 'sail openly into port when you reach your home country. Make a secret approach' (11:455-6). Another comes from Achilles, who is allowed to express an early flicker of doubt from beyond the grave about the noble pursuit of military glory:

> 'I would rather work the soil as a serf on hire to some landless impoverished peasant than be King of all these lifeless dead.' (11:487-91)

Better a live chattel than a dead *basileus*. After leaving Hades, Odysseus and his crew are ready to resume their journey. They use the advice of Circe to negotiate the Sirens' isle. The Sirens are sea nymphs, whose voices are so beautiful and whose songs promise such wisdom that any sailor who hears them is compelled to stay and listen until they die of starvation. The crew confound the Sirens by plugging their ears with beeswax, whilst the cunning Odysseus has himself tied to the mast so that he can enjoy the Siren-songs without danger. Adorno and Horkheimer used this episode as an allegory of instrumental rationality: the rosy fingered dawn of sovereignty by the conscious mind

over its body[39]. In order to be the archetypal master of his *oikos*, Odysseus must first master the natural passions within himself, which he does with guile and cunning.

The guile of Odysseus is also apparent where he chooses to be economical with the truth when it comes to telling his own crew about the horror of Scylla and Charybdis. Circe has advised Odysseus that his ship will have to be steered between the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis. It is better to steer closer to Scylla, for she will only eat six of his crew, whilst Charybdis will suck the whole ship into a whirlpool. As a responsible *basileus* he chooses the only policy that can save the party as whole, but does not tell the crew that his policy means that six of them will die for fear that they might not be prepared to sacrifice for the common good (12:101-110 & 208-225). In a world where conscious deceit can sometimes have a survival value the noble lies of captaincy are a heavy responsibility, but somebody has to do it. Odysseus takes it upon himself to deceive his community for the good of his community.

Having survived this ordeal, Odysseus and his remaining crew arrive at the desert island of Thrinacia, populated only by sheep and cattle sacred to the sun-god. Odysseus has already been warned not to set foot on this island, but by now he is losing the trust of the crew and they are getting mutinous. Once on the island, they become trapped by bad weather. Food rations run out and hunger undermines the authority of Odysseus, who has warned his crew not to eat the sun-god's cattle. Only Odysseus, with his sovereign consciousness, manages to suppress his passions as his crew feast on the roasted meat. They leave the island, only for the ship to be struck by a thunderbolt from Zeus. The crew are thrown overboard: 'there was no homecoming for them, the gods saw to that' (12:418). Odysseus is left all alone as a storm breaks up the ship until he is finally washed up on Calypso's island of Ogygia, which concludes Odysseus' flashback, and we find ourselves once more in the company of Alcinous and his fellow utopians. It is nearly time for Odysseus' voyage home, but first he has to be festooned with parting guest-gifts. As is fitting upon a utopian island, Odysseus is given far more wealth than the *xenos* would normally expect to receive. The Phaeacian ship takes him to a lonely cove upon Ithaca and the crew lay him down on the shore asleep, together with his guest-gifts, and depart.

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[39] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p.3-80.

Odysseus is finally back on his native land, but when he wakes up he finds himself alone and confused. After twenty years away he fails to recognise his home island, and thinks that the Phaeacians have betrayed him and left him in a foreign country. Odysseus is home but he is still homesick, and it dawns on us that there will always be a part of him that is still wandering around looking for a land that no longer exists. No amount of searching can bring back twenty years. Odysseus has become the archetype of alienation. His wanderings have turned him into a stranger who has come to test his own country's compliance with the norms of intertheocratic society:

> 'Oh no! Whose country have I come to this time? Are they some brutal tribe of uncivilized savages, or a kindly and god-fearing people?' (13:200-2)

Athena now descends, disguised as a shepherd, to let Odysseus know that he really has arrived in Ithaca. His heart leaps but, remembering the *sophia* he received back in Hades, he uses his capacity for conscious deceit to assume a false identity, and spins the shepherd a likely yarn of exile from a community on the island of Crete. Athena is amused by the alias of Odysseus, and drops her own disguise:

> 'Anyone who met you, even a god, would have to be a consummate trickster to surpass you in subterfuge. You were always an obstinate, cunning and irrepressible intriguer. So you don't propose, even in your own country, to drop the tricks and lying tales you love so much!' (13:291-95)

Athena loves Odysseus because he is a chip off the old block. Like her, he knows how to be one thing on the inside and another on the outside. He has an inner self that can use the art of deception to get what he wants: 'we both know how to get our own way'. Together the two conspirators, the mortal and the immortal, hatch a scheme for the repossession of his *oikos*. Athena will go to the house of Menelaus to fetch Telemachus back from his bolt-hole. Meanwhile, Odysseus assumes the disguise of a beggar, with a ragged tunic, shabby cloak, a staff and an old wallet to hold alms (13:430-38). Following Athena's instructions, he sets off to impose the first test upon Eumaeus the swineherd.

As Odysseus approaches the hut of Eumaeus some guard dogs catch sight of him and threaten to tear him to pieces on the margin of his own *oikos*, as if to emphasise his alienation. The swineherd calls the dogs off, greets the 'old man' and invites the beggar into his hut. The beggar is told he shall be asked for his identity after he has had

all the bread and wine he wants. The hut is poor, but Eumaeus offers as much hospitality as he can possibly manage. Odysseus expresses delight at the kindly reception, whereupon Eumaeus repeats the pedagogic formula:

> 'Stranger, it is not right for me to turn away any stranger, even one in a worse state than you are, for strangers and beggars all come in Zeus' name, and a gift from folk like us is none the less welcome for being small.' (14:55-60)

Eumaeus is passing two tests at the same time. He is not only the good host, but also the loyal slave. The Aegean now boasts a traffic in male slaves in addition to the market in female booty, as attested by Eumaeus' life story (15:402-85). Odysseus purchased Eumaeus from some Phoenician merchants when he was a small boy, but has treated him well: 'I shall never find so kind a master again wherever I go' (14:138-40). The figure of Eumaeus delineates the proper normative code for relations within the *oikos*. The master is benevolent, the slave is grateful and loyal. The loyal slave mourns the loss of his master, whom he believes to be 'dead and gone', and bitterly resents the behaviour of the Suitors. Odysseus is delighted. Eumaeus is passing the test with flying colours.

Then it is time for Eumaeus to ask the beggar to reveal his identity (14:185-191). From what city does he come? Who is his family? What ship brought him to Ithaca and who did its crew claim to be? Once again, Odysseus uses his worldly experience to spin realistic threads into a convincing tissue of lies (14:199-359). He narrates yet another self. He is still from Crete, but this time he is the son of 'Castor son of Hylax' and one of his concubines. Being the son of master and slave he is crowded out of a major share of the wealth by the legitimate sons upon the death of his father. But he overcomes this early setback in life by his own efforts. Archaic society does not totally slam the door against the bastard. He marries into a rich family 'on my own merits'. A big opportunity comes at the outbreak of the Trojan war, which he seizes with both hands. He proves to be a fine soldier and the Achaians reward him with large quantities of loot: 'In this way my estate (*oikos*) increased rapidly and my fellow countrymen soon learned to both fear and respect me'. He has made it. The bastard son of a concubine owns his own concubines now. Unfortunately, he is not content to leave it at that and enjoy the fruits of his valour. He goes off on a rash buccaneering expedition to Egypt in the hope of accumulating even more, is captured, gets mixed up with a rascally Phoenician, and ends up as a slave on a ship which happens to anchor

just off Ithaca. He slips his chains, swims ashore, and finds himself enjoying the hospitality of Eumaeus as a beggar.

Attention shifts to the return of Telemachus from the house of Menelaus. As is fitting with the convention of the *xenos*. Telemachus is given guest-gifts upon his departure. On his way home Telemachus gets wind of an ambush laid for him by the Suitors. He avoids it, lands on Ithaca and heads for the hut of Eumaeus. As he approaches, the barking guard dogs recognise him and start wagging their tails (16:4-7). The slave welcomes Telemachus, and introduces him to the beggar. Now it is the turn of Telemachus to pass the test of hospitality toward his own father (16:60-89). Eumaeus is then sent on an errand, Odysseus drops his disguise and reveals his true identity and father and son are reunited. Telemachus is made a party to the strategy for the downfall of the Suitors. Telemachus will join their company whilst Odysseus gains access to his home disguised once again as a beggar. He wants to find out which of the slaves and retainers of the *oikos* are being loyal and which are disloyal to the rightful master. Telemachus then shows how he is mastering the art of deception from his father by lying to his own mother Penelope, all in a good cause. Meanwhile, on his way to his old abode, Odysseus meets the goatherd Melanthius. The goatherd provides a marked contrast with the swineherd Eumaeus. He is a disloyal member of the *oikos* who thinks he has seen which way the wind is blowing and gone over to the side of the Suitors. He also fails the test in that he abuses the beggar, calls him a scrounger, warns him that he can only expect rough treatment at the hands of the Suitors, and then kicks him for good measure (17:214-39).

As the beggar approaches the house of Odysseus a dog lifts his head and pricks up his ears. It is Argus, who used to accompany Odysseus on his hunting trips before leaving for the Trojan war. As if to emphasize the fate of an *oikos* without a master, Eumaeus the slave explains why Argus the faithful old dog has become so dirty and neglected:

> 'But now he's in a bad way; his master has died far away from home and the women are too thoughtless to look after him. Servants, when their masters are no longer there to order them about, have little will to do their duties as they should. All-seeing Zeus takes half the good out of a man on the day he becomes a slave.' (17:318-23)

Though he has grown too old and weak to get up, the dog can do what most humans on Ithaca cannot do: see through the disguise of Odysseus and recognise his master. He

wags his tail in welcome, drops his ears and dies. The beggar then sits on the symbolic threshold of the house, a stranger-guest upon the margin of his own *oikos*. Telemachus, who is the first to notice him, immediately complies with the tradition of hospitality and offers the beggar food. Whilst the beggar is eating this food, Athena appears to urge him to go round collecting scraps from the Suitors in order to distinguish 'the good from the bad' (17:363).

The ties of obligation toward the beggar are strong. Even most of the Suitors seem prepared to give alms, with the important exception of Antinous, who demands to know why the scrounger has been led to town. Eumaeus tries to defend himself, whereupon Telemachus intervenes, asking Antinous to give alms too. Odysseus addresses Antinous once more, asks for food, flatters his vanity and, given that Odysseus has become a beggar within his own *oikos*, ironically reminds the Suitor of the ever-present risk of ill-fortune:

> 'Time was when I too was one of the lucky ones with a rich house to live in, and I have often given to such a vagrant as myself, no matter who he was or what his needs were. I had hundreds of servants and plenty of all that one needs to live in luxury and to be known as a rich man. But Zeus, son of Cronos - it must have been his will - wrecked my life...' (17:419-26)

The life story of the beggar thus confronts Antinous with a veil of ignorance about his own future[40]. If a rich man can become a beggar, then it is possible that Antinous could fall upon hard times too. Hospitality toward the wandering beggar is presented to us as a kind of intertheocratic insurance policy. The good *basileus* gives alms in the expectation that he will receive alms if fate should ever decide to make him down and out. But Antinous is not a good *basileus*. His destiny is to serve the narrative need for transgression in order to underline the normative code, so instead of giving alms he marvels at the 'audacity and impudence of the beggar', and after further provocation hits Odysseus with a stool.

The beggar retreats to the threshold and, in a pattern we have seen before, appeals to the avenging spirits of beggars to punish Antinous for his transgression. Antinous orders the beggar to keep quiet on pain of death, whilst the other Suitors are briefly concerned. The curse of the beggar worries them because of the superstition

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[40] Compare with Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p.136-42.

(which the minstrel is helping to promote) that gods sometimes visit mortals disguised as foreigners to observe and judge their behaviour:

> 'Antinous, you did wrong to strike the wretched vagrant. You're a doomed man if he turns out to be some god from heaven. And the gods do disguise themselves as strangers from abroad, and move from town to town in every shape, observing the deeds of the just and the unjust.' (17:483-8)

In the *Iliad* the gods intervene in mortal decision making. In the *Odyssey* they observe and judge the mortal decision makers. In the *Iliad* the feud between the two antagonists is resolvable because the strengths and weaknesses of character in Agamemnon and Achilles are subtly balanced and both are able to own up to errors of judgement. But in the *Odyssey* the conflict can only be resolved by righteous vengeance because it progresses toward what Havelock calls a 'moral polarization' whereby as the narrative proceeds, one side accumulates a monopoly in goodness whilst the other acquires a monopoly in evil, until it becomes a simple case of the characters falling into one category or the other[41]. The choice made by Amphinomus is an interesting case in point. Amphinomus is one of the less dastardly Suitors and, after an act of generosity, the beggar Odysseus warms to him and advises him to desert his companions before disaster overwhelms them (18:124-151). Amphinomus is thus given a chance to redeem himself, but fails to grasp it and seals his fate.

The women of the household are also tested. Penelope of course is the loyal wife who has been holding out against the Suitors for so long, and who is appropriately gracious toward the beggar. Eurycleia is the female counterpart to Eumaeus, loyal consort of Penelope who, like the dog Argus, sees through the disguise of her master by noticing an old scar whilst washing his feet. The loyalty of the slave toward the master can run deep. When she recognises Odysseus she declares him 'my dear child'. Odysseus replies that Eurycleia once 'suckled me at your own breast', but he will kill her if she blows his disguise. She declares her loyalty to her master and promises to tell him which of the maid-slaves have been loyal and disloyal (19:466-503). Melantho is the female counterpart of Melanthius. We are informed that Penelope has brought this slave up and looked after her as 'tenderly as her own child', but that this good treatment was repaid by treachery once the *oikos* fell into crisis. She has gone over to the side of the Suitors and has become the mistress of Eurymachus. Like her brother Melanthius, she

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[41] *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p.150.

also abuses the beggar (18:328-36 & 19:65-9). Like Amphinomus, Melantho is warned of the possible consequences of her disloyalty, to no avail. As the beggar beds down for the night he also hears other disloyal slaves making for the Suitors (20:5-16).

