

FAMILY AND CAPITALISM

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1. Summary

This book on Sociology consists of three parts. In the first we study the relationships that are established on the parade grounds of a barracks between soldiers and Sergeant during the practice of Military Drill, as if we were dealing with *a laboratory case*:

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In the second and third part we will apply the analytical method that we have elaborated here to the study of the family and capitalism.

I

The study of a situation which is so simple and concrete as is the practice of Drill allows us to define with absolute precision, *by means of formulas*, the activities of the persons that participate in it.

These formulas demand of the reader a constant effort of rigorous and abstract thought (not greater, in any case, than that of a physics manual for 15 or 16 year olds); but these formulas will also grant the reader the ability *to deduce* the structural parts of any collective human action.

For this reason the effort will be more than compensated. This, at least, is what my first-year students have said.

The reader, who is well used to a deductive line of argument, just as in a theorem, may be disconcerted by some of the more narrative parts of the text. After having chosen this means of exposition for tactical reasons, it may seem that the author loses his way at times and makes risky excursions into other disciplines. However, if he does so, it is always for the sake of the main sociological line of thought, which he does not abandon even for an instant.

The most important theoretical results obtained in the study of Military Drill are those that later will be used to analyse the family and capitalism, these being: the formula of the crime/punishment relationship, which is common to all human societies; the precise way in which language intervenes in the construction of social action; the organic, though not innate, condition of the linguistic function; the evolution in time of any collective activity, and how such an activity becomes a regular one; the consequences of the latter to lay the foundations of a true scientific Sociology, etc etc

II

By applying the procedures of the method that we have developed in the study of Military Drill to investigate the origin of the relationships of kinship or the prohibition of incest (which are basically the same), we can deduce the reason for its existence and its political meaning: these relationships hail back to the end of the 'Homo Erectus' period when they were used to submit the young *males*, right from their infancy, to the discipline of the adult *males*.

The rearing of the male infant by the female-mother under the *collective* domination of the adult males, over tens of thousands of generations, caused the evolution of the genotype of homo from 'Erectus' to 'Sapiens', and the consequent expansion over the whole planet of the prohibition of incest, which Anthropology documents everywhere.

The nucleus of the family is but one particular variety of kinship, which arises due to extra-parental motives, from the Neolithic agricultural revolution onwards; it consists of the male parent, the female parent and the male infant; a political group whose objective is the education of this male infant as the inheritor of the private territory of the male parent.

The application over hundreds of thousands of years of the prohibition of incest has converted the corresponding linguistic contents into organics (these being different in the male and female 'Sapiens').

However, that they are organics does *not* mean they are innate: to mature they need to be activated throughout the life of each individual.

For this reason we dedicated Chapter 11 to describing how this manly and maternal activation used to take place in the patriarchal times of our great-grandparents, in the nucleus of the family.

III

For Karl Marx the accumulation of capital by industrial means has its origins in the difference between the price charged for the work which the worker has added to the product and the price paid for the labour power of this worker.

This accountancy is the new crime/punishment relationship which disciplines the men and women protagonists of the capitalist productions of good and services. This is where, day by day, the independent and egalitarian mentality is *subconsciously* created.

And now we reach the nub of the question. How is the nucleus of the family affected by the fact that the buying and selling of the labour-power is taking control of all areas of production?

This has been happening in the Western World over centuries, but while businesses continue to be family property, this logically produces a reinforcement of the patriarchal system. This changes after the Second World War: the anonymous capitals of the multinational companies (for their expansion) need less and less the cyclic reproduction of the nucleus of the family, which gains (statistically) in freedom.

From then on every woman who conquers economic independence also achieves the political capacity to have children free of patriarchal control, which is disappearing.

And our egalitarian mentality, *which is nothing but a sub-conscious form of accountancy*, rules out that in this social system of capitalist domination there could be an ideal of perfection for the woman as mother.

In this way the nucleus of the Family disintegrates itself; couples with steady jobs with their 1.6 children; second marriages with children from previous marriages; homosexuals with adopted children; lonely (no single) men and women; etc. etc.

And yet things do not seem so extreme: despite everything the family resists... Why? Because in the depth of the experience of sexual relationships and those for rearing children the organic linguistic contents of the hundreds of thousand-year-old prohibition of incest are *fatally* reactivated. These contents will find a way of making themselves present, at least in private.

Paradoxically, the access to the maturing of these 'Sapiens' linguistic contents now needs, in our highly capitalised societies, a repeated political challenge: our adolescents behave just as did the late 'Erectus' immediately prior to the establishment of kinship, immediately prior to the prohibition of incest: but the drugs, the sex, and the rock and roll, are but the *symbolic*, relatively pacific recreation of that primordial, true physical violence.

However, the suffering will be greater every year, especially in the U.S.A. The contradiction between the progress of capitalism (merely historical) and the prohibition of incest (which exists at a biological level) has no more than started... What will it be like in 7 or 9 generations? I prefer not to see it.

The only *collective* answer to this galloping contradiction, the only *political* way out, is always in reach of the men and women of the Western and westernized World. To transform, little by little, generation after generation, industrial production until it *ceases* to be capitalist.

2. Classic authors

The development of the main line of argument needs at times the strategic intervention of the theories of Darwin, Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Freud, Marx, Hobbes, although only the most basic and easiest aspects of these authors. In this sense this essay can also be seen as one of the possible ways of establishing relationships between these classic authors.

3. Intention

However, the final intention of the author, naturally, is to make a truly scientific discipline of Sociology, one that is based on the logical deduction of equations, and on their mathematical (probabilistic) verification, as in physics.

If he has or has not achieved any success in this, only his readers will know.

Translated by Richard Harris