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Dear Father Gallo and Luisa Molina,

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I. During the Christmas holidays I will be completing the editing of the volume: The Relation Between Cultures with a view to getting it to press by mid-February.

Your own work is very central to this volume (enclosed) and I believe that you intended to add a substantive section. Could you give that your proximate attention?

II. There is a set of investigations which you carried out. Has this been published? I would appreciate your suggestions for its publication as a volume in the series on Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Life, possibly with a Spanish and and English edition. You had sent me some sections entitled, "El Yo y la Etnia: Fundamentación epistemológica de grupos Humanos", parts I and II. Please let me know what you would suggest.

With many thanks and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, I remain

Sincerely yours,

George F. McLean
Secretary

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CHAPTER ..

CULTURAL PLURALISM AND DEVELOPMENT

THE ETHNIC SITUATION OF GUATEMALAN YOUTH

ANTONIO GALLO and LOUISA MOLINA

This chapter will consist of three sections, of which only the first is developed below:

1. Ethnic group, boundaries as a problem of identity;
2. Differences between groups and ethnic hegemony: the case of Guatemalan youth, and
3. A philosophical epistemological explanation of the intra- and inter-group communication required for vital and harmonious development.

Summary

This chapter begins from the observation by G. McLean above that culture "is more bridge than barrier." The first section of the present chapter deals with the fundamental concepts involved in a concrete situation such as the Guatemalan ethnic complex. There, two or three different ethnical groups continually interacting in daily life. They experience great difficulty overcoming ethnic discrimination and struggle for self-realization and evolution both as individuals and as communities.

Here, the first concept to be discussed is that of identity in its twin aspects: personal and group. The second concept is that of group as an analytic tool. Perhaps the "ethnic-group" is the more perfect and complex realization of a human group. It both draws upon and supports ethnic identity and, consequently, personal identity, thus enabling one to develop both as a man and as a citizen. Difficulty arises when we begin to work with a group and find that this concept does not correspond to the reality. We must then construct some analytic tool to deal with it.

The third concept is the "relation" between the individual as a person and the group. This relation gives the individual an opportunity to appropriate both the meaning and symbols of the group's identity, to integrate the group identity with his own, and to understand (or practically accept) the barrier that separates one group from another in a negative or antithetic relation.

Here, culture and ethnicity are entangled only indirectly. Sometimes the same culture contains two different ethnic groups - ps - types. ps. Hence we could not speak of the French and the Italian

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groups as two different cultures in Switzerland; it is the same culture with two different groups. Similarly in Spain there is not two different cultures in Catalonia and in Castile, though these are two ethnic groups. Hence, we will not deal with the concept of culture.

Frequently, in such important cultural objects as language, traditions and social structure differences can be an excuse for ethnic resistance or opposition. However, the origin of this discontent is not the culture itself but something more hidden, such as economic needs, psychological attitudes, concern, or some internal patterns of the group structure. In other words, it is the living beings in the community who create the antagonism. Many ethnic groups in Guatemala, such as Quiches-Ixiles, Kekchis-Pocomchies, and Mames-Canjobales, which have basically the same culture, use the Spanish language which they can hardly speak in order to communicate with each other. Though this seems impractical from the point of view of the group, it is a way of being more fully themselves. Here culture is considered only as an "expression" of the identity of a particular group.

Ethnicity is a difficult term. Many studies, articles and reviews are published at the anthropological or ethnological level about: ethnicity, new ethnicity, ethnology, ethnic groups, the human context, etc. We are analyzing the subject from a slightly higher level or in a more speculative sense. Ethnicity itself is the context through which the identity of the group expresses itself. We take it, not at an empirical level (as does science), but as a set of practical principle or, if one prefers, as a pattern of endeavor that characterizes the group. Of course, ethnicity is an immediate correlate of identity and a parallel might be established between ethnicity and group identity, as between the personality and the "Ego" of the same person. The ethnicity can easily be observed in the interrelations between persons from different ethnic groups as they express themselves through their respective cultures as functions of the group's identity. Generally, in everyday life, groups try to impose their own culture upon other groups.

