

Summaries of articles

Between Husband and Sons : Social Aspects of an Emotional Conflict

L. ACCATI LEVI

The article consists of two contrasting parts. In the first, the author presents the life-histories of a generation of aged peasant women in Friuli. They are focussed on marriage and the relationships among women affines within a virilocal extended family. The power which women exercise indirectly through husband and sons increases as sons grow up and the husband-father grows old.

The second part concerns the life-histories of the women researchers who project their own social and emotional experience of husbands, fathers and sons into the material they are attempting to interpret. Interviewees and interviewers have different experiences of family relationships and work values. The interviewers come from urban, nuclear families in which relationships are primary and individualised. Work is linked to the paternal role, rather than being a subsistence activity in which all family members are engaged.

The peasant women's biographies reveal a difficult adaptation to a rigidly predetermined role. Those of the researchers bring to light a persistent and unresolved conflict between identification with the mother and identification with the father.

More Desired than Gold : Exchange and Female/Male Relationships in Oceania

A. B. WEINER

In this essay, I demonstrate that specific kinds of material objects used as currency and as the markers of social relations, gain their ultimate value from their actions as they manifest cultural principles of decay and death, and simultaneously, the history of successive acts of rebirth. These objects, all of them in a categorical sense, « cloth », are manufactured by women from fibrous plant materials. As « cloth » takes on greater physical durability, the object becomes a more precise recorder of history, documenting the power of cosmological phenoma (ahistorical time), and acting on and notating the socio-political dimensions of historical time. In Oceania, I argue that such « cloth », forms the basis for the development of political stratification.

Between Dream and Resignation : Popular Utopia in Pre-Modern Poland

J. TAZBIR

While the Polish nobility remained unaffected by classical utopias, popular utopias enjoyed a great success in Poland. This paper analyses the themes and significance of these compensatory dreams.

Individual Consciousness and the Vision of the Beyond in the Middle Ages

A. J. GUREVIČ

How did medieval man conceive of death? This article attempts an answer to this question by analysing primarily the accounts of voyages to the other world.

State Versus Rural Community in Burgundy (1661-1789)

H. L. ROOT

In 1756, a Burgundian seigneur, Loppin de Gemeaux, was engaged in a bitter and protracted struggle with the provincial intendant Joly de Fleury. At issue was the particular seignorial prerogative entitling Loppin to convoke, and preside over, meetings of the village assembly. But, as we shall see, Loppin was defending much more than a procedural detail. At stake was the essence of lordship, which in Loppin's view, combined the ownership of land with the exercise of public authority. The outcome of this case is highly suggestive of how relations between peasants, and seigneurs, and the state were changing in the late eighteenth century. In fact, the case was to mark a turning point in the monarchy's efforts to divest the Burgundian seigneurie of its administrative functions.

The Agrarian Structures of the Duchy of Limbourg and of the Outre-Meuse Region (17th-19th Centuries)

P. SERVAIS

The "Pays de Herve", which lies between Liège and Aachen, presents an original and essentially pastoral landscape. The patterns of land tenure and farming, as well as the geographical and professional distribution of landowners, point to the existence of a primarily local, individualized, non-noble, indeed peasant-run agrarian system as early as the 17th century. By analyzing the real-estate market one can identify its sources of financing, as well as the factors responsible for its stability and fragmentation. A comparison between the 17th-18th centuries and the mid-19th century reveals the respective impact of rural industry and of the industrial revolution on the system as a whole, providing the basis for a qualitative model of the regional economy.

Farm Accounts and Production Systems : an Economic Assessment of Cattle-Fattening in Lower Normandy in the Early 19th Century

B. GARNIER

This article draws on the example of a large farm and its accounting records for a study of a little-known form of speculation : steer-fattening. Using an accounting model incorporating a special breakdown of expenses, the author analyzes the income of the husbandman and his farm and attempts to define the economic rationale behind his choices, both past and future. This calls for a description of the production system. In addition to a high per capita output, this system is characterized by its hyperspecialization and its twin dependence on the market as an outlet for its products, of course, but also as a source of raw material, that is, lean cattle. These factors help to explain the geographical pattern of cattle-fattening in 18th century and early 19th century France.

***Society in Fact and Vision :
Frustrated Intellectuals in 17th Century***

R. CHARTIER

This article begins with a question framed in both historical and sociological terms : what are the social and psychological effects on a given population of intellectuals when the number of university graduates becomes greater than the number of posts available to them ? This study first tries to see if the hypothesis derived from the British case can be extended to all of Europe. It therefore looks at both the situation within the universities and the job market for graduates. The discussion then moves from social behavior to the ideological reasons for the surplus of intellectuals, which is examined in its 17th century manifestations (literary, political and sociological) and in its longer-term features (notions of the intellectual and notions of knowledge). Thus this historical outline also serves as a fable about the present.