The epic builds to a climax with the Suitors and the disloyal slaves continuing to insult the beggar and abuse the property of the *oikos* with almost monotonous regularity until, eventually, the beggar reveals his true identity and a great 'battle in the hall' ensues, wherein all the Suitors are slain. Meanwhile Eumaeus and another loyal slave, Philoetius, symbolically deal with the disloyal Melanthius (22:170-203). Eurycleia is then called to inform Odysseus which of the female slaves 'have been disloyal to me and which are innocent' (22:416-19). Twelve out of a total of fifty are then singled out, are made to clean out the hall of bodies and gore, and are then hanged by Telemachus: 'for a little while their feet twitched, but not for very long' (22:472-3). The consequences of the slaughter of so many *basileis* from all around Ithaca are then dealt with in summary fashion, as if the minstrel has lost interest in the narrative now that the major points have been made. Odysseus has returned to hearth and home and proved the indispensability of the master whose odyssey has taught him the value of an ego that can override the passions of nature in the interests of his *oikos*. The transgressors of the code of hospitality toward the stranger and charity toward the beggar have paid for their crimes. The images of the desert island, utopia and dystopia have been mapped out for the social imagination. And Odysseus the master-strategist has demonstrated the virtue of consciousness for the purposes of deception in a communitarian cause.

5: Philosophia

4.1. Desert Island Story

> '...and one nail a week to old Uncle Tod, who's lame and not too well but offers to organize a sort of school for the kids so the mothers can fish or hunt.'

We have seen how Strange's desert island stories postulate the development of three separate communities with distinctive characteristics. We have noted the three alternative scenarios Strange offered suggesting how relations between the communites might develop once contacts are established. But what about research, thought and education? Are these aged traditions of modern society going to survive and prosper in the hands of our castaways upon Strange's desert island?

Out of the three communities, Uncle Tod is the only person who suggests that the castaways might try to salvage something from the western tradition of formal education. He proposes to organize a school. Apart from the fact that he is old, ill, lame and rather poorly paid, we know nothing about Uncle Tod. Nor are we given any indication of what he intends to salvage.

Let us put ourselves in the position of Uncle Tod. As far as the parents are concerned he can provide a convenient childminding service. Indeed this is his opening pitch, but as the years slip by with diminishing hope of rescue the importance of Tod's school will become increasingly apparent. The first generation of castaways will have brought with them an eclectic baggage of twentieth century culture, but the next generation will be natives, born on the island with no spontaneous memory of the world before the shipwreck. Moreover, the daily rhythm of subsistence which the three communities have become locked into are so discontinuous with the past that their cultures are likely to undergo a radical forgetfulness. After a few months of hunting, fishing and farming, it is not going to be easy for the castaways to muster much enthusiasm for reproducing fragments of knowledge from the lost world of modernity that are bound to seem increasingly irrelevant to survival on their desert island paradise. It will be left to Uncle Tod to work with the children and try to preserve what he can from the world before the shipwreck. What he leaves out of his curriculum is likely to

be forgotten. What he includes will help shape the future of the island. What is he going to teach?

The gravity of the situation will become apparent as soon as Uncle Tod realises he has to make a decision on whether it is worth trying to salvage reading and writing, because when we re-read Strange's desert island story it becomes apparent that this is not going to be easy and that the presence of writing cannot be taken for granted. We may assume that many of the characters in the story can read and write. The students for example, or Mac the ship's purser, have previous occupations which normally require the use of letters and numbers. But it is also clear that writing is not a part of the structure of everyday life on this island and could easily peter out within a generation. As the characters go about their business, they speak and listen but they do not utilise their capacity to read and write. Furthermore, no writing equipment appears to have survived the wreck, so time and effort will have to be invested in making writing materials out of resources to hand. Consequently, Strange's desert island story Strange teeters on the verge of writing writing out of existence. And yet without writing the subtle distinctions between Realism, Socialism and Liberalism that she has weaved into the story will surely perish, because these differences were generated with texts. They are all children of the book. The decision on whether to preserve writing or not will have a bearing on how or whether the three communities mediate their differences over the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice.

4.2. Hesiod's Scrolls: 'keep your pronouncements straight, you bribe swallowers, and forget your crooked judgements altogether.'

We have seen how the administrative script known as Linear B disappeared from the Aegean during the political and economic collapse in Mycenaean civilization that initiated the period known as the 'Dark Age', from about 1175 BC. We have also seen how, during this Dark Age, an oral tradition evolved whereby minstrels performed and taught narrative songs that enabled the *basileis* of the Aegean to reflect about their world. We have also intimated that subtle differences between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* suggest a shift in the balance of power within the bicameral mind of the Hellenic late Dark Age. In the *Iliad* Mount Olympus comes across as the primary legislative chamber for human agency. In the *Odyssey* the mortal chamber of the human ego, represented by Odysseus through his odyssey of self-discovery, appears to be appropriating more powers of volition, will and agency.

From about 800 BC there are signs of a new script being taken up and used in the Aegean[1]. This script was the alphabet, which appears to have been disseminated through an intensification of trade contacts with the maritime states of the southern Levant[2]. This time though, writing was not reproduced as the exclusive *tekhne* of a cadre of scribes within the palace complex. It was seeded on the ground of the *oikos* and the *polis*. Borrowing from the already existing practice of education in music, clusters of *oikoi* would pay for their children to be collectively educated in grammar. During the eighth century people began to use this alphabet to distill the oral tradition and record the songs of Homer. Some scholars have suggested that the song of Homer was first recorded to be a teaching aid. The scholarly debate over the question of the historical status of Homer as an author, or as the mythical personification of a collective tradition, is irrelevant here. Instead of having to listen to or perform the song, the *basileus* had the alternative of reading the text and investigating its words for the *sophia* contained therein. This literary mutation of *sophia* also meant that the text could eventually fall into the hands of people other than the *basileus*. Furthermore, texts attract commentaries. Now that the mnemonic formulas could be permanently inscribed upon scrolls, the brain was liberated from the perpetual effort of having to remember them and could afford to supplement them instead. In other words, with the dissemination of writing it was possible to make an original contribution to knowledge.

During the eighth century a new voice appears in our historical record. The voice of Hesiod. Homer bowed down before us as an anonymous professional bard sponsored by our local *basileis*. The closest we can ever get to Homer is through the characterization of Phemius employed in the *oikos* of Odysseus, or Demodocus in the utopian *polis* of Phaeacia. Hesiod is different. Hesiod appears before us as a provincial amateur who wants to tell us a little about himself. He has an 'I' that wants to narrate itself. His father was a merchant seaman, we are told, based from the city of Cyme on the Lydian coast of Anatolia, but who fell on hard times and had to flee from his debts to the village of Ascra beneath Mount Helicon on the mainland of Greece. Hesiod claims to have been brought up there alongside his brother Perses, eking out a living from a stretch of poor farmland.

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[1] This is the current consensus over the dissemination of the alphabet. Dissenting voices are: Joseph Naveh, *The Early History of Alphabet*; Martin Bernal, *Cadmean Letters: The Westward Diffusion of the Semitic Alphabet Before 1400 BC.*

Hesiod cannot resist telling us that he is the proud owner of a trophy won for poetry in the 'games at Chalcis'. Hesiod is also an autodidact. He claims his gift for singing was not taught by a professional bard, but came down to him through divine revelation from the daughters of Zeus whilst tending his flock along the slopes of Mount Helicon. Nor is Hesiod sponsored by anyone. When the Muses descend upon Hesiod, they legitimise a voice which springs from the margins of the *oikos* and the *polis*:

> 'Shepherds that camp in the wild, disgraces, merest bellies: we know to tell many lies that sound like truth, but we know to sing reality, when we will' (*Theogony*:25-8)[3]

Even the humble shepherd is entitled to sing songs. Moreover, he is free to sing songs that challenge values promoted in songs once composed and performed solely for the pleasure of the *basileus.* A fissure has opened up in the formulaic verse of the ancient Aegean. Deep down from the depth of his hungry shepherd's belly, Hesiod has rumbled that there are bards who sell lies dressed up as truth. It is as if the loose-tounged Thersites from the *Iliad* (2:209-277) has suddenly taken over the narrative to tell how things really lie.

Why did the 'daughters of Zeus' choose to 'breathe wondrous voice' into the belly of Hesiod? The proud claim of the autodidact is one clue. Being a failed merchant from the coast of Anatolia, Hesiod's father came from amongst the ranks of those who were the primary agents for the transmission of the alphabet to the Aegean. We may speculate how a defeated man, whose legacy was far poorer than may once have been hoped, could have tried to pass down to his sons one of the few gifts still left in his possession: the *tekhne* of writing - lading it with a heavy cargo of frustrated ambition:

> 'And he settled near Helicon in a miserable village, Ascra, bad in winter, foul in summer, good at no time.' (*Works And Days*:637-9)

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[2] Susan and Andrew Sherratt, 'The growth of the Mediterranean economy in the early first millenium BC', *World Archaeology*, volume 24 No.3, p.367.

[3] All quotations from Hesiod are from the translation by M.L.West, *Theogony & Works And Days* unless otherwise stated but, as with Homer, may be located through alternative translations via the line references given.

Hesiod is a singer who reads and writes[4]. He is a practitioner of what Derrida once called *difference*. He uses the hexameter verse of the Homeric epic and he is clearly familiar with some version of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but his songs tend to systematize and annotate rather than simply reproduce the narrative[5]. Another indicator of incipient literacy is his propensity to assimilate. Somehow the lowly farmer from Boetia has managed to finger some scrolls of wisdom literature from the Near East. We can begin to imagine the impact this new breed of singer must have had upon what would have been a largely illiterate audience as he won his trophy in the games at Chalcis.

People have wondered whether it was for a performance of the *Theogony* that Hesiod won his 'tripod with ring handles'. After opening this song with the claim of divine revelation upon Mount Helicon, Hesiod proceeds to meditate upon the origin and purpose of the Muses and their bards. Havelock argues that this was a novel development[6]. Previously the minstrels would simply invoke the Muses to sing about the words and deeds of gods and heroes, but Hesiod argues he has been chosen to sing about the Muses 'themselves' (34-5). To reflect upon the function of the minstrel in society, Hesiod writes out a divine genealogy. The Muses comprise nine daughters who are the fruit of an affair between Mnemosyne, goddess of memory and Zeus, king of the gods:

> 'Lovely is the sound they produce from their mouths as they sing and celebrate the *nomoi* and *ethea* of all the immortals, making delightful utterance.' (64-67)

West translates *nomoi* and *ethea* as 'ordinances' and 'good-ways', whilst Havelock translates them as 'custom-laws' and 'folk-ways'[7]. Another alternative for Hesiod's use of the word *nomoi* would be 'norms': the proceedures of behaviour ordained by Zeus and memorized for recall in the songs of the Muses. Meanwhile the word *ethea* seems to have originally signified the 'lairs' or 'haunts' of animals. Hesiod uses this metaphor of

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[4] This interpretation comes from Eric Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, chapters 11 & 12. See also *Preface To Plato*, chapters 6 & 7, and 'The Linguistic Task Of The Presocratics', in *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosphy*, edited by Kevin Robb.

[5] The *Theogony* and the *Works And Days* were probably written before the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as we now know them, but Hesiod would have been familiar with ancestor versions of these songs on the theme of the siege of Troy and its aftermath. See M.L. West, 'Introduction', in Hesiod, *op cit*, p.viii-ix. Also Havelock, 'The Linguistic Task Of The Presocratics', *op cit*, p.8-9.

[6] *Preface To Plato*, chapter 6.

[7] *Ibid*, p.62-3.

settlement to refer to the habits within which the good life lives. The *nomoi* thus cover rules that apply across a given community, whilst *ethea* governs excellence in personal behaviour.

Hesiod's song goes on to list the names of the nine daughters of Zeus. The names are descriptive, promoting the various attractions the minstrel has on offer. Clio offers fame, Euterpe entertainment, Thaleia cheers us up and so on, but chief amongst the Muses is Calliope, or 'fair utterance'. It is Calliope who accompanies the august *basileus:*

> 'Upon his tongue they shed sweet dew, and out of his mouth the words flow honeyed; and the peoples all look to him as he decides what is to prevail with his straight judgements. His word is sure, and expertly he makes a quick end of even a great dispute' (83-88)

Through the medium of the minstrel Calliope teaches her *basileis* the gift of reflection and eloquence. These powers of judgement lend an air of authority in communal decision making and enables the *basileus* to negotiate fair settlements in matters of serious conflict:

> 'Such is the Muses' holy gift to men. For while it is from the Muses and the far shooting Apollo that men are singers and citharists on earth, and from Zeus that they are kings, every man is fortunate whom the Muses love; the voice flows sweet from his lips.' (94-7)

The cithara was a large lyre. The *basileis* are from Zeus because they control the wealth and have a monopoly in the means of violence, but they also need to muster power through the art of music. The minstrel is important, according to Hesiod, because the *basileis* love to listen to the lyre. Judgement and persuasive speaking is a kind of music that comes naturally to people who have been inspired by the Muses. *Arete* or excellence comes not just through wealth and force but also by virtue of the honeyed voice.

Hesiod then launches into his grand narrative of the origins of the gods. Armed with his genealogical paradigm, Hesiod attempts to build a 'theory of everything'. The family tree comprises about three hundred names and takes us through three generations. This grand narrative of the matings, births and struggles of gods accounts for the ingredients that make up the physical universe: darkness; light; earth; sky; sea; mountains; storms; rivers and stars. It also manages to breed the various ingredients

which comprise the human condition, such as: desire; labour; pain; joy; age; lies; peace; conflict; famine and pestilence.

Primordial conflict results from a generational struggle for sovereignty over the skies. The creative power of Uranus is castrated by his son Cronos, who is in turn overthrown after losing a war against his own son named Zeus. This succession myth has antecedants in the wisdom literature of the Near East and may be an archaic relic from the 'father-son-brother' paradigm of intertheocratic relations[8]. When the war ends in victory for Zeus he considers whether to replace humanity with something better, but Prometheus intervenes by tricking Zeus into accepting waste scraps as offerings after the slaughter of an ox. The sacred offering thence ritually appeases the gods and consecrates the need to use cunning against the spirits of nature in order to survive amidst a potentially hostile cosmic order. For this audacity Zeus decides to deprive humanity of fire, but Prometheus steals it back for them. Fire, the primordial *tekhne* of human civilisation, thus becomes stolen knowledge, for which Prometheus is bound and has his liver eaten daily by an eagle whilst humanity is punished through the creation of Pandora. Meanwhile Zeus manages to arrest the divine cycle of conflict between fathers and sons by swallowing his pregnant wife Metis, goddess of good counsel, reflection and cunning, thus consuming her powers of wisdom for himself and preventing the birth of a usurping heir. Consequently Athena is born from the head of Zeus. Next Zeus marries Themis, the goddess of propriety and order, who bears him Law, Justice, and Peace...[9]

In the *Theogony* then, Hesiod used the genealogy as a syncretic device to try and systematize his readings from a collection of scrolls that recorded a diversity of local oral traditions, and then reconciled these readings with those from some of the literary traditions emanating from the Near East.

