

Further problems in producing viable model of analysis

TRIBE - is a concept which requires a conceptual analysis. Use of the concept reveals what is in fact a conceptual system - a way or multiplicity of ways in which 'people', 'communities' are thought about, are perceived by others and perceive themselves.

It quickly becomes apparent that the term tribe as found in Iran is a term, a label used in very different ways, and the meaning or significance of the terms used varies according to a number of different and often antagonistic ways. The very extent to which the term and terms used are to be found suggests that it is one of the various means through which people conceive of themselves, give themselves and are given IDENTITY. It is a means of talking about people; a means of presenting oneself in the public arena. It is a medium of communication, a medium through which, and by means of which people interact, or refuse to interact.

There is no easy definition of what a TRIBE is, primarily because it can be defined in such a variety of ways. Tribe in Iran is more of an idea, i.e. really is a concept, and its analysis demands an analysis of the Iranian conceptual system as a whole, of which the term TRIBE is but an element, one mode of identification among many others.

The most significant feature thus to be asked about TRIBE as a concept, a system of classification, is to enquire into how, in Iran, do people think, how do they think about their world, not just what they think. Can thinking tribally, or thinking about TRIBE be revealed better by examining how concepts are formed and used in Persian. Is it that we are looking at a TRIBAL MODE OF THOUGHT. a NOMADIC MODE OF THOUGHT; better a nomadic style of conceptualisation is their something distinctive in DEGREE in the nomadic style of orientation to the WORLD, through which they MOVE. Nomadism, overlaid by tribalism increases, intensifies this specific orientation which is distinctive in some of its apparent qualities

How people think about Tribe can be seen in a number of ways, the most revealing, I think, by examining the Terms used for TRIBE - and this means an examination of the TERMS within the Persian system itself. The situation is quite different from Africa, or New Guinea in many crucial respects, throwing into relief not just problems concerning TRIBES; whatever they may BE, but also the range of social categories, formations and forms in the region.

There are thus a number of , a multiplicity of criteria utilised in the identification of people, groups, communities, categories, and also , logically, individuals have equally, a multiplicity of modes of self identification. Self realisation is a combination of and the interaction of Self-Others processes of identity and identification.

It is important to clarify the point that this level of analysis is 'ideological'. The use of a primarily 'ideological' mode of address and reference to others, involves a consideration of the terms so used as symbols rather than signs. Collective representations.

Sign or Symbol
These terms treated as signs point only in one direction - away from the content . Huxley's use and Geertz use seems more appropriate - models of and for; even better, symbols enclose their reality content.

The suggestion so far is to treat the concept TRIBE as a species of a "Total System" of meaning formations in which the world as experienced and the world as perceived finds dynamic expression.

Thus a semiological analysis of the conceptual representations should interact with a Modes of Production type analysis. - here the superstructure is not just a replication, or a reflection of the infrastructure , but the former is the mode through which the latter is conceptualised?

In the centre of this dialectic, which is historical materialism(?) between ideology and praxis(?) between superstructure and infrastructure lies the experiencing social being. Both superstructure and infrastructure are not amenable to ~~experience~~ observation - they in fact are the product of historical experience in which the two reflect back on each other in a sense, and it is how they do this that is important because human beings are in the 'middle'.

'Science' may tell us that man is not the centre of the universe and no matter how 'objectively' 'TRUE' this statement might appear to be in an astronomical perspective, it could perhaps be characterised as a perception embedded in a capitalist if not as well as an imperialist mode of production. In other words, generalising grossly, but I hope revealingly, the highly technologically dependent 'scientific' perception of the universe can only be sustained within the mode of production - capitalist- which allows for the accumulation of the vast surpluses necessary to sustain such enterprises.

Vast production of knowledge of the world, the material world at that, its storing capacity outside the hands of individuals and held in institutions - Univs. libraries, museums etc - in short, what we call our CULTURE is a product of means and modes of production.

cf K. Gough - Anthropology the child of imperialism. Science as ideology in other words is, in other cultures a RELIGIOUS ideology. In other words to study the way other cultures 'see' the world, studying other peoples 'ideologies', ways of conceiving of and expressing the world is crucially important- one way in is undoubtedly to study modes, means, relations, forces of different types of production, i.e. social formations. The other inverse mode of operating which is Ardener's New Anth. etc is to study meaning, language, the ways in which people understand, perceive and make sense of themselves- their collective representations I suppose.

A crucial question, which is being tackled in lots of different directions, but without any common framework, or without a 'general theoretical framework' - possibly without a totalising framework such as those in vogue in 19th C. - Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Wagner, - what caused this to develop; a type of political consciousness - an efflorescence of freedom from the constraints of past religion - cf. the great emergence of Giant Jewish intellectuals -----

is examining in greater detail how knowledge is acquired, how it is stored, accumulated, added to, how it is transmitted, to whom it is transmitted; how it is monopolised and traded. How is access to knowledge controlled - age, sex etc. - structures of domination. How does learning process take place, under whose control. Access to means of production of knowledge apportioned how? - women excluded. Women are sources of reproduction (production line babies) - they are sources for and of the future - just as crops/animals, land are. Factors of production? Sources are best kept invisible - women and divinity. Surround sources with protection devices which maximise their invisibility, which thus maximise one's control over sources of production. Structures erected protecting, cutting off from public gaze - i.e. from conscious knowledge

Source of KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH, VISION OF GOD, are thus the heart of the matter - not means and modes of production - relations of production - all of these are male institutions and do not get to the source, the question begged by Marxist materialists, and by him to.