The Second Section of this paper presents the real case of an Indian (Mayan) who is monolingual in a bilingual situation. The reality of the ethnic groups in Guatemala makes this fairly universal. People must accept the imposition of the dominant Spanish cultural group, Spanish language and its style of life, which along with its related symbols and way of thinking they do not perceive as their own. In contrast, ethnic groups possess a vast culture, their own symbols, customs and special way of thinking. We shall analyze the objective impact of the two cul-

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tures and their inter-relations from the point of view of the superior and the inferior as the person develops from childhood into a citizen and is incorporated into his community. The interchange is unequal, and operates at multiple levels of human concerns: family, community, village and region, natural and human environment, education, economy, intellectual and spiritual world. An understanding the concrete path of one's development among men and nature in space and time is needed in order to understand which mechanism or strategy a specific individual adopts in order to survive in adverse circumstances. This will make it possible to introduce the concept of dialogue, interchange and harmonious development as remedies to the traditional struggle and oppression.

The Third Section of the chapter enters the epistemological field in order to focus upon the metaphysical problem, but without abandoning our special phenomenological insight. Why is a person so intimately involved in a particular culture, custom, tradition or set of human relations? Why is it so difficult for him to overcome the culture created by the group and by himself? By going beyond the individual, toward an understanding of the general foundational values on which the unity of mankind is based, one can reach the source of the being of the person himself as a unity and as openness. There may be a demiurgic function between two extremes: on the one hand, a closed unity with holiness, plenitude, perfection and power, and, on the other hand, an openness with poverty, possibility in its negative-positive meaning, implementation, finitude and need for meaning. This dialectical contradiction of a human person as an "I," an "Ego," and "myself" is found in the immediate relation of one person to another: the discovery of others that are not really objects, but "subjects" like myself or other "Egos" for themselves. This contact with, or advancement to, the "other" as a subject--a living, thinking and willing principle of decisions--is not abstract or universal. It is simply my immediate and singular action as this particular "Ego"; it is I and my acts of knowledge, in my unique and centralized world and with my own space-time situation.

In this basic interchange, where each person plays the role of both subject and object, we can discover the real material and spiritual dimensions of experience. Consequently, it will be possible to discover the real problems of good or bad interpersonal understanding, the proper means of self-expression in contrast to alienation, and the roots of a static or dynamic attitude toward the development and life style of the person. In this sense the community, and more properly the ethnic group, which has the potential of satisfying the essential needs of all

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those who live in the context of its culture, provides an epistemological basis for all the dimensions of human nature: its historical conditions, concerns, values, etc.

B GROUP BOUNDARIES AS A PROBLEM OF ENCOUNTER **BET-** **WEEN IDENTITIES** *Hyper*

The chapters by Profs. Asike, Balthasar, Kromkowski and Wanjohi note a characteristic of the last decade spread throughout the world. This is the growing consciousness of national and ethnic identity and the danger of ethnic struggles and divisions which threaten the unity of many states and have many political consequences. The strengthened consciousness of ethnic distinctiveness makes even more difficult the encounter and interrelation between different races, nations, regions or groups in everyday interchange on cultural or political issues.

Conflicts increase when antagonisms are established in the narrow limits of a region or a small country. This is the case of Guatemala, a nation with some eighteen different languages which divide the territory into a similar number of cultural and ethnic groups. This emphasizes the problem of ethnic inequality and of human oppression which (as its history is dialectically interpreted by Severo Martinez, 1978) has existed since the Spanish conquest and occupation four centuries ago.¹

The different degrees of modernization between the indigenous and at times conflicting peoples is well expressed by the anthropologist, Ricardo Falla (1980),² as "different forms of being Mayans." In each case we meet the same problem: a small group of people with a very distinctive culture who struggle to develop their cultural elements in response to their vital need to define their collective personality and history. Pope John Paul in his allocution in Canada (September, 1984) paraphrased the Apocalypse: "Yes, you are from almost all tribes, languages, people and nations."³

This problem is also found in Europe. France, traditionally a model of modern national integration and identity, is one of the states suffering with this issue. Immigrants from all over Europe, groups from Morocco, Algeria, the Middle East and Corsica confront this old and unresolved problem, as do people in Britain, Alsace and the Basques. Other European nations such as Italy, Yugoslavia, Belgium, Spain and Switzerland are even more ethnically divided. In Germany the Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers still conserve their national identity. Sweden and Norway, traditionally isolated from such conflicts, have recently received large quotas of immigrants from the Central and Eastern Mediterranean region. To the many peoples

from its old colonies, such as India, New Zealand, Australia and others, England has now added Sicilians, Vietnamese and Africans.