It is tempting to speculate that the success of the *Theogony* gave Hesiod licence to take risks when it came to composing the *Works And Days.* Having won his prize for poetry at the funeral games at Chalcis by singing about the immortals, Hesiod now chooses to sing about the temporal world of mortals, and to enframe conflict within the temporal world of mortals Hesiod makes a shift in emphasis from 'father-against-son'

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[8] Jasper Griffin, 'Greek Myth and Hesiod', in *The Oxford History Of The Classical World*, edited by John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray, p.90.

relationships to one of 'brother-against-brother'. The opening invocation to the Muses gives his audience a warning of what is to come (1-10). The Muses are asked to sing about the will of Zeus toward mortals, being the deity who has supreme power to make people rise and fall and who 'makes the crooked straight' and 'withers' the arrogant. Zeus is asked to help Hesiod muster his indignation whilst he tells his brother Perses a few 'words of truth'. West has argued that Hesiod was assimilating an established tradition of normative literature from the Near East, whereby perceived wisdom is articulated by a victim of brotherly injustice who publicly admonishes the alleged perpetrator[10].

In the *Works And Days* Hesiod was also prepared to amend the genealogy set out in his *Theogony*. In the *Theogony* Hesiod had characterised *Eris*, or conflict, as an accursed child of the Night who in turn gives birth to all manner of social ills (225-32). In the *Works And Days* Hesiod tells Perses that he now percieves there to be two goddesses of conflict, one bad and the other good (11-26). The younger sibling bears 'ugly fighting' and bloodshed, but the elder nurtures a healthy spirit of competitiveness which motivates men to work hard and strive to manage their *oikoi* well, thus producing more wealth. This doubling of *Eris* would have been a high risk experiment under the mnemonic constraints of the orally reproduced epic, where energy had to be invested in saying over and over again what had been learned arduously over the ages. By providing an artificial memory, writing freed Hesiod from the obligation to simply reproduce the standard *Eris*, and enabled him to make an analytical observation about the different forms in which conflict can manifest itself.

Having established a creative *eris* to supplement the destructive *Eris*, Perses is urged to channel his feelings of sibling rivalry toward Hesiod into the former form of conflict, and away from the latter. Men who have not got the harvest in yet cannot afford to indulge in the destructive form of conflict, Hesiod argues, and appeals to his brother to 'let us settle our dispute with straight judgements, the best that Zeus sends' (36-7). We then learn that the dispute between the two brothers is over the division of their father's estate:

> 'For we divided our estate before, and you kept grabbing and taking much more, paying great tribute to the lords, those bribe-swallowers, who see fit to make this their judgement.' (36-40)

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[9] Or *Eunomia, Dike* and *Eirene.*

There were local *basileis* around Mount Helicon who were, it seems, capable of 'crooked judgements' as well as 'straight judgements'. This experience appears to have had a profound effect upon Hesiod. He feels a need to return to the question of social evil. The first explanation tells how men formerly lived 'remote from ills, without harsh toil and the grevious sicknesses that are deadly to men' (92-4). This state of bliss is disturbed when Zeus realises he has been duped by the fraud perpetrated by Prometheus already mentioned in the *Theogony*. Zeus takes revenge by devising 'grim cares for mankind' in the form of Pandora and her jar of miseries.

A striking thing about Hesiod's inscription of the Prometheus myth is his ingratitude toward Prometheus and his faith in Zeus. First Prometheus has found a way of filling bellies and appeasing the spirits by offering waste scraps. Secondly, Prometheus saved humanity by stealing fire. Above all, Prometheus pioneered a survival tactic for humanity by promoting the possibility of cunning disobedience against the sovereign authority of the spirit of nature[11]. Prometheus has thus inculcated in mortals the possibility of human agency, the purposive or reflective act that can take place independently of, and even in defiance of, divine agency. Meanwhile Zeus has seriously contemplated replacing humanity, then attempted to deprive humanity of fire and sustainence, then tricked it into a brutal life of labour, pain and suffering. But still Hesiod remains convinced that Prometheus is a trickster and a thief who has got his comeuppance and clings adamant to the faith that Zeus is a benevolent deity who dispenses justice.

Hesiod's second explanation for social evil is the famous 'Myth of Ages', where he charts the fall of man through a series of metallic phases (105-201). The first phase was a golden age when Kronos enjoyed sovereignty over heaven and when men 'lived like gods, with carefree heart, remote from toil and misery'. It is a lost paradise, a time of abundance in wealth, peace and freedom. The succeeding silver age marks the first phase of moral decline, when men lived in suffering for only a short time because they 'could not restrain themselves from crimes against each other'. In the third phase, the bronze-age, these crimes intensify into a state of perpetual war. Some classical scholars agree that what Hesiod did here was pick up the motifs of successive metallic world

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[10] M.L.West, *op cit*, p.xvi.

[11] Max Weber's thesis was that the shift from appeasing the spirit of nature through sacrifice toward mastery through calculated disobedience against nature was a founding moment in the

ages, the fall from virtue and the loss of paradise from scrolls of wisdom literature from the Near East, but then had to reconcile this foreign innovation with his native epic tradition. To do this he inserted a rather incongruous fourth 'age of heroes' into the scheme, the demigods celebrated in the minstrel's ballads 'who are our ancestors on the boundless earth'. Most of these demigods were destroyed in war, but a few of them are 'granted a life and home apart from men, and settled at the ends of the earth' in the 'Isles of the Blessed'. These islands preserve exotic fragments from the lost paradise of the golden age, and its inhabitants live with a 'carefree heart' where the 'grain giving soil bears its honey-sweet fruits thrice a year'. Meanwhile, the heroic age is followed by an iron age, the fifth age in which Hesiod ruefully lives, and which is characterized as an age of ceaseless toil and trouble. What is more, Hesiod fears things can only get worse. In time all children will cease to respect their elders, society will come to honour the criminal and dishonour the virtuous, 'law and decency will be in fists' and 'men in their misery will everywhere be dogged by the evil commotions of that Envy who exults in misfortune with a face full of hate'.

Having charted the fall of humanity into the depths of evil as far as his imagination can carry him, Hesiod changes tack and the song returns to another dangerous subject. The singer turns to address the *basileis* directly ('now I will tell a fable to the lords'), and lays down some lines of stunning audacity. A hawk catches a nightingale and carries it high into the clouds. The nightingale shrieks in the talons of fate whilst the hawk explains about the way of the world:

> 'Goodness, why are you screaming? You are in the power of one much superior, and you will go whichever way I take you, singer though you are. I will make you for my dinner if I like, or let you go. He is a fool who seeks to compete against the stronger: he both loses the struggle and suffers injury on top of the insult.' (207-12)

We begin to fear for Hesiod. Was this the sort of thing likely to go down well with all that meat and wine at the symposium? Would it win Hesiod any more prizes at the games? Or perhaps a good friend should have quietly taken Hesiod to one side and advised him to spend less time amongst his scrolls? According to West, the use of

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development of occidental rationality. See 'Science as a Vocation' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Hans H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills.

animal fable is another tell-tale indicator of exposure to the wisdom literature of the Near East[12].

As if startled by the foolishness of its own courage, the song switches back into an address toward the errant sibling. Perses should listen to the voice of *dike* and forget the call of *hybris* because a small man cannot expect to get away with it. Hesiod declares that even the big men with wealth and force at their disposal can be brought down by their hubris. Havelock argues that this argument has conjoined the hubris of Agamemnon and the Suitors and its consequences[13]. In other words, Hesiod's experience of injustice has prompted him to scan his scrolls of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* for all references to the word *dike*, and he has come up with a series of cuttings lifted from the epic narrative and pasted them into what might be called 'a concentrate of *dike*'[14]. The next allusion posits justice and hubris competing in a race, where justice wins in the end when oath catches up with crooked judgements (216-19). Havelock argues this refers to the chariot race in the funeral games for Patroklos, where Antilochus is forced to admit under pressure of oath that he cheated Menelaos (*Iliad* 23:263-611)[15]. Then, justice suddenly becomes a woman being dragged away 'wherever the bribe swallowers choose to take her as they give judgement with crooked verdicts' (219-24). Havelock suggests this recollects scenes from the debates over Chryseis, Briseis, and Hektor's fears for Andromache[16].

By mistreating justice the crooked ultimately bring disaster upon themselves, Hesiod argues, but those who treat justice properly find that their community will flourish. War, pestilence and famine all avoid those communities where justice prevails (225-38). There the lands are always laden with grain, fruit and honey, and its people will enjoy 'a continual sufficiency of good things'. Havelock argues that Hesiod is thinking here about the Phaeacian islanders from the *Odyssey*[17]. This idyll is then contrasted with the land ruled by hubris:

> 'But for those who occupy themselves with violence and wickedness and brutal deeds, Kronos' son, wide seeing Zeus, marks out retribution. Often a whole community together suffers in consequence of a bad man who does wrong and contrives evil. From heaven Kronos' son brings

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[12] *Ibid.*
[13] Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p.196.
[14] *Ibid*, p.194-5.
[15] *Ibid*, p.196-7.
[16] *Ibid.* p.197-201.
[17] *Ibid*, p.201-3.

> disaster upon them, famine and with it plague, and the people waste away. The womenfolk do not give birth, and households decline, by Olympian Zeus' design. At other times again he either destroys its broad army or city wall, or punishes their ships at sea.' (238-47)

Wealth and security are both dependent upon the observance of justice, according to Hesiod. The primary model for 'those who occupy themselves' with hubris was the Suitors, Havelock suggests, whilst the whole community that suffers as a consequence of the actions of a single individual recalls the Achaian plague after Agamemnon's treatment of Chryses, or indeed the Trojan war caused by the transgression of Paris. According to the *Iliad*, the Trojans blamed Paris for bringing war to the walls of his own city by abusing the hospitality of Menelaos in the abduction of Helen.

Having composed his concentrate of *dike,* distilled from the oral epics that the *basileis* themselves venerated as their creed, Hesiod now musters courage to address the lords directly for a second time: 'You too, my lords, attend to this justice doing of yours' (248). Hesiod thinks he has proved it is in the interest of the *basileus* to act justly, because the Muses have told us so in the immortal songs of heroes where chickens always come home to roost:

> 'Beware of this, lords, and keep your pronouncements straight, you bribe-swallowers, and forget your crooked judgements altogether. For a man fashions ill for himself when he fashions ill for another, and the ill design is most ill for the designer.' (262-6)

The possibility that injustice may rebound upon the unjust is not, however, just an ironic feature of the human condition. It requires the agency of Zeus and his community acting from their divine headquarters on Mount Olympus. Some local bosses may be corrupt, but Hesiod still reckons Zeus the *basileus* of the cosmos masters his universe in a just and responsible manner. There are about thirty thousand divinities on duty, Hesiod sings, patrolling the roads and sea lanes looking out for evidence of crooked judgements and corruption. These watchers report back to Justice, now a goddess in her own right, who sits by the side of her father Zeus and informs him of any crookedness at large in the world of mortals. In this way the all seeing Zeus 'does not fail to percieve what kind of justice it is that the community has within it' (268-70).

There follows a discordant note of existential doubt that threatens to undermine the tenor of the whole song. Zeus may well receive intelligence about mortal acts of justice and injustice, but what does he do about it? As things are, Hesiod declares, he

could not aspire to be a just man in his dealings with other men, or try to bring up his son to be a just man, in a world where injustice pays better dividends than justice. This flicker of disillusionment has resonance with the replies made by Achilles to the Achaian embassy in Book Nine of the *Iliad*, plus the indignation of Mentor the elder statesman at the *agora* of the *Odyssey* (2:229-34), and which is then repeated almost word for word by Athena reproachfully to the bosses of the universe in Book Five:

> 'Father Zeus, and you other blessed gods who live for ever, kindness, generosity and justice should no longer be the aims of any man who wields a royal sceptre - in fact he might just as well devote his days to tyranny and lawless deeds. Look at Odysseus...' (5:7-11)

But unlike Odysseus and his heroes, whose gods often engage in direct conversation with mortals, Hesiod's gods are silent. Unlike Odysseus, Hesiod bears witness that he has no Athena to guide him. He is left alone with his scrolls.

Instead, Hesiod endures his fate by counting the days[18]. The justice of Zeus expresses itself now through time. Homer lived in a timeless present. Hesiod lives within a world which is gaining a sense of history. Having lost the voices of the gods, Hesiod nurses his spirits with the calculated forethought that Zeus shall see to it that injustice shall not triumph over justice forever: 'I do not expect Zeus is bringing this to pass yet' (273). In time, justice shall overcome. Odysseus has to wait for twenty years before he can return from his desert island, but the homecoming is all the sweeter. As Hesiod scans his scrolls of Homer, he thinks he can see how injustice may bring short term gain, but that justice eventually wins out over the long term. He even suggests that divine retribution can skip generations, and that people can suffer the consequences of actions taken by their ancestors.

Hesiod's scrolls were probably part of the estate left by his dead father. He had been cheated out of much of the land, but by poring over the beloved scrolls that reminded so much of the man who had collected them, Hesiod could resurrect that voice which used to chastise his prodigal brother:

> 'But you, Perses, must take in what I say and hearken to *dike*, forgetting *hybris* altogether. For this was the *nomos* for men that Kronos' son laid down: wheras fish and beasts and flying birds would eat one another, because *dike* is not among them, to men he gave *dike*, which is much the

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[18] Jaynes, *op cit*, p.280-81. Also Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p.31-4.

> best in practice. For if a man is willing to say what he knows to be just, to him wide-seeing Zeus gives prosperity; but whoever deliberately lies in his sworn testimony, therin hurting justice, he is blighted past healing; his family remains more obscure thereafter, while the true-sworn man's line gains in worth.' (274-86)

The hawks can eat the nightingales. That is nature, or *physis*. But Zeus has saddled humanity with the *nomos* of justice, and Hesiod thinks he can prove this by supplementing the very songs of the heroes which his local *basileis* like to hold up as their paragons of virtue (*arete*). With his Phoenician letters, Hesiod has cut and spliced the very meaning of virtue. In the Homeric epic virtue could mean excellence in anything from the military prowess of Achilles to the deceitfulness and cunning of Odysseus. But Hesiod has begun to erase those traces of virtue which seemed to celebrate the capacity for deception. For Hesiod, virtue is excellence in the pursuit of justice.

Hesiod is aware that excellence in the pursuit of justice is a difficult thing to acheive, but clearly thinks he has come close enough to be able to judge the failings of his target. 'Foolish Perses' is told that the road to worthlessness is easy, 'the road is smooth and she lives very near', whereas the road to virtue is one of sweat and tears that eventually brings reward:

> 'it is a long and steep path to her, and rough at first. But when one reaches the top, then it is easy, for all the difficulty.' (288-92).