How is source, centre, heart, inside, conceptualised in Iran - and we begin to see the most powerful overdetermining of the entire culture - i.e. productive forces. We need to examine not just what means, modes, relations, forces of production are, but how they are experienced, lived in and through, are qualified by the necessity for ALL of these to be SOURCED. GOD? Women, QORAN, SUFI LITERATURE, Water Wells (places where women go, SHRINES (sourced places). This connects directly to my writing on quality place and time

TIME itself is source - i.e. eternity. Here is a way in which everything can be examined to get at the heart of the matter. Source of good/evil - eye symbolism. Protection of Qoran, the literary embodiment of TRUTH, the allegorical and metaphorical and metamorphic if 'SEEN' Sufi literature which is perennially subversive. Source of POWER as well - secular and temporal; divine and eternal.

In preliterate society, knowledge is stored, not in books to which only an elite may have access, Holy books can be in a non understood language, but in the culture. The BODY is a prime carrier of knowledge, but importantly and probably more importantly the BODY in its differential treatment - in TIME as well as Space- different bodies, or the same body at different times, under different condits. is a storhouse of HOW TO KNOW. This latter gives the clues as to the qualitative evaluation of the spectrum of knowledge in a community -the what is known. We can focus this even more finely to the issue of Self knowledge - i.e. source as conscious of itself. This is both difficult and dangerous(wisdom) which explains perhaps why Divinity only KNOWS all THINGS, the first and the last; he alone knows SELF. Other analagous or partial sources - WOMEN must therefore be denied such SELF knowledge. Women are negative divinity, the opposite pole of Divinity, are ignorant of their own SOURCEDNESS and are kept so by depriving them of interaction with the world, by hiding and protecting them, by separating them off. By treating them as undifferentiated WHOLES, consciousness itself is denied them - consciousness emerging through the perception of difference.

Women are thus massively negatively Superdetermined category defined exclusively in terms of TOTAL CONTROL. The quality and diversity of controlling mechanisms taken together is where the answer lies.- from veils, to linguistic referential invisibility. Their existence as sources(of reproduction and symbolic of divinity) is

predicated on the pragmatic temporal control of their form, their bodies, to the point where their physical existence becomes symbolically negated. Women thus literally embody the contradiction between source- energy, principle, fluidity, timelessness and its temporal manifestation in specific women. They embody the clash between the idealised principle of femininity, continuity, eternity, flow of time and its realisation, in the world of time, place

In them the ABSOLUTE, TRUTH, REALITY, DIVINITY is partially realised, but humanised. While DIVINITY is absolute GOOD, women embody humanised divinity- therefore are pregnant with potential for both good and bad. Women UNITE and DIVIDE as well. The image of a well-source (jins etc) which as it flows through space, land, i.e. time becomes differentiated, distributed etc.

Marriage can then perhaps be seen in conjunction with the division of water for irrigation. Women are symbolised by Water. Both are rigorously controlled. Principle of division in Ali Kuh, Khorde Malek land is to sit in a circle and work counterclockwise, choosing the start by a game, and then dividing the water according to TIME. of flow, not quantity of water exactly.

i.e. femininity (water) is something that one has temporal access to only, not permanent. Rain - women (baran) is a gift of God, comes at certain times, in unknown and unpredictable quantities, outside of man's control completely, except nomads who move themselves to get the rain in form of pasture, rain can be dangerous, can kill, rain is a double edged gift - snow (barf) can also kill by freezing, turning to stone, stopping the flow slowing it down at least. Too much, too little, flowing too fast (floods) too slow (frozen snow) all can bring death. Rain itself is neutral - can bring life and death, just as women can. Can bring success or failure. This is why women MUST produce male children. A Barren woman is a disaster - a non person. Too little flow. Flow of blood, temporarily stopped in pregnancy, but produces a child. Too much flow - abortion.

Here we have another parallel. Women - water - blood - milk - rain
Men - land - flesh - semen - drought
body

Interior private night moon wells caves hidden continuity
surface public day sun hilltop plain visible discontinuity

shrine tant veiled silent bent circled Time
mosque market moustached vocal straight squared Space

Soft boiled fat hot wet birds flowers herbs
hard roast flesh cool dry animals plants grass

salt - preserves, slows degeneration,; melts snow-speeds flow.
associated negatively with evil, left, brackish.
sugar - turns fluid viscous - i.e. Sharbat , shireh, opium

Both of these are transformers - change quality of that which they mix with or come into contact with. Salt and sugar are not visible in water- i.e. their transformation is one of quality, not appearance they change also TASTE. Salt makes food 'tasty' in a way which sugar does not. Sugar disguises, it sweetens, changes the taste, whereas salt brings out the inherent qualities, it makes it more of the same. Amount becomes importance - too much or too little of both. Sharbat is 'Too much' for western tastes for example. Greater amounts of sugar in fact changes consistency of liquid, whereas salt does not. Too much salt and food becomes non edible - evil tasting?

Salt and sugar are not opposites - say like sweet and sour which combine neatly. Salt and water do not combine in this way.- do not negate each other. Work negatively on each other .

Some thoughts on the above separations. Top line - all are kept rigorously separate. Rain/drought can not happen together logically. Milk and meat, blood and meat are separated from consumption. Men and women are kept separate. By extension land and water are kept separate, ownership different. Hence failure of land reform it fell foul of separation. Land is static and compact - water-qanat flows and is wide spread - comes from a source and travels through - nomad