The same phenomenon can be found in many other countries of Africa, South America and Asia. Regions which were rather pacific in the past are now experiencing the sudden birth of racial barriers and linguistic and cultural competition by citizens who feel within their legal rights in defending and perpetuating their historical and ethnic status.

Moreover, immigrants of the most recent generations, instead of seeking to assimilate into the host population, now claim with growing force their right to profess and develop their culture, language and social organizations. In these circumstances the humanitarian ideals of being the same, of sharing and communicating are becoming strongly utopic and improbable.

To give but one example, the Bishop of LataCuga (Ecuador) in November 1984 wrote a note about the Quechua's population expressing concern that though they constitute one third (about 35%) of the peasant population, they hold (in any clearly legal sense) only 5% of all the goods of the nation. But the Bishop added that he did not consider this to be the greatest evil, for the most important good of which they have been deprived is education. They have lost any "true" education, because the very little they are receiving is given in a language they do not understand, and in a completely foreign cultural context. To be an Indian has become--not so much in theory but in practice--synonymous with "inferiority."

Identity

The main concept inherent in this problematic situation is that of identity--the ethnic group identity. We shall approach this only descriptively, without pretending to analyze it as an object. We shall build the concept gradually as we grow closer to its subject. For the human person, identity is the very reality of the person, "the Ego" considered in its concrete existential situation: I am myself, all myself. This "Ego" is consciousness; but it is also a concrete real existence here and now. Upon this one builds all the spacial and temporal relations, and upon these all the other dimensions. "I" am the subject, and my identity includes my history, all my spacial relations and all the objects I appropriate.

From another point of view, my situation (Ortega & Gasset),⁴ my being (*das sein*) (Heidegger),⁵ or my phenomenological experience (Husserl)⁶ includes my identity as the foundation both of my unity and continuity and of my differentiation from

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all that is not purely myself. My experience, actions and acts of willing and thinking all surround me as other beings or objects; they are part of me but at the same time distinct from myself.⁷

This experienced consistency and continuity of my identity with its multiple dimensions cannot be separated mentally or psychologically from my identity itself. Nor does it make sense to separate them, because identity without external, cultural, social, aesthetical or moral determinations does not exist. This, it would appear to me, is the nucleus of the whole problem: my identity is myself "with-the-whole" of my existential environment; I cannot separate them. Yet I can understand the differences and the reciprocal polarity of the two terms: "my-Ego" and "my-identity." Identity is the established relation, the living being, with its consciousness of the present, its historical properties and all the things I have more or less intimately appropriated.

The inability to define identity probably is due to its unicity, which is not an abstract or conceptual unicity, but a reality that is not distant from the world. The common contextual world is there around myself as a limit or possibility (K. Jaspers),⁸ or as an horizon which I ought to interpret (G.H. Gadamer).⁹ One's identity is being One-with-others. This reflects the presence of non-intellectual things inside one's intelligence, and of the non-emotional things within one's emotions. This unicity could not be disrupted without affecting the "Ego" itself, for this world is concretely and immediately my own; it identifies me.

This study does not deal with the word "personality" which here is taken more in a "psychological" than an epistemological sense. Nor does it deal with the word "person" which must be considered at a deeper, more essential or metaphysical level: here the "person" is seen as deeper than identity. Nor, finally, does this study deal with the world "culture," which must be referred, in general, to the model rather than to the individual style of endeavour: in this sense, it is more external and directed toward the world. - *Lysson*

Identity continually deals with the external world as well as with my essence as a man. Perhaps at this deeper level, identity and person could be taken as one. In reality they are one, but identity cannot be elevated to the abstract and universal, whereas the term person can. On the other hand, the person cannot be in contact with material or individual things without the mediation of identity, which makes these things mine.

The identity of a person is that of a being, really existing as this particular person and as a member of a community and in the process of becoming a man and assuming responsibility in

the world. He is neither an anonymous nor a generic object; rather he supports and gives shape and color to all the characteristics of his subjectivity. One's identity is one's own not in the semantic sense, but in the sense of "*lebens welt*." In this living sense, identity involves one's culture with all its social, economic, historic and psychological factors.

My identity is built upon these cultural determinations; it needs them in order to be a continuous, coherent and well developed human being. Hence, one's culture is the natural context for the existence of one's identity: the cultural group, more than the culture itself, is one's natural environment. Through this particular environment, the individual must communicate, learn, evolve and achieve his fulfillment--even extending to that of the group itself and the culture. This makes it necessary to extend the analysis of identity to the group itself.