The remainder of the song attempts to plot this path to virtue which, for Hesiod, consists of honest hard work to sustain the virtually self-sufficient *oikos* of the farmer. His strategy for overcoming 'crooked justice' is to survive it. The bribe swallowers will come and go, rising with hubris and falling by hubris. Meanwhile the peasant keeps his head down and, by the luck of Zeus, survives, working the land according to the eternal rythym of the seasons just as his forefathers did. Security is the deliverance that comes with having little or nothing to steal. Wealth is the harvest laid up for the winter, the flock of sheep, the ox, the spare plough kept by for emergencies, the home that keeps out the cold and the damp. Happiness is listening to the cicada in the late summer, together with some food and wine in the shade facing a westerly breeze at the height of the day.

4.3. *Logos* And *Kosmos*

We have tried to show how Hesiod used letters to unify all the myths of the gods into one great genealogical story, and how he used writing to compile a digest of Homeric *sophia* over the question of crooked justice versus straight justice. In the work of Hesiod we have also seen how the winged voices of Olympus fall mute before the whispers of a consciousness that was assuming the role of an alternative decision maker within the mortal conduct of an everyday life. We have also been introduced to the divine personification of this shift within the mind, namely Prometheus, but noted that Hesiod has profound doubts about this rebellion against the will of Zeus. In fact he believes that this change lies at the root of social evil. We have also intimated that this secularisation of reflection, decision-making and agency was becoming possible because the Archaic Aegean had witnessed the formation of a novel interface between the written word and the oral.

One feature of this new interface was that the reproduction of writing tended to be controlled by the master of his *oikos* rather than any centralised cadre of scribes. Another feature of the new interface was that the dissemination of writing did not always respect the status quo. That is to say, less powerful households often acquired literacy before more powerful households. With Hesiod, for example, we have a curious situation where a literate smallholder uses writing to pass judgement upon a local nobility who were probably illiterate. Initially, the skill of literacy may have even signified inferiority. Phoenician letters carried the odour of trade, and many of the old oligarchical families are known to have had a deeply ambivalent attitude towards trade. A third feature of the new interface was that literacy in the Aegean coalesced around a strong tradition of oral debate, as pioneered in the oligarchical *agora*. These three factors added together enabled the peoples of the Aegean to exploit the potential of writing in ways that had previously remained latent, or which had been exploited only fitfully.

The next stage in the rebellion of Prometheus and the emancipation of *nous* takes place in Miletus with the reflections of Thales. Miletus was a thriving commercial city along the coast of Anatolia, a crucial Aegean link between east and west. According to classical lore, Thales personnified this link himself, being a citizen of Miletus from a family with Phoenician ancestors[19]. In many respects the anecdotes surrounding Thales

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[19] Kirk, Raven & Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p.76-77.

are similar to those of other legendary mephistos from Imhotep to Daedalus, but there was also a crucial difference. He is supposed to have assisted the Lydian king Croesus in his military manouvres against the Persians by diverting the river Halys in order to assist the movements of his army[20]. He is also supposed to have predicted a solar eclipse in 585 BC, which interrupted a battle between the Lydians and Persians, and pointed out to fellow Milesians the navigational utility of the Little Bear in a 'nautical star-guide' written in verse. Then there is the story of how he brought geometry back from Egypt, and used it to teach the Milesians to calculate the distance of ships out at sea by taking observations from two points on land. Unlike previous mephistos, however, Thales was also remembered for advancing a cosmology, or a *logos* about the *kosmos*.

By *logos* we now mean a statement that presents a thesis for debate or contemplation. The word was originally used to denote the speeches made by gods and heroes in the Homeric epic. But once the dissemination of writing had begun to relieve formulaic verse of its mnemonic function, the habit of debate in the *agora*, which had been promoted by the the epic for communitarian purposes, began to feed back into the reproduction of *sophia* itself. Debate as entertainment began to supplement the songs of the minstrel in the symposium, and then became popular around the fringes of the public games, festivals and markets. Often the people participating in the debate would be the bards themselves. This was a cultural fusion that borrowed elements from both the *agora* and the games. An *agon*, or contest, would be set up between competitors who were expected to argue over an entertaining topic for public speaking. To begin with the subjects for debate would have been inspired by the songs that they supplemented, a digression on the character of Helen for example, or arguments over the propriety of the guile of Odysseus. In this way, *logos* should be seen as a supplement of *mythos* rather than something that was conceived in opposition to it. Nevertheless, the appetite for novelty prompted some speakers to make a name for themselves by advancing arguments upon subjects that had previously been marginal as far as the epic repertoire was concerned. One dialectic that became popular in Miletus lingered over the nature (*physis*) of the universe.

By *kosmos* we mean our physical environment considered as an ordered whole. The word had customarily been used to refer to an order of military formation adopted

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[20] Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1:75

in hoplite warfare[21]. Hesiod had tried to unify contemporary descriptions of the universe as a world of divine agency through a grand genealogy of the gods. Now certain members of Miletus began to make statements about the world in terms of ordered relationships between material objects. Thales asserted that water was the primary substance out of which all things were made, and upon which the earth floats[22]. There are a number of things we can say about this assertion.

Firstly, it abstracts from a number of mythological themes that Thales is likely to have been aware of. For the ancient Egyptians the earth had long been a dish floating upon primordial waters. In Mesopotamia the earth was a raft built upon primeval seas[23]. In Homer, there are scattered asides which suggest that many Hellenes thought of the earth as a disc surrounded by waters which were the 'begetter of all things'[24]. We may assume that Thales followed Hesiod in the sense that he was working with a set of already existing traditions, but Thales supplemented these traditions in a way which supplanted them. His redescription of the physical environment strips away the names of the gods, together with their attendant verbs of divine agency, and replaces them with words that imply impersonal relations between disembodied nouns. His abstraction of the natural world thus slips the bonds of narrative performance. The gods no longer have to mate with each other and give birth to a genealogical universe. As far as the *physis* is concerned, the gods have ceased to reproduce.

Secondly, with Thales the human subject claims the right to make a comprehensive statement that reduces the plurality of the environment into a single object, an integral whole[25]. As far as we know, the Milesians had not yet stretched the original meaning of the word *kosmos* to refer to this whole, but there is fragmentary evidence to suggest that they were beginning to use papyrus to compose their

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[21] Havelock, 'The Linguistic Task Of The Presocratics', in Kevin Robb (ed), *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philsosophy*, p.24.

[22] Kirk, Raven & Schofield, *op cit*, p.89. It may be objected that this fragment is an anachronism which classical philosophers projected back onto the figure of Thales. See for example: Eric Havelock, 'The Linguistic Task of the Presocratics', part 2, in Kevin Robb (ed), *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*. If the statements attributed to Thales are anachronisms, then the nature of their projection is interesting in itself, and the same arguments about the shift from *mythos* to *logos* may be applied to other thinkers who conventionally fall under the heading of 'the Presocratics', whose extant fragments are relatively more reliable.

[23] Henri Frankfort, H.A. Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen, Irwin, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, p.45. Kirk, Raven & Schofield, *op cit*, p.92.

[24] Kirk, Raven & Schofield, *op cit*, p.9-17.

[25] Havelock, 'The Linguistic Task Of The Presocratics', *op cit*, p.21 & 23.

thoughts[26]. Writing helped to turn their discourse about the world into an artefact, an object separate from the consciousness of the subject. As this happened, an opportunity arose to inscribe this object as a world order instead of a series of events issuing from the mouth of the poet[27]. In time, a word would have to be displaced to fill the semantic vacuum which had been created. Partly because of the immense effort that went into training the Aegean citizenry to maintain their military formation in the midst of battle, and the importance of this order for the security of the *polis* as a whole, the word *kosmos* achieved a resonance which made it the primary candidate for displacement. The importance of this linguistic innovation for natural philosophy is obvious, but in political terms it was also an essential precondition for the development of the notion of the unity of mankind.

A third thing we can say about the statement made by Thales is that it was built with terms and introduced into a habitat that stimulated contradiction, revision and amendment. Myths of divine agency required recognition by the faithful or rejection by the unfaithful. Arguments that cultivated a vocabulary of impersonal relations and disembodied nouns invited critical appraisal[28]. To compose his statement Thales probably used papyrus, but to publish it he would have taken his voice to the *agon* and participated in the customary rough and tumble of a symposium or festival. To make an impact he would have needed a worthy opponent, so contradictory views would have been eagerly sought out in order to make a game of it.

The next legendary figure in the formation of *logos* is Anaximander, a younger contemporary of Thales from the same city of Miletus. Later biographies portrayed Anaximander as a pupil of Thales, but it is more likely they were fellow contestants who competed with each other in a fairly genial manner. Like Thales, Anaximander was held to have acquired a reputation as a mephisto with novelties that impressed his fellow citizens. He is supposed to have imported the sundial to the Aegean from Mesopotamia and used it to calculate times of the day and the seasons. He was also held to have been the first man in the Aegean to have drawn a map of the known world on a tablet, marking an outline of its lands and seas. Anaximander entered the debate about the *kosmos* with the contradictory *logos* that the primary substance out of which all things were made was not water but *aperion*, an unspecified matter that surrounds everything

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[26] Charles Khan, 'Philosophy And The Written Word', in Kevin Robb (ed), *op cit*, 111-114.
[27] Havelock, *op cit*, p.15.

without boundary or limit, and that the earth was a column that did not float but was held in place by an equilibrium between the heavens[29]. Next in the Milesian roll-call was Anaximenes, who argued that the primary substance was air, from which everything emerged through a process of condensation. Meanwhile, the earth was flat and was supported by air[30].

Taking the three Milesians together, we can say that a new relationship had become possible between the knower and the known. *Sophia* was no longer just the songs sent by the Muse when the bard summoned her for the remembrance of things past. It was also something that could be actively sought out through investigation, research and contemplation. These activities were combined in the term *historia*. For a while, *sophia* by revelation happily coexisted with *sophia* by searching, but as the appetite for the fruits of *historia* spread along the Aegean coastlines during the course of the sixth century there were some who began to adopt a more assertive tone toward the old way of knowing. Admittedly, they were only a small band of marginal figures. The culture was still overwhelmingly dominated by the Homeric tradition, but there was an impudence about the way *historia* had begun to challenge *mythos* in the symposium that must have been disturbing to many contemporaries. Early signs of this impudence can be detected in fragments held to be by Xenophanes from Colophon:

> 'Let us commend that man among men who after drinking puts forth goodly matters to view, according to his recollection and his zeal for excellence with no mention of battles of Titans or Giants or Centaurs, those fictions of men of yore, nor vehement factional strife; these matters contain nothing good.'[31]

Xenophanes himself was a bard who could compose in epic, elegiac and iambic metre, yet in this fragment he has already begun to proscribe the archetypal subjects of Homer and Hesiod. And in another fragment Xenophanes actually mocks the immortals celebrated by Homer and Hesiod for judging mortals according to an ethical code they are unable to live up to themselves:

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[28] Henri Frankfort et al, *op cit*, p.376.
[29] Kirk, et al, *op cit*, p.105-121 & 133 & 137.
[30] *Ibid*, p.144-154.
[31] Quoted in Havelock, 'The Linguistic Task Of The Presocratics', *op cit*, p.15.

> 'Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other.'[32]

Xenophanes judges the judges. But this does not prompt him to lose faith in the gods. It prompts him to lose faith in the ability of humanity to render them. He thinks that the hypocrisy attributed to the immortals is a human projection that tells us more about Homer and Hesiod and their followers than it does about the gods:

> 'But mortals consider that the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and bodies like their own.'[33]

Xenophanes' sensitivity to the human propensity for religious anthropomorphism owed something to the expansion of the known world[34]. By his time the growth in seaborne trade had given the cities of the Ionian coast a keener awareness of the diversity of human life:

> 'The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair.'[35]

Xenophanes knew the value of carrying a little humour in his knapsack for defusing the explosive heat that his arguments were liable to generate. He drives his point home with satirical analogy:

> 'But if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men do, horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and they would make their bodies such as they had themselves.'[36]

The logic of communitarian worship is thus driven to the point of the absurd. If all peoples manufacture different images of the gods then we might as well admit that there are no valid grounds to believe that our own images are the correct ones. The claims which Homer and Hesiod make to have divine access to the *sophia* of gods and heroes are therefore bogus, just 'fictions of men of yore'. Xenophanes replaces them all with a cosmic god, or supreme being, who is 'in no way similar to mortals either in body or thought'. And being incommensurable, god is also unknowable:

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[32] Kirk et al, *op cit*, p.168.
[33] *Ibid*, p.169.
[34] Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind*, p.16-17.
[35] Kirk et al, *op cit*.
[36] *Ibid*.

'no man knows, or will ever know, the truth about the gods.'[37]

Nor does this cosmic god condescend to communicate knowledge to humans through the medium of the Muse:

'Yet the gods have not revealed all things to men from the beginning; but by seeking men find out better in time.'[38]

Man cannot rely upon divine revelation. He must search and inquire to find out things for himself. And even then the truth will probably always be elusive: 'seeming is wrought over all things'.

The ability of Xenophanes to identify the communitarian nature of the gods assembled on Mount Olympus may be partly explained, as we have noted, by an expansion of the known world. But another factor should also be considered. By the time of Xenophanes the art of spontaneous oral composition was in decline and being superseded by the age of the *rhapsode*, or the minstrel who possessed a prized text of Homer which he memorized for recitation[39]. Having the epic laid out upon the scroll opened up for the reader a new world of cognitive dissonance. In oral knowledge structures 'inconsistency, even contradiction, tends to get swallowed up in the flow of speech, the spate of words, the flood of argument'[40]. An oral culture can manage dissonances by glossing them over. All sorts of diverse statements can be thrown together into a single narrative by the speaker in blissful ignorance that they may be inconsistent, and what is more, his listeners are unlikely to notice this either. No such luck for the literati. The growth of text enables backward and forward scanning for cross-reference, which promotes a more rigorous desire for logical consonance and a corresponding intolerance toward contradiction. It is still possible, probably inevitable, for an author to contradict himself at various points along the line, but it is more likely that his readers will notice them where they occur. If a text begins to accumulate readers, sooner or later somebody is going to draw attention to the contradictions that exist within it. When that happens, when someone has become conscious of an *aporia*

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[37] *Ibid*, p.179.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Kevin Robb, 'The Linguistic Art of Heraclitus', in Kevin Robb (ed), *op cit*, p.158.
[40] Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, p.49-50.

within the text, it is not so easy to gloss over. If desirable enough it is still possible to maintain this contradiction, but at a cost, for the innocence of it will have gone.