But first we must conclude from the above that people have but one identity. An individual could not change his identity, just as he could not cease to be himself. He could, of course, extend the terms of his identity to such higher and deeper levels as learning a new language and obtaining new skills and technologies in order to have broader knowledge, etc. This is not properly a change, but the extension of one's identity to include new dimensions without losing one's personal or group identity.

Sometimes one can cast off some of the former elements of one's personal identity if these are not very integrated in one's personality or are less important. But generally to lose part of one's identity is to lose part of oneself. We cannot talk about a shifting-identity, but only about a shift between one and another incompatible objects should we prefer something new, want to develop other dimensions of our personality or wish to expand our concerns to new fields. But this is not to shift the identity of the person or of the group.

This, I believe, is the key to understanding this phenomenon. We can lose very important facets of our identity, but in that case we are alienated. We can become alienated and leave the ethical group. Such ethnic alienation affects the group only indirectly; directly it affects the individual, and to lose all the elements of one's identity would be to become mad. In any case, to lose some elements of our identity is a bad wound when we accept it freely, and aggression when it is imposed.

All persons must change some things during their lives: when a child becomes a man he must change many customs and ways of thinking. This is a natural evolution, just as he has to change his teeth, the curls of his hair, etc. But one does not change identity: he remains himself for his entire life. Indeed,

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to have to renounce some elements of one's particular identity generates great trauma, as when one discovers that his parents are not his natural mother and father. In general, damage is inflicted upon one's identity by limiting or depriving a person with regard to some important element. Forced changes of customs, tradition, language or social structure are undoubtedly acts of coercion against individuals and groups.

We assume that the reason for this is the very close connection between identity and the person as the basis and center of human rights. Here the subject of rights is not only the individual persons, but the collectivity, which in our supposition is the ethnic group. Hence, the sense of personal identity leads to the problem of group identity. What is a group?

Ethnic Groups

We approach the group in the same phenomenological manner used on the concept of identity above. The group exists, with its distinctive style of life, language, special style and color of clothing, ecological environment, products, and social structure. The many examples of real ethnic groups are easy to identify and to distinguish. One does not need to know where they are from, but only to see them; one does not know how they were formed or when, but only accepts them. They are there; and they are many. But note: this concept fits not only Indians, Africans, Bascs, or people from Tyrol; it is a quite general phenomenon. Men constitute groups and are seen to live in them when they fulfill all the characteristics which anthropologists attribute to true ethnic groups.

One issue is empirical and must be resolved empirically, namely, when does an ethnic group exist? For the answer we depend upon anthropologists and ethnologists. Ania Peterson (1982)¹⁰ provides a good summary of the different approaches to interpreting the existence of groups; many more recent studies deal with this concept and modify it.

Philosophers, however, consider the concept itself. First, it must be separated from the traditional concept of class. This is generally understood as an horizontal stratification on the basis of one's personal income and is statistically and economically clear. But in reality men do not generally live "in" a class but in a group, which may not coincide exactly with a class. The group concept is opposed to the vertical one; it is pluridimensional or total and covers man as a whole in his material, emotional and spiritual dimensions. One intersects with people of many different classes. Further, class is characterized by mobility, but even though one can easily trespass the level of his or

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her class. One cannot do so with regard to the group. Of course, some times a class (read, "high class") could consider itself and function as a group, but this is not generally the case. Ordinarily a person has a group and lives with artists, politicians, intellectuals, etc. This takes in other people, workers, authorities, etc., with whom he identifies: to be in a group is to identify with its members. no by...

In these examples it is clear that it is not the limits or the contrast to other groups which cause the cohesion of a group. We develop our personality in a real human context, which is the complete realization of our life. This is Barth's concept of group, and it has two principal advantages. One is that it is phenomenological and allows for an analysis of the concrete situation as the form in which man identifies himself within the group. This is not merely a question of membership. As Ania Peterson points out, Barth¹¹ attends to boundaries because his approach is experimental; but he goes deeply into the fundamental reasons which support human endeavour in this particular situation. The second advantage is that his analysis can be complemented with new elements found in other circumstances.

At the present time, special emphasis is placed upon the ecological element and linguistic structures. The views of Spicer (1971),¹² based upon a theory of opposition between groups, seem inadequate in that they seek an explanation based upon a negative concept. Opposition is only the "other's view"; it cannot produce anything without the reaction or positive interpretation of the group which is living, reacting and constructing its life. Since in this process the human group generates a culture, the concept and issue of group becomes that of the ethnic group.

Perhaps we could agree with the view of De Vos (1975)¹³ that consistency of behavior enables "others to place an individual or a group in some given social category." But it is not only the consistency of behavior which generates identity. This is based upon the group itself with all its components: its divergent as well as its common behavior, its limits and trends, all are elements or cultural objects which support the identity of the group.

The new concept of ethnic-group arises from two factors: the human group and identity. Without identification of its members there would not be a group. This type of identity differs from personal identity. Behavior, technology, spiritual values and language are common or similar. But in addition to these objective elements there is sense of unity and of solidity which strongly binds individuals to the group. This is a community of p

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values, customs, traditions, thought, social relations, scale of values, sensibility, historical heritage, and environmental inter-relation; all these support what we call "group-identity." When all these elements come together there is "ethnic-identity."

In real life, however, this ethnic identity does not exist; it is a collective concept. In reality there exists only the personal identity of the members of the ethnic group. How can one explain that what does not exist is the strongest tie between men and more consistent, and lasting than any other? The answer must be that the human person and the human group are in some form the same thing. There exists a bipolar reality, a natural or essential continuity, which from the person or individual makes the group, and from the group makes the person: this is a co-constitution. The group has and develops a particular culture; the members of the group are active members of this construction. The Group is a "whole" of persons, and nothing else, while persons are necessarily a group and have a group-identity. This statement can be proved only by experience, and may be only a phenomenon of our times.

An ethnic group possesses a special wholeness and is able to satisfy all human needs in the multiple circumstances of life: birth, wedding, death, social status, and work. It enables the individual to respond personally with direct communication and emotional sensitivity. The ethnic group can endure across centuries through changes in culture, states and political regions, as for example, with Israel, the Russian nationalities, and ancient pre-Columbian groups in Latin America. Though their culture may not be the same after four centuries, they retain their actual identity with a consciousness of continuity and spiritual unity with the past. The historical is not the most important aspect of this identification, but only one of many. Instead, consciousness of the value of their self, of their world vision and of their human relations is the true core of the significance and transcendence of their identity.

This is the case of the Basques in Spain, the Scots in Britain, the Bretons in France, and of Ulster in Ireland. Perhaps "ethnicity" is the highest expression of the human community precisely because its roots are not geographical, historical or economic, but anthropological in the philosophical sense, that is, gnoseological and metaphysical.

Ethnicity is not only a consciousness; indeed sometimes it is not conscious, for people can ignore the foundation of their special uniqueness in choosing the elements of their distinctive identification. However, the objectivity of this differential character can be verified experimentally with respect to external cultural elements and to some extent as regards such deeper

components as psychological attitudes, aesthetic taste, spiritual predilections and the interpretation of one's world.

Does this second perspective, restrict the broader concept of the mobile and evolutionary structure of the "self"? Ethnicity is not material because it is so close to the person itself and to conscience, yet it is not a spiritual thing either. It emerges from the dialogue between the "Ego" and one's proximate situation, between the personality of individuals and collective needs. In ethnic identity, the group plays the role of a collective personality in response to the individual's and people's demands, and to pressure from surrounding forces.

Relation Between the Person and the Group

Now we must focus upon the third concept identified above, namely, the "relation" between the individual and the group. Without more clarity on this it will be impossible to answer any fundamental questions about the development and modernization of groups. Besides it will provide greater insight into the relation between personal and individual being: the individual with his unique and incomparable specificity, the group surrounded by the real world with its temporal changes and the interplay with other men and other groups. This might be more easily understood through the example of a particular situation in the second part of this chapter.

The linguistic form for stating this relation is the pronoun "We." "We" are thinking, "We" have this tradition. "We" are . . . etc. "We" embraces me and the group. The group and I are thinking . . . we have the same customs, opinions, communications, means, etc. There are three poles in this relation: the cultural object, the collective-subject, and the individual-subject. There is an identification between me and the group; this is the first level of identity. But on the other hand, the group does not really exist; it is nothing more than a collection of the individuals which compose it. It is a very special form of identity, different from $2=2$ where there are two identical objects: two and two. In the situation of identity there is no "equivalence" as there is in $(5+4) = (6+3)$, which is a proportion with four objects. In the case of ethnicity there is one-object and one-subject (with three relations). In reality there is a third object-subject: "the others." The reason is that the others do exist.