We can imagine how Xenophanes scanned the Homeric text and noticed how the gods failed to act according to the normative code they were supposed to enforce. He then began to compose the verse that drew attention to the fact and which became notorious enough for fragments of it to survive the ravages of time. At any rate, his observation appears to have been widely tolerated. Xenophanes claims to have spent 'seven and sixty years tossing my thought up and down the coastlines of Hellas'. Probably he was just shocking enough to be the lucrative talk of any *polis* he cared to visit, but not so outrageous as to offend the aristocratic households in which he hoped to be honourably received: a professional who had found his niche. Heraclitus was rather different.

Heraclitus grew up in Ephesus, another Hellenic city lying along the Ionian coast about forty kilometres north of Miletus. It seems he had not been dealt a bad hand. It was said he was the eldest son of a noble family that could trace its ancestry back to the founder of Ephesus. But something happened to Heraclitus. He resigned the largely honorific title of 'kingship' and handed it over to his younger brother[41]. The fragments evince someone who has become a misfit. A remark about drunkeness suggests a man who feels ill at ease within the male conviviality of the symposium. And when it came to the fun of the games, there is the shrill tone of an outsider, a voice that feels either unable or unwilling to participate:

> 'Homer deserves to be expelled from the competitions and beaten with a staff - and Archilochus too!'[42]

The staff was a standard prop for the bards who played in the symposium and competed in the games. The fantasy of beating Homer resonates with the beating of Thersites by Odysseus in Book II of the *Iliad*. It seems Heraclitus wanted to expel the bards for the claim that they dealt in *sophia*:

> 'The teacher of most is Hesiod. It is him they know as knowing most, who did not recognize day and night: they are one.'[43]

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[41] *Ibid*, p.1-2.

[42] Charles H.Khan, *The Art And Thought Of Heraclitus: An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary*, p.37.

Heraclitus seizes upon the wisdom of Hesiod over one of the most basic experiences of mankind. Hesiod had seen the opposition between day and night as separate deities who visited the world alternately, whereas Heraclitus deduces that the presence of night is merely the absence of sunlight[44]. Like Xenophanes, Heraclitus is keen to draw attention to the fact that the recieved wisdom is fallible. But Xenophanes was changing the tradition from within the tradition, his existential position invited the employment of humour, whereas Heraclitus seems determined to be more confrontational:

> 'What wit or understanding do they have? They believe the bards of the people and take the mob as their teacher, not knowing that 'the many are worthless', good men are few.'[45]

The alienation of Heraclitus is expressed in terms consistent with an oligarchical contempt for the *demos*, but he was taking on the cultural tradition of a whole community here, for Homer and Hesiod were revered by noble and commoner alike. Doubtless, Heraclitus could afford to be rude because of his wealth and status. But his venom is directed as much against his own class as any other. His elitist sensibility has projected itself onto an intellectual plane.

Heraclitus claims to have access to a superior alternative to the wisdom of his day which he has already tried to communicate to people, but finds it impossible to make himself understood. He has searched for soulmates but has not found any. And so he makes a virtue out of his fate and becomes Heraclitus the obscure. For a priviliged man, brought up to look down on people, the temptation to nurse his cognitive alienation with intellectual snobbery must have come easily:

> 'Of the *logos* which is as I describe it men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it. For although all things happen according to this *logos* men are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain, when I distinguish each thing according to its constitution and declare how it is; but the rest of men fail to notice what they do after they wake up just as they forget what they do when asleep.'[46]

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[43] *Ibid*, p.37.
[44] Or: 'If there were no sun it would be night', *Ibid*, p51.
[45] *Ibid*, p.57.
[46] Kirk, et al, *op cit*, 187.

The cognitive alienation which Heraclitus testifies to was the alienation of a man who has begun to interiorize the written word in a community that was still only protoliterate. By protoliterate, we mean a society where the use of script is still mainly confined to business, administration, and possibly the codification of law. By interiorizing the written word we mean the activity of making the technology of writing a part of our humanity, part of our sensory apparatus, thus allowing it to transform the way we think[47]. Any charge of technological determinism would be missing the point here. The man picked up the technology and it became his friend. Heraclitus himself believed that character was destiny[48]. It was his fate to be the kind of man who happened to prefer the company of letters to the company of his fellow Ephesians.

Heraclitus composed his thoughts on papyrus, but unlike his contemporaries he was probably not built for the rough and tumble of the *agon*. The classical tradition holds that Heraclitus wrote his views down on a scroll which he dedicated to and placed in the temple of Artemis. Sensing himself marooned outside his time, he stuffed his messages into a jar in the hope that one day he would find his audience. The *viva voce* had failed Heraclitus, so he became the first author for whom the written word was the primary mode of communication[49]. This does not mean that he was able to write prose as we would understand it today. Working from the surviving fragments attributed to Heraclitus, scholars have suggested his 'book' was not a sustained argument but a series of aphorisms or self-contained proverbs[50]. Today we might call them soundbites, designed in such a way that when read aloud they could seed themselves in the memories of receptive listeners, using rythym, parallelism and alliteration. With many of these sayings he also discovered the charm of using riddles and ambiguity to make his curse of obscurity look deliberate, thus triggering a multiplicity of interpretations and a sense of profound meaningfulness. The strategy worked. Within a couple of generations 'his book acquired such fame that it produced partisans of his doctrine who were called Heracliteans'[51].

His strategy was also a success in the sense that of all the shadowy figures who preceeded Socrates, it is his thinking that has arguably best survived the ravages of time.

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[47] See Walter J.Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, p.83.
[48] 'Man's character is his fate', Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p.81.
[49] Khan, 'Philosophy And The Written Word', *op cit*, p.118.
[50] See Barnes, 'Aphorism And Argument', Khan 'Philosophy And The Written Word', and Robb, 'The Linguistic Art Of Heraclitus', in Robb (ed), *op cit.*

Despite the atomistic structure of aphoristic communication, and the delight Heraclitus took in oracular ellipsis, it is still feasible to reconstruct a coherent world view out of the extant fragments. Inspired by the inquiries of his Milesian predecessors, Heraclitus advanced his own arguments about the question of the physical environment and the human condition within it, but he did so in a way that indicates reflection about the nature of *sophia* itself:

> 'It is *sophos*, listening not to me but to the *logos*, to agree that all things are one.'[52]

Wisdom is no longer found by listening to the muse. It is obtained by listening to the *logos*, which is somehow independent of Heraclitus himself. Let us assume that Heraclitus was trying to summarize the wisdom of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. He hears or reads about their debate, and learns that they have advanced different arguments about the nature of the world, but he is more concerned to identify the issue upon which all three Milesians were agreed. Taking the debate as a whole, which he calls the *logos*, he observes that it revolves around a consensus. He is interested in the unity which lies behind the apparent plurality of opinions, and thinks he has found this in the common assumption of a physical environment which can be considered as a whole. The search for assimilation within difference is a theme that recurs with Heraclitus, but the point we are trying to highlight here is that he has identified wisdom as the axioms that emerge within the context of a debate, and *logos* as the totality of arguments which constitute the debate.

Having identified the common assumption which underlies the arguments of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, Heraclitus finds it necessary to give it a name, but to do so he has to commit an act of displacement. That is to say, he has to pick out a word from the Hellenic vocabulary and help it to slip the bonds of contemporary usage[53]. He chooses the word *kosmos*:

> 'The *kosmos*, the same for all, no god nor man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire everliving, kindled in measures and in measures going out.'[54]

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[51] Diogenes Laertius, quoted in Khan, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p.3.
[52] *Ibid*, p.130.
[53] Havelock, 'The Linguistic Task Of The Presocratics', in Robb (ed), *op cit*, p.24.

This is the first recorded entry of the word in its capacity as a referent for the universe as a whole. As we have already intimated, it was borrowed from its previous application to the orderly array of an army controlled by its 'orderer' (*kosmetor*). This is why Heraclitus has to stress that his *kosmos* has no maker. It is a work of nature, an order without an orderer[55]. In fact, it even transcends the divine. Not only is it immortal, like Zeus. It also has no genesis, unlike Zeus. There is no sovereign intelligence by which matter is organized. It is just fire in an eternal process of burning itself out. Human agency has extinguished divine agency, on papyrus at least!

Before we leave Heraclitus, we should note that he believed his vision of the *kosmos* was intimately connected with the human condition and its destiny. His love for paradox enabled him to cobble together a communitarian-cosmopolitanism that managed to anticipate the primary antimony of the classical age. Heraclitus envisaged his *kosmos* as a fiery flux of eternal conflict between opposing forces:

> 'One must realize that war is shared and conflict is justice, and that all things come to pass in accordance with conflict.'[56]

Heraclitus was lucky enough to live in an Ionian city that was on good terms with the Persian kings who were becoming increasingly active in the region during the latter half of the sixth century. He could afford to be sanguine about conflict as a universal principle. Ephesus was on the up:

> 'Homer was wrong when he said 'would that conflict might vanish from among gods and men!' (*Iliad* 18:107). For there would be no attunement without high and low notes nor any animals without male and female, both of which are opposites.'[57]

Conflict was positive for Heraclitus in the sense that he thought its removal would remove the foundation stone of life itself. There was a hidden harmony behind conflict that made it creative. But any notion that he was thinking about a healthy spirit of competitiveness that could sublimate violence in the manner of Hesiod will not wash. For Heraclitus, violence was simply what made the world go round:

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[54] *Ibid*, p.132.
[55] Khan, *The Art And Thought Of Heraclitus*, p.134.
[56] *Ibid*, p.67.
[57] *Ibid.*

> 'War is father of all and king of all; and some he has shown as gods, others men; some he has made slaves, others free.'[58]

Had not Zeus himself assumed divine sovereignty by victory over the Titans? On the mortal plane, war creates freedom and slavery, freedom being the fruit of victory and slavery the consequence of defeat. To sustain his notion of a humanity eternally divided against itself within the overall unity of the *kosmos*, Heraclitus turned to *canis familiaris*, the creature who guarded the margins of the *oikoi* and who scavenged around the walls of the *polis*:

> 'Dogs bark at those they do not recognise.'[59]

Remember the dogs who bay outside the hut of Eumaeus, balanced by Argus who pricks up his ears and wags his tail in the courtyard of Odysseus. Heraclitus uses the dog's bark as a signifier for the capacity of communities to engender solidarity through the intimacy of presence, and their corresponding ability to foster antipathy through the impertinence of absence. Down the millennia the dog's bark heralds the foreigner whom we do not know, the other who does not know us.

4.4. Solon's Law: 'Public evil comes home to every man and no security gates can hold it back; it leaps high over the courtyard wall and finds its man, no matter how well protected the house in which he tries to hide.'

We have seen how Hesiod used letters to unify all the myths of the gods into one great genealogical story, and how he used writing to compile a digest of Homeric *Sophia* over the question of justice. We have also seen how knowledge as revelation through song was being challenged by human inquiry through prose in the *logos* of the sophists of Miletus and Ephesus. And we have intimated that this secularisation of human consciousness and agency was possible because the Archaic Aegean witnessed the formation of a novel interface between the written word and the oral. The dissemination of writing had begun to release music and song from its obligation to serve the collective normative memory.

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[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Ibid*, p.57.

An early consequence was that some singers began to use writing to wander from the hexameter verse and record other meters such as elegiac, iambic and lyric. The traditional canon was still preserved, but was supplemented with other genres that could tailor songs for specific targets, promote particular messages, or lighten the mood of an audience with the comic or bawdy theme. In such songs the subjective consciousness inscribed by Hesiod could develop and explore itself further. Fragments have survived which suggest that some of these new songs also challenged established values, or heralded new ones.

Archilochus, for example, son of a master and slave from the island of Paros, heralds the arrival of the anti-hero. Neither one thing nor the other, Archilochus commemorates his life with bastard songs. He courts Neobule, daughter of Lycambes, but the father goes back on his word and marries her off to another man of better status, so Archilochus gets his own back by visiting the drinking dens to sing a satire about the whole affair. Aware of his social impediment, he makes a virtue out of his fate by declaring indifference to the values of wealth and power:

> 'All the gold of Gyges means nothing to me; I've not yet been seized by envy, I do not admire what the gods do, and I do not want to be a great tyrant. These things are beyond my sight.'[60]

Gyges was a famous Anatolian king of Lydia, the contemporary Agean epitome of wealth and might. As the child of a power relationship between his master father and his slave mother, Archilochus contains the primary contradiction of Hellenic society at the very core of his being. Archilochus the master-father does take the traditional route of advancement for the bastard, participating in an attempt to set up a Parian colony on Thasos, but Archilochus the slave-mother still lurks within as a kind of gremlin in his tank. Defeat in battle against a local tribe, for example, gives Archilochus an opportunity to mock the heroic code of honour and glory:

> 'My shield delights some Thracian, for I dropped the blameless gear, unwilling, in a wood - but saved my skin: what is that shield to me? Fuck it! I'll get another just as good.' [61]

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[60] *Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists*, edited by Michael Gagarin and Paul Woodruff, p.22.

[61] Quoted in Ewen Bowie, 'Lyric and Elegiac Poetry', *Oxford History of the Classical World*, *op cit.*

The coward declares his courage to flee. In flight and fright the shield was a serious handicap, but to suffer it becoming a trophy for the enemy was not the sort of thing an Achilles or Hektor would have boasted about. It is the misfortune of heroes, barks Archilochus the bastard, to die young. But the fact that Archilochus was able to get away with these lyrics suggests that he was singing for laughs to a new breed of warrior who, in his lighter moments, did not attatch quite so much reverence to the value of individual bravery.

The warriors of the Aegean were indeed changing. Whilst knowledge experienced the introduction of a new dialectic between the oral and the written, the security structure changed with the evolution of hoplite warfare. A community could huddle behind city walls, but warfare often tended to focus upon the agricultural plain, because it was here that the bulk of its productive wealth could be destroyed, and the narrow margins upon which life subsisted in Greece meant that few communities could survive the ruination of a harvest two years running. As far as is known, open warfare on the plains emerged from the Dark Age as a rather disorganized melee led by the aristocrats, who could afford the best equipment and who had the leisure to learn how to use this equipment effectively, followed by a supporting cast of poorly armed troops who helped as best they could. The revival of trade during the Archaic Age brought increased access to metals, opening up new opportunities for military entrepreneurship. Firstly, metalsmiths and soldiers were more free to experiment in the use of heavy armoury, furnishing the range that would eventually become the standard hoplite gear: the helmet; the breastplate; the shield; greaves; and the thrusting spear. Secondly, more arms could gradually trickle down through to the ranks beneath the aristocracy, partly through the sponsorship of oligarchs who were in a position to give arms to some of their subjects in order to gain an advantage in battle over other *poleis*, and partly through the initiative of the smallholders themselves who were now more likely to be able to afford the armour because of the improvement in supply. These two developments added together made it feasible to experiment with organized formations, culminating in the hoplite phalanx, in which soldiers would move together in a line, conventionally about eight deep, thus gaining an advantage in the field through combined force and mutual protection[62].