A. I am declaring my openness to the others, my "human-transcendence" to the other men. My life is intimately mingled with the others in a unity that is true, unique and an absolutely

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different type of identity. I am myself, but the others of the group are also myself. This could be true only if ethnicity could satisfy all that concerns human life. The others are a set of people with whom my own existence is auto-extended and shaped. This is what we call ethnic identity. It is extended to everyone of them, who form a limited group. They live in this specific place and time, with a specific economy and culture. I am among them in all that; I know them more than does anyone else in this world, just as they understand me more than anyone else.

This is a true relation of identity, but not in a static sense; it is dynamic. I go to the people, and they come to me in a process of identification that is a generative relation. My self-gift to others generates a group identity and the response of the community creates my own identity. Again it is a case of co-building, possible only because the others are also subjects or human persons. This is possible only in a very limited group, for the ethnic group is an expression of human limitation.

At this point one could ask: Can this argument be extended to all men? Surely it can, but very abstractly and not in a practical form. The huge world of men is very distant, quite different, very anonymous and constituted of a large quantity of cultural objects which do not mean anything to me.

B. This last factor leads us to the second of the three relations, namely, that between me and the culture. We must envisage the linkage between man and all the cultural objects with which the community is dealing. I cannot speak about culture because from inside the group there is no limit to the culture, no definition, but only a specific set of cultural objects that the community, with its individuals, have built or adopted from other groups or received from the past.

Generally, anthropologists agree that a culture is the product of a group, but this is not very exact. The "culture is a group," or better, a group is a specific "culture." We will see this later as the third relation. The culture "is" the group in the sense that the culture is another abstract concept which we do not want to adopt, for we are dealing with the set of cultural objects which a group has produced. A member of the community knows those objects whether material such as houses, weavings and pottery, or social objects such as language, education and technologies.

When people say "we," usually it is not a generic word stating a plurality, but an accurate utterance of identity. "We the Cackchiqueles" or "We the Mames" expresses this along with the geographical, ecological, biological and social connotations

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which support the mysterious reality of the group and its culture. Cultural objects, such as language and customs, are always related to the statements of identity, with its ambivalent and ambiguous relation to the elements which distinguish the group. Two analogous concepts refer to the cultural objects: personal identity related to the individual experience and ethnic identity related to group experience. In both cases, the basic support of the relations is the person; it is a cultural thing.

The similarity is very close. In both relations, it seems that the subject can choose between assuming a cultural object or substituting it for another if the circumstances and the overall good demands it. The relation of identity in this second kind of identification is not so important as in the first (as changing the style of clothes as contemporary fashion presses forward). Theoretically speaking, all cultural elements could be substituted, but that is not the case in reality. Persons and the groups develop their behavior very slowly. Cultural objects can be incorporated more or less into the consciousness of one's identity and consequently generate or weaken resistance to their removal. Individuals of the group can play an extremely important function in introducing new cultural objects accepted by the community without being refused as contrary to its identity. This second relation could be the path to peaceful introduction of cultural elements from different cultures.

C. The third relation is the trend that induces the group to choose this particular cultural element in place of another. The poles of the relation are the group, on the one hand, and the set of cultural objects, on the other. The group identifies itself with these cultural elements, not as a receiver, but as a creator. This is one's particular culture because one's group built it and is still building today. As we noted before this is a co-building of both the individual and the collectivity. Why do two different ethnic groups choose different ecological niches: the one farming and the other cattle raising? If the highest criteria were economic the response to the environment would have to be the same. Of many recent studies in this field we shall cite only a few: S.M. Michael (1986),¹⁴ Pedro Ramet (1984),¹⁵ Noam Chomski,¹⁶ Donna Birdwell-Pheasant (1986),¹⁷ M. Gaborieu (1986),¹⁸ Chinen Joyce N. (1984),¹⁹

Anthropologists, ethnologists and sociologists usually study the way people take their decisions, without considering why they took them. Mechanisms of decision-making are internal to the group and without any apparent reason. If we do not agree with Pavlov's theory of mechanical or biological reflexes at this point we must open some space for human creativity.

The third relation of ethnic identity, between the group and culture, directs our attention to the production of culture. The group performs a demiurgic function amid individuals in the world. Everyone knows the uncertainty and fears we suffer in facing the world. The group, with its previous experience mediates the understanding of the world and protects against its dangers. That is the first pattern of mediation: between the person and the natural world. We must deal with it and we need the surrounding group in order to be able to do so.

The second relation of mediation between the group and the world is to make sense of it. Man is searching for meaning and every signification needs a symbol. The second demiurgical function of the relation of group to culture is that of symbolization: the group gives the world the power to signify. The production of culture is the production of symbols. The group allows us to understand the world through a chain of symbols: it is symbolic understanding. The creation of culture is the creation of symbols which provide particular "interpretations" of the world.

But the group is nothing more than this particular "set of persons"; consequently the group is the "demiurg" of creation. It brings out old meanings and fixes new ones. The demiurgic function of the culture creates a structure of symbols whose significance is common to the members of the ethnic community. Of course, the products of civilization are quite useful and productive, such as houses, work instruments, language, music; they fulfill the needs of ordinary existence. But they are symbolic also and create the meaning of the whole universe. This meaning, as it is created by the members of the group, is generally unknown to the other groups, just as others' cultures do not have their complete significance for our group.

Generally, cultural objects obtained from a different group may have a practical function and be useful, but they lack the semantic implication of our cultural objects. That, I feel, is the root of many misunderstandings of the group. We want to give them a set of cultural objects (read "developments"), but the group does not want to accept them because they are not significant to the group. This is the social-cost of so-called "change." Is it worth it? To them it is not. One would not substitute an object that lacks meaning to him for one that has meaning. One would not integrate his life into something devoid of semantic implication, when one is able to create something with more significance.

Language is an external thing, universal, generic and open to all people; in contrast the meta-language of the internal meaning for the group is esoteric, collective, local, exclusive,

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suitable to this community. The language of things does not develop ties between people and make the material and natural worlds human; the human world is a spiritual one built by persons through rational cultural products.

The group brings the individual the chance to appropriate its own surroundings and to create a new world. One man alone cannot create a culture, but this can be done by a group. This esoteric communication establishes a constant and common support for individual life in the context of the community and separates this portion of society--one's physical, emotional and spiritual world--from other groups and peoples. As every other language, communication within the group has two directions, from group to the person and from person to the group. This dialogue may be broken by a particular individual who does not agree in some fundamental issue with the community and leave it to go to a bigger world.

The understanding of the world through the culture is the means for man to appropriate or interpretate his world and destiny. Things known and verified become part of man himself and constitute the truth of the world. Man is a being open to the world, but his main way of reaching the world is through his intellect and emotions, that is, his culture. Consequently all cultural objects are integrated in the creation of the world. Indeed, the bridge by which a man goes to the world, as well as the structure of his world, is his culture.

The pattern of a group and consequently the difference between two ethnic groups is not only economic, social or technical, but semantic; it is a difference of worlds. The struggle generated at the frontier between two groups is usually not a desire for conquest or a dispute about a piece of land for material advantage, but a struggle for significance and meaning. The acts and behavior, the values and laws of a strange group are meaningless; their symbols are semantically poor and devoid of relation to another world. The group can sometimes adopt a new cultural object in order to survive or have material benefits, but their meaning is lost. For generally it belongs to the meta-language of the other group and is out of the way, inaccessible, uneasy and meaningless.

Alienation from the Group

A citizen can leave the group and become involved in the vast world outside with a different scale of values, a different language and different technical knowledge. He thus alienates himself from his group. The alienated individual will not be able to be incorporated into the other group precisely because for

the same reason that he does not understand the secret rules of the game of the new group, its unique meta-language. He will be forever condemned to suffer permanent marginalization.

Of course, he can learn to use one of the conventional languages of general or international culture at an inter-group level. He can live and produce at a superficial level; he can develop some practical but superficial substitute for an identity without the ability to grasp the deeper intensive meaning of the world or have real communication and share human partnership and concerns.

This person has lost his identity in his group, yet not his personal identity; the group alienates him but he is not personally alienated. But at some level, he has suffered a decrease in his personality, losing contact with his community's identity and his integration into that world--which for him is the only real world. He can never substitute for this private and intimate dimension, even if it will be compensated for and covered by his broader, more general cultural improvement.