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[62] Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States*, p.29.

Once the new formation proved successful it spread rapidly throughout the Aegean, and its adoption had a number of consequences. Firstly, The phalanx produced a shift in the dialectic between military courage and cowardice. Collective courage to hold the line was of paramount importance, but once the line was irrecovably broken individual courage served no useful purpose. This was because the hoplite shield was of such design that the right hand side of its owner went unprotected when out of formation and so, as Archilochus observed, the only sensible thing to do when the line was broken was flee from what would become a rout. The requirements of the phalanx thus demoted the military prowess of the aristocrat, undermined his sense of *noblesse oblige*, and made him just another member of the infantry required to hold the line alongside his comrades. Meanwhile, the common peasant was promoted. His military contribution to the security of the *polis* was now more on a par with the aristocrat, who no longer held a monopoly in access to the the means of violence[63]. Archilochus sang it thus:

> 'I don't like the puffed up general, one walking legs astride, nice hair, shaved, proud of it. No, give me a scruffy little fellow, legs you can see between - that bowlegged! - standing firm on his feet, full of heart.'[64]

But at the same time the phalanx also helped to forment solidarities across class divides. Success in military formation depended upon communitarian discipline, trust, cohesion and collaborative effort. These virtues were painstakingly acquired through much practice from an early age, and put to the test in war at regular intervals, forging bonds between members of the community who would otherwise have lived apart[65].

The rise of hoplite warfare was probably linked to a new development in the realm of finance in the political economy of the Archaic Aegean. Ever since the Bronze Age it had been customary to use precious metals as a currency for exchange, measured by standard weight systems. The tradesmans balance had permeated so deeply into Aegean culture that Zeus uses a pair of scales in the *Iliad* to weigh the fates of mortals in the administration of divine justice (see 8:67-75 & 22:209-14). During the seventh century, however, a state based at Sardis in Western Anatolia began to manufacture standard units of electrum, marking them with the stamp of sovereignty to guarantee the

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[63] James O'Neil, *The Origins and Development of Ancient Greek Democracy*, p.8.
[64] Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*, p.88.
[65] Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Life*, p.183-7.

accuracy of their weight and quality[66]. This was the state of Lydia under the rule of Gyges, the tyrant whom we have already met within a fragment from Archilochus. At this time the Lydian state is known to have been involved in a number of conflicts with numerous Hellenic city states lying across the coast of Anatolia, and many scholars have speculated that these standardised units of electrum were commisioned in order to facilitate uniform payments for equipment and soldiers in a portable and durable form. Once these early coins were distributed they began to change hands in exchange for other goods and services, and the reliability of their standard enabled them to circulate as a prototype of money. The utility of the coin as payment in the military muster was quickly appreciated, and many Hellenic city states along the Anatolian coast began to emulate their innovation. From here, the practice spread westward throughout the Aegean. In the process, the Hellenic city states took the manufacture of coinage to new levels of sophistication. The advent of coinage was important because military payments could be made in a way that bypassed the traditional aristocratic network. It also gave leaders a means to persuade their soldiers to exercise more restraint when it came to the practice of looting, thus opening up an opportunity to forge norms that might stabilise the risks of waging war. Coinage would also become important later in that it could be used to pay for other forms of public service, and because the dies cast into the pieces of hot metal became major signifiers of communitarian value.

The Archaic Age also witnessed changes in the sphere of production. Firstly, there were changes in land use. After the nadir of the Dark Age, say about 1000 BC, the demography of the Aegean peoples began to stabilize and then made a gradual recovery. By 750 BC this recovery was gathering pace, and many communities could no longer support their burgeoning populations from their existing supplies of land. One response to this was extensive, the tradition of setting up of colonies abroad, thereby exporting excess populations to areas where farming land could be occupied without major opposition. In this way Hellenic settlement began to expand and multiply[67]. Another response was intensive, a shift away from pastoralism back toward the trinity of grain, grapes and olives. Secondly, there were changes in the possession of land. There had always been inequalities between households in terms of wealth in land, but these inequalities became more serious when population growth plus the finite supply of land combined to threaten the self-sufficiency of the poorer *oikoi*. A family which had numerous sons in one generation, all of whom having sons of their own, would

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[66] N.K. Rutter, *Greek Coinage*, p.8-10.

experience a decline in wealth as the plots of land were divided amongst the greater number[68]. Hesiod's answer to land poverty was hard work, but during the seventh century the process of immiseration by fragmentation had reached a stage where many farms were so small they were no longer viable. Meanwhile, the more fortunate families sought to consolidate their wealth and accumulate more, by giving loans to the failing *oikoi* on the security of land, labour and bodies in the event of default. In this way many households began to fall into debt and slavery. Thirdly, there was a combined but uneven diversification of the productive base, supplementing wealth from agriculture with commodity production in activities like mining and craft manufacture. This sector of the Archaic political economy was often export orientated, and thus dependent upon a revival in Mediterranean trade that was now beginning to surpass the commerce of the Bronze Age in terms of reach and scale. Fourthly, there was a growing emphasis upon slavery in the production process. Some slave labour was procured locally, as we have indicated, through the exploitation of debt. Another type of slave labour came through local conquest, as in the Peloponnese, where Spartans adopted the innovation of hoplite warfare and used it to turn whole populations into helots. But an increasingly important source of labour was chattel slavery, humans as commodities shipped from considerable distances[69].

Taken together, these changes brought what the Greeks called *stasis* to many parts of the Aegean. This word originally meant 'to stand one's ground', or 'take a position', but came to signify the despair of a community that had become locked into a seemingly endless cycle of civil conflict[70]. Many *poleis* became unstable as power shifts in knowledge, security, finance and production corroded aristocratic solidarities to the point where the oligarchies began to divide into rival factions. In order to gain the upper hand in these oligarchical rivalries, some of the more astute factions began to seek support amongst the *demos*, or the common people[71]. Such initiatives were invariably led by an individual who was in a position to generate sufficient hoplite support to seize the *polis* by force. He would then set about consolidating his position as a tyrant (*tyrannos*) by repressing rival factions in the former oligarchy, whilst promoting his own faction through the power of patronage. The loyalty of the hoplites and other

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[67] Sealy, *op cit*, p.30-33.
[68] O'Neil, *op cit*, p.7-8.
[69] Susan and Andrew Sherrat, 'The Mediterranean economy in the early first millennium BC', *World Archaeology*, p.362-3.
[70] J.O. Urmson, *The Greek Philosophical Vocabulary*, p.154. Also Andrew Lintott, *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City*, p.34.

members of the *demos* would then be secured through innovations that were both popular and served to undermine archaic ties of dependence toward rival aristocrats, such as the cancellation of debt, the redistribution of confiscated land, the encouragement of alternative forms of wealth creation such as mining and craft manufacture for export, and regular payments for military service made through the innovation of coinage. Many tyrants also acquired a reputation for using coinage to fund employment for landless labourers in the construction of public goods such as defensive walls or temples. Some tyrants also adopted the Near Eastern practice of using writing to draw up some of the first Hellenic law codes. This served both to enhance the prestige of the tyrant as sovereign 'lawgiver' and undermine the traditional role of other aristocrats as oral remembrancers of legal custom.

Whilst the tyrants often struck bargains with the *demos* in order to gain the ascendancy in rivalries with other aristocrats, tyranny did not, as a rule, challenge the notion that it was only aristocrats who were fit to govern the *polis*. Nor were the tyrannies capable of the kind of long term stability that would have enabled them to usurp the autonomy of the *oikos*. The typical pattern was for the tyrant to enjoy an initial burst of popularity as opportunism moved him to check the *hubris* of his fellow oligarchs, followed by a variegated process of decline and fall as the tyranny succumbed to the various temptations of power, thereby committing its own acts of *hubris*[72].

A striking exception to this took place in Athens at the beginning of the sixth century, when conflict between rival factions within its oligarchy provoked a communal crisis. The bloody aftermath of a failed coup by the would-be tyrant called Kylon, in about 630 BC, left many leading families acutely aware of the costs of civil conflict. During this coup Kylon and his followers had moved to seize the Acropolis, but found themselves besieged there when further support failed to rally to their cause. When the situation became hopeless Kylon negotiated terms for surrender, securing an assurance that his followers would not be killed if they came down without a fight. After laying down their arms and seeking sanctury at altars around the Acropolis, all captured members of the coup were then slaughtered. The ruthlessness of this deed, the depths to which civil conflict had tempted some members of the community to sink, haunted the Athenian political imagination for generations. The family of a leading protagonist of the massacre, the Alkmeonids, was subsequently declared accursed, a curse which

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[71] P.J. Rhodes, *The Greek City States: A Source Book*, p.36-44.
[72] O'Neil, *op cit*, p.10. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought*, p.21.

proved to be a factor in later events. The trauma also prompted efforts to purge the resort to civil violence with a punitive law code under Drakon in 621 BC.

Oligarchical feuding continued to simmer under the surface, however, and soon after 600 BC these conflicts once again threatened to break out into open violence. This failure to resolve internal rivalries gave many Athenian oligarchs cause to reconsider their contempt for the *demos*. Many within the aristocracy had grown rich during the seventh century by exploiting their financial ability to offer loans to their poorer neighbours, thereby trapping them in an vicious spiral of indebtedness. Once the debtors were in a position where they could no longer meet the repayments, the creditors would make their move. Sometimes the creditor exercised his right to redeem the debt by selling the debtor into slavery, along with the inhabitants of his *oikos*, whilst seizing the land to turn it into an estate producing goods for export. Other creditors found it more congenial to convert the debt to the status of hektemorage, whereby the bankrupt was allowed to remain on his land but was permanently obliged give over a sixth of his produce each year to his former creditor. These forms of exploitation were sustainable as long as the oligarchy could maintain a semblence of unity, but became unsustainable whenever rivalry threatened to deteriorate into open conflict between ruling factions, each seeking to recruit elements within the wider populace to their cause[73]. Being appraised of recent events in other parts of the Aegean, the Athenian oligarchy was aware that tyranny was a capricious resort. Under tyranny the Athenian aristocracy as a whole could expect to lose out because of a beggar-thy-fellow-oligarch dilemma that gave victory to the would-be tyrant who was ruthless enough to offer the *demos* the best deal. It was one of those curious moments in history where an oligarchy awakes, spooked by the spectre of its own mortality, and feverishly seeks to lower the stakes previously raised so high by the hubris of rampant inequality.

They turned to a man called Solon, a musician educated within an old aristocratic family 'but by wealth and position of the middle sort' who, partly through his performance of epic and his composition in lyric, had acquired a reputation for *sophia*. They made him Chief Archon for the year 594-593 BC, giving him a special brief to arbitrate for the resolution of conflict and thereby restore 'good order' within the *polis*. Somehow, maybe because of his middle rank status and a proven record of being either unable or unwilling to climb the greasy pole of patronage, Solon was trusted by the

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[73] This interpretation combines those favoured by Sealey, *op cit,* p.114-5, and Lintott, *op cit*, p.44-5.

oligarchy as the person least likely to be tempted to abuse this position in a bid for tyranny. Solon's gift with words and the popularity of his music were possibly also valuable assets for bringing restless elements within the *demos* back into line. What the oligarchy probably did not anticipate was the way in which Solon would take the traditional lore of oral song and apply its norms to a wider community. It was a reflective moment that changed the history of the Aegean[74]. It would also initiate the transformation of the status of Prometheus from that of a trickster as in Hesiod, to that of the champion of human freedom as characterised by Aeschylus. Solon the singer entered his own ballad and became a leading participant in its narrative. Obviously, we have to be careful. Solon's songs may have been about as vainglorious as the average modern political autobiography. Nevertheless, the surviving fragments of Solon's verse can help us to understand how he thought about his world and the role of the bard within it, and see how his way of thinking helped to shape the political and economic reforms which he initiated[75].

In the fragment known as the *Hymm to the Muses* ('poem 13'), Solon opens with an address to the 'children of memory', thus invoking the epic and lyric tradition. But there is a subtle shift in the nature of address. The traditional posture of the minstrel was to summon for his audience a song heard directly from the Muses. Solon departs from tradition by asking the Muses to 'hear me as I pray'. This move is already anticipated in Homer where the bard sings of characters such as Chryses who pray to the gods. But here the bard himself sings the prayer and the audience is invited to witness a public address to the gods:

> 'Shining children of memory and of Olympian Zeus, Pierian Muses, hear me as I pray. Grant me prosperity and the hands of the blessed gods, and always a good reputation at the hands of men.' (13:1-4)[76]

Traditionally, the singer would invoke the Muses and leave it to his characters to appeal to the court of Zeus, but Solon requests an audience with the gods of both knowledge and power because fate has brought him to a position of knowledge and power. Being both minstrel and Archon at Athens, Solon attempts to traverse the boundary line that divides singers from heroes. Solon scans the Homeric canon for the *sophia* he thinks it

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[74] I use the word reflective in the sense delineated by Amoore et al, 'Paths to a historicized international political economy', *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol.7, no.1, 2000, pg.57.

[75] See Emily Katz Anhalt, *Solon The Singer*. Ivan Linforth, *Solon the Athenian*. Kathleen Freeman, *Work and Life of Solon*.

contains. He identifies with the heroic pursuit of wealth but observes, mindful of Agamemnon and 'the anger of Achilles', that this pursuit has to be tempered with the pursuit of justice:

> 'I desire to have property, but I do not wish to acquire it unjustly; for justice comes inevitably afterward. Wealth which the gods give, comes to a man to stay, set firm from lowest base to top. But that which men prize by reckless violence (*hubris*) comes not in due order, but forced by unjust deeds, it follows unwillingly, and swiftly it is mingled with ruin (*ate*); its beginning is from a little thing, as is the beginning of a fire, trivial at first, but in the end grievous; for mortals' works of reckless violence (*hubris*) are not long-lived.' (13:7-16)

Solon broadly follows Hesiod's supplement to Homer on the question of *dike* as laid out in the *Works And Days*, but there is a subtle shift in emphasis. Hesiod looked upon justice with the reproachful eye of a powerless man, the wronged peasant who patiently waits for divine retribution. Solon sees justice as a man of power, a mortal who has accepted the moral abdication of Zeus offered in the *Odyssey* (1:32-34) and thereby seeks to act in a way that will shape his fate through a knowledge of causal connections between actions and outcomes.

Solon has a theory about why many of his fellow mortals succumb to hubris and fail to act according to the observation that just accumulation results in secure wealth whilst unjust accumulation is ultimately self-destructive. Solon acknowledges that the ways of the immortals are mysterious and that causal connections between actions and outcomes are often obscure. Some people pay for their transgressions straight away, some later, whilst others die before the consequences of folly return home to ruin their children, or their children's children (13:25-32). This existential zone of aporia between action and consequence combines with the human weakness for wishful thinking:

> 'This is the way we mortals think, both good and bad alike: each man has confidence in his own expectation until he suffers something. Then in turn he wails aloud; but until this, with gaping mouths we take our delight in high hopes.' (13:33-36)

Optimism is always liable to triumph over experience. Humans habitually commit injustice because they do not immediately feel the pain of its ultimate consequences, and in the meantime are able to fool themselves into thinking that they are getting away

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[76] All quotations of Solon are from Emily Katz Anhalt, *ibid*, unless indicated otherwise.

with it. This brings Solon to a startling discovery, the human capacity for self-deception:

> 'And whoever is oppressed by painful illness, considers that he will be healthy; another who is a coward thinks he is a brave man. Another, whose form is not charming, considers himself beautiful.' (13:37-40)

And another who is behaving unjustly, considers himself a paragon of virtue. There is nothing quite like this in Homer or Hesiod. 'Wily Odysseus', as we have shown, was celebrated for his cunning, but even he was innocent of the possibility of lying to himself. And when Agamemnon offers his apology in the *Iliad*, he explains that 'the cruel blindness in my mind' that enabled him to commit his act of injustice was an evil goddess planted by the gods (19:79-95). The gods create injustice in order to administer justice! Hesiod also circles around this divine paradox. In the *Works And Days* Hesiod is confident that the Olympian world order will bring Perses to book for his injustice, but then also tells how all the evils which befall men can ultimately be traced back to the smoking finger of Zeus, who created them all in a fit of vengeance after a deception by Prometheus over the wealth of an ox.

Solon calls for a halt to all this. Zeus is let off the hook and Prometheus is unbound. For Solon the mission of the bard is to cajole the Athenians to take responsibility for their fate. Human misfortune can be forestalled by calculated forethought, and Solon leaves his audience in no doubt about what the primary cause of misfortune for his community is likely to be:

> 'But of wealth there lies no limit visible for men, for those of us who now have the most property, strive with double zeal; who can satisfy all?' (13:71-3)

Solon eyes the rich of Athens and observes that their unalloyed pursuit of wealth has become folly. Those who have the most wealth are the people least satisfied with the wealth they have, and when the desire for wealth becomes insatiable, people resort to hubris because production can never meet supply. The major threat to the security of Athens thus comes not from outside the city, but from within:

> 'Our city will never be destroyed by the fate of Zeus or the plans of immortal gods, for Pallas Athena our protector, great-spirited daughter of a mighty god, holds her hands over us. But the citizens themselves, lured by wealth, are willing to destroy this great city by their folly. The common people's leaders have a mind to do injustice, and much grief is about to come from their great hubris, for they do not know how to

> restrain their greed, nor how to order their present festivities in the peacefulness of the banquet. They grow rich yielding to the temptation of crooked deeds; sparing neither possessions that are sacred nor those belonging to the public, they steal rapaciously from every direction.' (4:1-13)

The consequence of this, Solon argues, is a communal drift into slavery. By failing to respect the value of freedom for others, the rich bring tyranny upon themselves because the enslaved shall resort to desperate solutions. Solon sings out his consciousness of the interdependency between the individual fortunes of each *oikos* and the fortunes of the *polis* as a whole. When social cohesion breaks down distinctions between rich and poor, public and private, become irrelevant:

> 'In this way public evil comes home to each man and the outer doors can no longer hold it back; it leaps high over the courtyard wall and finds you anywhere, even if you hide in your inmost bedroom.' (4:26-29)

Justice within the *polis* is the means by which the Athenians may achieve security for their *oikoi*. All members of the *polis* have a mutual interest to construct, observe and defend laws that regulate communal limits and responsibilities:

> 'This is what my spirit tells me to teach the Athenians: bad government brings the most evils to a city; while good government (*eunomia*) makes everything fine and orderly, and often puts those who are unjust in fetters; it makes rough things smooth, stops excess, weakens *hubris*, and withers the growing blooms of folly (*ate*). It straightens crooked judgements, makes arrogant deeds turn gentle, puts a stop to divisive factions, brings to an end the misery of angry quarrels.' (4:26-38)

Solon boasts he brought good government to Athens in his time as Archon by adopting the stance of an impartial third party, who 'stood like a boundary stone' between 'the two armies' of the oligarchy and the people, building alliances from all sides 'like a wolf wheeling amongst many dogs'. He claims to have acheived a genuine settlement by gaining concessions from all sides, and by resisting the temptation to play people off against each other for his own advantage.

One of Solon's acheivements was a consensus over the cancellation of debt, including the obligation of hektemorage, won under the slogan: 'the shaking-off of burdens'. This would have been a popular measure amongst many debt ridden members of the *demos*, but was not such good news for the creditors. Solon was able to secure this concession from the latter by arguing he needed it as a bargaining chip to forestall calls for land reform. We have reason to believe that Solon did resist calls for a

redistribution of land from rich to poor because he tells us so in poem 34. The deal was that by agreeing to annul the debts of the poor, the rich could consolidate gains in land already made. The cancellation of debt was combined with a law forbidding the practice of offering loans on the security of the person. This was also popular amongst the *demos*. It defined them as citizens with inalienable rights. Behind closed doors, Solon probably argued that this concession meant a lot to the *demos* without costing the aristocracy too dear. By now, the Meditteranean slave markets were booming and slaves from abroad were cheap. Needless to say, for the *demos* Solon heralded the reform up for all it was worth: 'she who was formerly a slave is now free' (36:7). To amplify his personae as liberator, Solon arranged for some natively produced slaves to be brought back after having been sold abroad, and gave them back freedom amid a fanfare of publicity (36:9-10). The importance of the prohibition of debt slavery cannot be overestimated. By displacing the fear of slavery beyond the boundary of the *polis*, Solon had created a space for the development of freedom within the *polis* as a communitarian value. From now on the Athenian slave was by definition a foreigner. This displacement meant that freedom was conceptually forged upon the back of slavery and consequently became equated with mastery[77]. The dissonance between these two values was regulated by enclosure, by the boundary that determined who was inside and who was outside, citizen or slave.

Solon also sought to reduce tensions by using writing to widen the scope of eligibility for political and judicial service and promote other constitutional reforms. Whereas formerly an Athenian could only hold office by virtue of being a member of the oligarchy by birth, now eligibility was determined by an annual census which sorted people into four classes according to the yearly income of each *oikos*[78]. The highest officials were recruited from the top two classes, lesser duties could be performed by the third class, whilst the lowest class were now entitled to participate in the General Assembly. Solon also founded a new deliberative body called the Council of Four Hundred, selected by election or lot from the ranks of the top three classes, whose job was probably to convene the General Assembly and prepare its agenda[79]. This was important because it meant that the General Assembly was no longer called just on the

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[77] Orlando Patterson, *Freedom: Freedom In The Making Of Western Culture*, chapter 4.

[78] O'Neil, *op cit*, p.16-17. Simon Hornblower, 'Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greece', in *Democracy The Unfinished Journey*, edited by John Dunn, p.4. But for a sceptical view of the 'birth to wealth' narrative see Sealey, *op cit*, p.114-9.

[79] O'Neil, *op cit*, p.19. Hornblower, *op cit*, p.5-6. But once again, see Sealey for a sceptical view, *op cit*, p.120-21.

whim of a would-be Agamemnon or Achilles, according to an oligarchical agenda, but on a formal basis by a body whose members were sensitive to wider concerns.

Before Solon, the senior council of state and court of law had been the *aeropagus*, traditionally manned by all the oligarchs who were ex-archons. All legal casework first came under the jurisdiction of the nine sitting archons (magistrates), and appeals would then pass to the *areopagus*. After Solon's reforms, the General Assembly also gained the right to sit as an appeal court, called the *heliaia*, and would eventually supplant the *aeropagus* to become the soveriegn court of law. The *heliaia* (or the General Assembly when sitting in its capacity as an appeal court) meant that all citizens regardless of wealth and status were entitled to serve as jurors[80]. By giving all members of the General Assembly the right to serve in this appeal court Solon provided, theoretically, a check against 'crooked judgements' meted out by the aristocratic establishment[81]. Allied to this was a law which gave all citizens the right to bring a prosecution before the courts. The right to exercise judgement over what actions did or did not transgress the laws was thus no longer the monopoly of the ruling class.

Looking at Solon's constitutional reforms as a whole, we can discern that they aimed to leave the doors of power ajar just enough to co-opt the *demos* and give them a feeling they had a stake in the *polis*, but not so open as to threaten the status quo and provoke an oligarchical backlash:

> 'I gave to the *demos* as much privilege as they needed, neither taking honour from them nor reaching out for more. But as for those who had power and were admired for their wealth, I arranged for them to have nothing unseemly. And I set up a strong shield around both parties by not allowing either to defeat the other unjustly.' (5:1-6)

Solon was no democrat. He believed in rule by the few, not by the many, but experience had taught him that inequalities of power have a propensity to corrupt. He argued that the powers he had given to the *demos* were just enough to keep the oligarchy honest. The role of the *demos* was to make its leaders accountable, rein in oligarchical infighting and thus reduce the risk of tyranny:

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[80] Ostwald, *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law*, p.9-13.
[81] *Ibid*, p.15.

> 'In that way the *demos* best follow their leaders, neither giving them too much freedom or too much force. For excess breeds *hubris*, when great wealth comes to people whose minds are not in order.' (6:6-10)

Solon was thus pursuing the ideal of a benign oligarchy. Nevertheless, his efforts to realise this ideal prompted him to enrol the *demos* into the political process. By using the poetic tradition of *sophia* to resolve the *stasis* which had gripped the *polis* of Athens, Solon managed to lay the foundations for classical democracy.

Solon acheived this at a time when the mnemonic vehicle for reflection itself was changing, a movement in which Solon himself was a participant. Following the precedent set by Drakon in 621 BC, Solon the singer had his constitution inscribed in stone on a *kyrbeis* and cajoled his fellow Athenians to swear on oath that they would obey the written laws[82]. The sovereign voice thus ceremoniously delegated powers to its written supplement, and this too was an essential ingredient for democracy. Before the advent of the *kyrbeis* the oligarchy had held a mnemonic monopoly over the constitution, but once the laws were written down and had gained a separate existence outside the head of the oligarch as a public document, it opened up the potential for independent judgement:

> 'Callias stood up and said that there was a traditional law that if any one placed a token of supplication in the Eleusinium he should be put to death without trial: his father Hipponicus had expounded this to the Athenians, and he had heard that it was I who had placed the token of supplication. Then Cephalus leaped up and said, 'Callias, you are the most wicked of all men. First you are expounding law, though you are one of the Heralds, and it is not right for you to expound. Secondly, you talk of traditional law; but the *kyrbeis* beside which you are standing prescribes a fine of a thousand drachmae if any one places a token of supplication in the Eleusinium.' [83]

Written laws, accessible to all those who could read, became the property of those who could read, so that judges could be judged and laws followed to the letter. To support the drive toward a written constitution over the long term Solon proposed that all boys destined for citizenship should learn letters[84]. This proposal was conceivable because of the success of a number of schools founded shortly before the time of Solon[85]. Traditional education in the Archaic age had been the preserve of the aristocracy

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[82] Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, p.48 & 122-3.
[83] Andocides, I. *On the Mysteries*, 115-16. Quoted in P.J. Rhodes, *The Greek City States: A Source Book*, p.36.
[84] F.A.G. Beck, *Greek Education*, p.77 & 92.

through the commission of private tutors. The new schools, established to employ professionals who could teach hundreds of children at a time within a designated building, made elementary education cheaper and the demand for literacy and numeracy effective for parents from the wider citizenry in a way that the older tutorial method could not[86].

[These schools, as communal organisations dedicated to the dissemination of writing throughout the whole *polis*, were thus destined to become agents for the democratisation of Athenian consciousness. Drawing from both the oral tradition of Homer and the writing of Hesiod, and using the reasoning processes propagated by the men of *logos* from Miletus, Solon the singer had initiated an experiment in the mediation of the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice by mortals. His poems openly address the Athenian populace as a whole. Each citizen is thus invited to assess the legitimacy of the judgements of his Archonship for themselves. The mediation of security, wealth, freedom and justice was now conceivable as an art, the art of human governance. This is where the history of the knowledge structure in the international political economy of antiquity really starts to get interesting...

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[85] J. Bowen, *A History of Western Education*, p.74-81.
[86] F.A.G. Beck, *Greek Education*, p.80.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this conclusion I propose to review the journey traveled so far, tie up a few loose ends not quite covered in the introduction, and then say one or two things about the way ahead.

This thesis was written for those scholars who converge on the following four points of consensus. First of all, it is written for those who agree on the inseparability of politics, economics and international relations. It is written for those participating in the heterodox forum of International Political Economy which has grown out of the disenchantment with the intellectual boundary lines that were laid down during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Secondly, it is written for those who have read and been inspired by the work of Susan Strange. More specifically, it is aimed at those who have read *States and Markets* and who are open to the idea that her structural framework therin might be a fruitful method of assimilating politics, economics and international relations in an intellectually coherent fashion. Thirdly, this thesis is written for those who accept Strange's argument that knowledge is a source of structural power which is of equal importance to security, production and finance. It is intended for those who have been struck by the prescience of her conception of 'knowledge structure' in a world where market and state imperatives under the forces of globalisation have been restructuring how world society applies words like science, technology and ideology in decision making discourse. Fourthly, this thesis is written for those who have either called for, identified with, or elaborated upon, the need to 'historicise' international political economy.

These four points then, shall be taken as given points of consensus which do not need to be defended here to the people by whom I would prefer my work to be judged. My theory of contribution is that this thesis might be accepted as one demonstration of the heuristic potential of this consensus and take its place alongside others. Chapter 2 deconstructs *States and Markets* and thereby highlights aspects on the margins of Susan Strange's text pertinent to her conception of knowledge structure. Chapter 3 narrates the origins of human social complexity using Strange's heuristic framework of primary and secondary power structures. Chapter 4 narrates the origins of a western consciousness of dissonance between Strange's basic values of security, wealth, freedom and justice and interprets the songs of Homer as a mnemonic database dedicated to the memory of oral

principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures for their mediation. Chapter 5 then thrusts the formation of a consciousness of the value of wonder under the spotlight of attention, and tries to show how important this value was in the formation of a political will that initiated the democratic reforms which would eventually lead to what David Held called 'the classical model of democracy'.