Abstractly and in principle the two cultural dimensions are absolutely compatible and could co-exist in the same man, so that the subject retains his former involvement with his group. In this case we would speak about higher and lower levels of identity or, more exactly, of different trends or paths. But to the man who loses the group's cultural view and its symbolic construction and appropriation of the world, the second situation is not enough. He needs a new group, but none will accept him. As anthropologists state, with few specific exceptions one cannot be integrated into a different ethnic or quasi-ethnic group. One of the conditions of sharing the identity of such a group is to be born into it.

This is our last insight in this matter and it leads us to the problem of the growth of the new generation of a group. To be born in-group means to turn into an adult in terms of that group. The process of rapid transformation of the new born is a process of identification of the person with the external world, the human world and the meaning which the group and the cultural symbols give to it. What happens when a young man faces the external world (in our case, the strange and dominating Spanish culture) and tries to interpret it? Education as an ethnological process of evolution for the person by which the culture transmits a language and economic technical skills is present in all societies; it cannot be distinguished from the process by which society survives and transforms itself.

The ethnic group has an education without schools and with no books, but it has other institutions which express and communicate local tradition and thought in a complete and for-

mal fashion; it is a living education. To cite but one example we can repeat the words of a young Maya theoretician, Manuel Salazar Tetzaguic:²⁰ "I am plunged into the Cosmos. What benefit does this produce? I am a part of nature: animals are my brothers; I live with them. I look for ways to work in nature: to cultivate the maize, to build a house, to cut timber. All around there is a spirit; every man has a Nahual." The ethnic identity through its vision of the Cosmos sets the person and the group in a universe with a cosmic attitude reflecting his conception, with a literary tradition and oral communication, with hopes and fears, and with faith in the energies of nature: earth, mountains, woods, or peculiar ritual sites. In ethnic education traditional patterns are made manifest in linguistic formulae which are assimilated as components of one's identity.

Ethnic Education

For the young man, the fundamental structure given by ethnic education becomes his mental structure. During this period, a child develops the mental instruments to communicate with his fellows and neighbors, to organize his thoughts logically and to find the path to expression and creativity.

When the young man encounters Spanish culture at the elementary school, and with it a set of symbols which are meaningless from the point of view of his community, he experiences frustration and internal stress. He can learn the words mechanically and shape his behavior to the rules imposed by teachers, but he will never assimilate the spiritual content and the semantic values of the dominant culture.

The official intention to substitute Spanish as the national culture and to suppress one's ethnic worldview is not only aggression, but a real destruction of the biological, psychological and intellectual development the group began and promoted by the new generation. At this point of our analysis we can understand why this is so, for the analysis has clarified some complex mechanism of the group's structure and of the ethnic identity.

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Reflections

From this starting point we can draw some initial conclusions:

1. The ethnic group is not an accidental or secondary structure of human society because it concerns some very intimate dimensions of the person.
2. Ethnicity is not a romantic idea to exalt some particular human minority or the lore of some culture; it is a dif-

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ficult and universal issue.

3. Ethnic identity is an expression of the fundamental right of the individual person and the human community to be free and creative.

4. Ethnic identity is an intellectual and gnoseological being, which is not primarily economic or political, but cultural.

5. We must recognize the existence of ethnicity and of ethnic identity instead of trying to change a people's culture.

6. We must develop these cultures and make clear the semantic values of the world they create.

7. We must deal with cultural pluralism to find an understanding between different ethnic groups.

8. Cultural pluralism is not a problem, but a fact.

9. Cultural pluralism is not opposed to unity because it merely brings out problems of understanding and of personal evolution; an official culture makes no sense.

10. The complex ethnic and personal identities has many levels, trends, and areas of concern which overflow the limits of the group and imply intercultural bonds.

11. The promotion of people must be not merely take place in a local culture which it disregards, but from that group's culture.

12. We must cooperate with persons in the local culture to develop the project of growth from within the community or region.

13. Development cannot be understood as the imposition of technical or commercial patterns, but as human understanding and adaptation and as the creation of meaning.

14. We must overcome the confusion between "differences" and "inequalities." Differences are free and creative; inequities are unjust and oppressive. We must eliminate the inequalities and respect the differences.

Here, we would repeat the suggestion of the Mexican anthropologist Bonfil Batalla (Dec. 1986),²⁰ "We have restricted human values to the economic ones." We have assimilated the external elements of the culture and made people interiorize an inferiority complex about their culture. The human group is the source of cultural expression: all must begin from the group and their form of life.

(To be continued)

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NOTES

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