I want to say a few more things about the reasoning behind the decision to go rummaging back so far into the rubble of history. IPE has, right from its founding articles and meetings back in the early 1970's, deservedly perceived its greatest strength as being its superior ability to understand and explain contemporary processes of globalisation relative to many other social sciences. These were the original reasons given to justify its existence. What I have tried to suggest in this thesis, however, is that in the long term IPE can aspire to become more ambitious than this and should consider thinking more strategically about its heuristic appeal. Given that the traditional social science disciplines have for some time now been assimilating and developing the globalisation thesis for themselves, we could be approaching a stage where it will not be enough any longer to claim to be able to understand this aspect of the present better than other disciplines. Older social sciences have generally had more universal claims to knowledge. Therefore, we should also consider opening up a claim that an IPE approach also has the potential to understand the past better. Or rather, to adapt the classic quote from E.H. Carr, we should stake a claim that over the past three decades or so IPE has generated a unique set of questions which the present badly needs to ask in its dialogue with the past. Furthermore, Susan Strange's analytical framework provides a pretty serviceable vehicle for that dialogue.

Now of course I am aware that some IPE theorists who agree on the need to address the historical deficit in IPE have found kindred spirits within the *Annales* school of historical scholarship, which consciously saw itself as a unifying force in perpetual dialogue with the human sciences[1]. Another important resource which the historicist turn in IPE has sometimes turned to is the comparitive historical sociologists: Michael Mann; Theda Skocpol; and Charles Tilly being perhaps the most notable examples[2]. Adam Watson has also applied the insights of the so-called English School of

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[1] See for example, Braudel, 'Unity and Diversity in the Human Sciences' & 'The History of Civilizations: The Past Explains the Present', in *On History*.

[2] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990-1992*.

international relations profitably to the broad sweep of history[3]. Then of course, there is the tradition in Marxist historiography exemplified by the likes of Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, E.P. Thompson and Eugene Genovese. And of course IPE has a great deal to learn and profit from the study of all of these traditions. Nevertheless, none of these are directly conversant with the ontological and epistemological concerns of the IPE literature which has been developing over the last three decades or so. Rather, these traditions have often had ontological and teleological baggage of their own to consider when researching into the past. Consequently, IPE concerns have rarely been addressed directly in the construction of historical narrative itself. Generally, we have had to get by on a talent for eavesdropping upon historical narratives written for debates generated within other disciplines. But it does not have to be like this. IPE is capable of inspiring important work on the past in its own right. At some point addressing the historical deficit will involve IPE becoming more proactive in the business of generating its own historiographical tradition which is fully plugged into and which thus directly seeks to address contemporary IPE debate.

Conventionally, where IPE has turned its attention to history, it has done so in order to seek out the origins of capitalism, because political economy has traditionally seen the development of capitalist relations as the primary roots of the normative perspectives that have been characterized as mercantilism, liberalism and marxism. More recently, the occasional foray deeper into the Middle Ages may have been legitimated by claims that we are moving toward a 'neo-medieval world order'[4]. Some very valuable work has also been done on various civilizations in the world political economy before and after their tragic encounters with the emerging European hegemony[5]. But the idea that IPE should consider straying further back into antiquity may seem counter-intuitive to many. One reason for this is that what often strikes us about the peoples of antiquity is a profound sense of *otherness*. The minds of antiquity can seem so foreign to us that the very idea of imaginatively reinscribing these worlds of the past in a manner advocated by the likes of Vico, Collingwood or Cox may appear risible. Concomitant with this comes the view that antiquity stretches so far into the past that it has no meaningful purchase on the present. Also, regrettably, we have to

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[3] Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society.*

[4] Lipschutz, 'Reconstructing World Politics: The emergence of global civil society', *Millennium*, 21, no.3. 1992, 398-420.

[5] For example: Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The world system 1250-1350*, Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance: European overseas empires 1415-1980.*

recognize that the study of antiquity and the classics has strong associations for many with conservative or even reactionary traditions of thought. These negative associations have some basis from the days when the university was seen as a finishing school for national ruling elites and the classics an essential grounding in a 'liberal education'. And to this day, in Britain at least, any sort of training in Greek or Latin is still a pretty reliable indicator of class. Consequently, anyone who attempts to trespass in this area risks simultaneously being seen as a reactionary by the moderns and as an imposter by the classicists.

My view is that IPE should seriously consider trying to overcome all three of these obstacles to understanding the antiquity of modernity, and chapters 3, 4 and 5 should be seen as modest contributions toward that effort. My reasons for risking the attempt are as follows.

First of all, what has been handed down to us as mercantilism, liberalism and marxism are all siblings born of an enlightenment that was steeped in the classics and used them in their rebellion against Christian scholasticism[6]. Hobbes, Machiavelli, Hume, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Marx and all the other greats in the intellectual heritage of IPE all stood upon the classical western canon manufactured for them using the printing press[7]. Consequently, it makes no intellectual sense whatsoever for the 'historical turn' in IPE to stop short at the medieval origins of capitalism. Also, thanks to a wealth of research in archaeology, anthropology and philology during the 20th century, our understanding of antiquity today is very different from that upon which the founders of political economy built their theories about their present. Our 21st century engagements with the thought of mercantilism, liberalism and marxism which we draw from in order to interpret our own present should thus be sensitive to the fact that they all rest upon these shifting sands.

Secondly, recent talk of a 'neo-medieval world order' is an indicator in itself of the broader perspective badly needed for a comparitive historical analysis of the present, for our post-cold war order is, in many ways, far more neo-classical than neo-medieval. If we look at Strange's ontology of human values of security, wealth, freedom and justice for example, our vocabulary for these is far more easily transposable into the

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[6] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment* Volume 1.

Greek *polis* than into the Latin discourses of the medieval monastery. Or if we wish to seek out historical resonances for contemporary struggles against the exploitation of world debt and the associated struggle for cosmopolitan democracy, surely it is classical antiquity which provides a stronger echo than feudal Christendom. Or if we want to find a historical parallel for a drift in foreign policy from the relatively benign hegemony of a democracy to predatory imperialism, and the tragic consequences that this drift will bring in its wake, surely it is to ancient Athens we should turn rather than medieval Rome. This was the message of Thucydides, and the realists should never have been allowed to get away with claiming him as one of their own.

Thirdly, I invoke the authority of Cox and his post cold war interest in the concept of civilization. When the final draft on *tekhne* was being written, the Americans and the British were going through an early round of bombing what used to be Mesopotamia, and one or two of my students were enthusiastically quoting Huntington, whilst their antagonists were citing Edward Said. Yes, of course, the historical study of *other* civilizations caught within the deadly embrace of neo-liberal globalisation is very important. But as Edward Said pointed out, the study of the other can sometimes turn out to be little more than a projection of the self[8]. Another counterveiling strategy to the new cultural realism, therefore, would be to rekindle the spirits of those *others* who lie restless deep within the lower strata of western civilization itself. As I have tried to show in this thesis, the study of antiquity is deeply political because it can challenge the very identity of western civilization. Ironically, the conventional focus of critical IPE on the medieval origins and subsequent history of capitalism risks reifying capitalism and Christianity as the defining features of the west, when in fact western civilization is much richer than that and there is a profoundly radical occidental antiquity lying buried under our feet (if my interpretation of Homer is anywhere near the mark, the origins of western civilization lie partly in the primitive discovery of respect for international law). But in order to excavate this radical antiquity and thus undermine the barbarian assumptions of people about what western civilization means, we within IPE will also have to overcome many of our own preconceived notions about the study of ancient history and learn to reaffirm its pertinence. Many neo-liberals and neo-conservatives are fond of finding resonances in antiquity to support their theories and fantasies. Critical IPE will need to cultivate its own antiquity in order to puncture such pretensions.

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[7] Eisenstein, *The Printing Press As An Agent of Change: Communication and cultural transformations in early modern Europe,* vols 1 & 2.

Having made such claims for ancient history aimed at debates within IPE, I also want to say something about the many historians upon whom I have relied to generate this text and, out of profound respect for them, explain exactly what my historical narrative does and does not purport to be. This is important because in order to address the historical deficit in IPE meaningfully, we shall have to develop some principles, norms and rules for cooperation with the professional historian. Like Amoore et al, we should be inspired by Collingwood and Carr, but we should also be prepared to listen to people like Arthur Marwick, who expresses views shared by many contemporary professional historians[9]. When the historian assesses his peers, an important criteria for judgement is the balance between primary and secondary sources. If this were a thesis submitted within the discipline of history, for example, it would not pass, because it is almost entirely reliant on secondary sources and where it does use primary sources, it does so only through the good grace of a translation attempted by the philologist. Therefore, it should be made clear that this thesis does not purport to be written by a professional historian immersed in the primary sources or with first hand experience of the relevant artifacts. Rather, the historical narratives are written by a scholar of IPE based upon the most reliable secondary sources he can find. My assumption of the licence to do this is based upon the principle that, given the extensive nature of our contemporary academic division of labour, pragmatic indulgences should be granted to middlemen attempting to defy the problem of opportunity cost. On the one hand we have a collection of scholars under the banner of IPE who wish to develop their historical awareness further. On the other we have a number of historical scholars who presumably have no great desire to repel potential readers outside their own specialism. In the short lifespans allotted to mortals, one cannot be an expert in both fields. Therefore, theoretically it should be admissable for a scholar from IPE to legitimately use secondary sources in order to generate historical narratives according to the coordinates of questions that his chosen discipline prompts him to ask.

So I have tried to narrate a history of the structuration of knowledge within a context of the mutual structuration of security, production and finance. I have tried to eschew an approach which sees history merely as a quarry from which fundamental abstract laws of human nature and behaviour can be derived. I have used Strange's

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[8] Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

[9] Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History*.

heuristic framework to write a narrative based upon the hypothesis that history proceeds through a process of multipile determinations. I have developed Strange's conception of knowledge structure to assimilate Amoore et al's proposal for research upon the historicity of knowledge. In *States and Markets*, Strange's desert islanders carry the weight of conscious human agency within her structuralist framework. In this supplement to *States and Markets*, her desert islanders turn into the peoples of antiquity. Because of her emphasis upon the structuration of knowledge, Strange's framework is actually quite well suited to the study of human agency within structure. As Amoore et al argue, the purposive act is the key to introducing an emancipatory human dynamic between structure and agency. But in order to sidestep the accusations commonly aimed at both Croce and Collingwood of an idealist bias, I have tried to contribute toward Amoore et al's project by capturing some of the key transformative moments in the *materialist history of consciousness* itself. Since Collingwood composed *The Idea of History*, the idealist versus materialist divide has been returning to haunt us in a burgeoning body of literature in science and philosophy clustering around the 'hard problem' of consciousness[10]. This thesis aligns itself firmly behind the side of the debate championed by people like Daniel Dennet, Julian Jaynes, Eric Havelock and Jacques Derrida who, in diverse ways, have argued that consciousness has a material basis in our communicative media and arrived late, with the onset of human civilization and the structuration of knowledge. This is my final argument why it is important for IPE not to forget the antiquity of modernity. If it can be shown that consciousness itself has a history then we need to remember that it cannot be taken for granted. We must struggle to prevent it from being snuffed out. Far too many important decisions in our world political economy seem to get made without it. The Turing Test is equally applicable to humans.

I now turn to the first and second points of consensus identified earlier in this conclusion, namely the need to integrate politics, economics and international relations and the possibility that Strange's framework for analysis may be a suitable method of so doing. One of the things that has struck me very forcibly in my research for this thesis is how the disciplinary boundaries between international relations, politics and economics are reflected in the work of many historians upon whom we rely for our understanding of the past. Professional historians during the 20th century have often tended to divide

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[10] See Jonathan Shear (ed) *Explaining Consciousness: The 'hard problem'*, also Susan Blackmore, *Consciousness: an introduction.*

themselves up into international historians, political historians or economic historians. This intellectual division of historiographical labour, in turn, inevitably acts as a constraint upon the epistemic hunger of scholars within the disciplines of politics, economics and international relations, and vice versa. That is to say, when a political scientist turns, for whatever reason, to study secondary sources on the past, he will turn to the political historians. And when an economist decides, for whatever reason, to consult sources on the past, he will consult the economic historians. And when a scholar of international relations looks to the past, he will inevitably gravitate toward the bookshelves which have been set aside for the international historians. These symbiotic intellectual relationships thus mutually reinforce each other. When the scholar of the present consults the scholars of the past, there are well beaten paths there which fail to challenge him to question the mental enclosure imposed by his disciplinary training. And when the scholar of the past looks to draw inspiration from, or find an audience amongst, the scholars of the present, he finds little there which challenges him to integrate economic history with political and international history. Conversely, when a scholar with an interest in IPE consults the most authorative sources on the past that he can find, he is immediately confronted with a Herculean task of cross referencing, trespassing, beating down overgrown paths and making connections as best he can.

Therefore, by picking up Susan Strange's structural framework and showing how it can be used to actually construct historical narratives right back to the dawn of human civilization, I hope I have contributed in helping to sustain the IPE project of integrating politics, economics and international relations, simply by undermining some of the historiographical props which may have traditionally helped to maintain their intellectual separation. Of course my contribution in this regard, and on all the other points above, has been limited by my meagre powers of scholarship but hopefully, by taking this step and being prepared to expose my nakedness, shortcomings and abject failures for all who wish to see, it will encourage others to do better and apply Strange's structural framework to the study of history more fruitfully.

Earlier on, in my introduction to this thesis, I suggested that it was setting out to historicise certain questions prompted by Susan Strange's prescience with regard to the retreat of the state in the university. I did not suggest that this thesis would complete the task of historicizing my questions prompted by the retreat of the state in the university. Such a task is way beyond the wits of any one person. In the event my thesis falls short of even its far more modest original objectives for lack of time, space and money.

Unfortunately the narrative has to stop short before the Athenian democracy initiated by Solon began to promote Greek Theatre as the primary means of higher education and reflection for the many, whilst the Academy emerged as the dominant means to elite higher education, reflection and research for the few. Unfortunately, the narrative has to stop short before the Athenian democracy initiated by Solon fell into the trap of an imperialist foreign policy. Consequently the narrative stops a very long way short of my original intention to conclude chapter 5 with the emergence of Diogenes, who harnessed the general disillusionment in the wake of the Peloponnesian war to fuse the Theatre and the Academy and project the mediation of the values of security, wealth, freedom and justice beyond the walls of the *polis*, and who thereby became the first cosmopolitan. These are the next steps that I would take if given the opportunity to pursue the task of historicizing IPE further.

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