Naturally, as in every militaristic culture, whether it be that of the North American Plains or of modern Prussia, the ideological superstructure bore heavily on women. It might thrill them to the core to hear how a son or husband had wiped out a whole tentful of Cheyenne, but it was not so pleasant when sooner or later retribution was visited upon a near kinsman. And it was not only the enemy that brought grief. How did Crow women feel about that fortnight's licensed libertinage in the spring, when Foxes and Lumpwoods broke up many happy homes?...Strikes-at-night gave a graphic account of the average woman's reactions:

> My husband was a great warrior. He was a Fox. The Lumpwoods and the Foxes were stealing each other's wives one season while my husband was on the warpath. Before I had married, another man had courted me with gifts of beef and horses, but I married Bull-weasel's father. Now this suitor came with other Lumpwoods to get me. I was afraid they were going to take me by force...My husband returned with Big-ox's war party, and I saw him looking for me. The people told him I had fled in order not to be taken away...He told me that if the Lumpwoods came for me while he was present he would let me go, but if I hid it would be well...I heard the Lumpwoods outside. They had taken the wife of a man who had been living with her peacefully for several years. He got furious and was going to kill her...The Lumpwoods all scattered. They took revenge on the Foxes by cutting up their robes into strips and pounding their horses' feet...the wife-kidnapping ceased, and I escaped. [1948:359–60]

Lowie ends by conveying the plight of woman and her complicity in "militaristic culture":

> Crow women of the old school, then, had a hard lot. They were forever mourning their husbands or brothers or sons; and at home they were exposed to the blatant virility of their tribesmen. Yet the women who had lived in the buffalo-hunting days preferred them to the pedestrian security of a modern reservation. The reason is clear: the old life had a tang that is drained out of contemporary conditions...Visions and ceremonial activity were open to both sexes. Muskrat...had visions that enabled her to doctor broken bones and other ailments. She had held the highest post in her branch of the Tobacco society and adopted many novices. For the old-fashioned Crow woman the days of the war parties and the military societies, for all their tribulations, had a rich content. "I know the songs (of the Goose Egg Dance)," Strikes-at-night told me, "and sometimes I sing them, and they bring back memories of the past that make me feel sad." [Lowie 1948:61]

(Might one translate "tang" as "Zauberung"?) Like Weber, the most disturbing aspect of Lowie's theory of the state (first outlined in 1920) – an overcentralization of sodalities that ought to remain plural and competitive – is how prophetic it proved.

Lowie's work on society and sodality clarified the contrastive systematics implicit in Boas's general view of cultures. Lowie, and perhaps Lowie alone of his generation of anthropologists, avoided those difficulties in German historicism that were, according to Talcott Parsons, "repeated a half century later in American cultural anthropology" (1971:30). His wary method eventually lost ground to the more substantialist views of social and psychological form developed in the school of culture and personality and to semisynthetic

notions of superorganic culture tested by Kroeber and others. Lowie's intricate approach – avoiding pat paradigm cases and substantive classes of phenomena – was revitalized later by Fred Eggan (1950/1973, 1961), who incorporated Radcliffe-Brown's lessons in abstracting social structures in closely documented, historically informed "controlled comparison." Moreover, Lévi-Strauss – always expressing profound admiration for Boas, Lowie, and Eggan – developed his dazzling structuralism (a reconstituted, "depositivized" *L'année sociologique*) in light of their example. Although Lowie had barely mentioned Durkheim (Barnes 1966:171), in Lévi-Strauss's work they meet at last.

With these aspects of Lowie fresh in our minds, we might briefly turn to some related figures. Ruth Benedict, for example, as complex a writer as Lowie, was less reificationist and psychologistic than she was later reputed to be. Her work is often associated with the shift toward thematic wholes in the 1930s in light of psychoanalytic concerns – developments epitomized in Margaret Mead's remarkable career. Mead was the first professional American anthropologist to devote her primary fieldwork to non-Amerindian populations. The geographical remove of Samoa and her subsequent field sites from the mainstream of New World comparative research doubtless strengthened her already considerable determination to divert the discipline from diffusionism and close variations and to turn it toward psychological themes. The tenor of Mead's views is apparent from the advice she wrote Benedict from New Guinea, urging her to revise the manuscript for *Patterns of Culture*; Mead counseled her own teacher (Benedict) to disavow what she herself had been taught:

> So here goes, and try to see me saying it, wrinkling my brows and making awful faces to get it clear...
>
> The Zuni chapter is grand...And that chapter and the Northwest Coast will be the most important, of course. But the order and arrangement of the rest worries me. It's written to some four or five audiences...The result has had a bad effect on your style, the texture is all uneven and choppy, sometimes intimate, sometimes heavily formal, sometimes colloquial or journalese, sometimes in the jargon of anthropology and sometimes in the phrases of good literature...It would be a bad accident if your feeling for style and texture were to be spoilt by an accident of assembling of miscellaneous source materials, plus an evident consciousness of trying to write so that Papa Franz [Boaz] and Lowie will approve...Of course I am not sure whether you are writing an essay in social theory, or an essay in the philosophy of cultural temperament, or a book which, under the guise of dealing with this point is to put over a lot of other points also. I am afraid that it is the latter and I don't think it is best. The point is too fine to be muddied about with diffusion and evolution and race prejudice and all the rest of it. I'd scrap the first chapter forever...I'd write a short introduction along the lines of the "arc of human experience and the sounds in language" – but omitting the further illustrations as too slight to carry the point – for it needs a whole culture to do so.
>
> And I'd leave out all the adolescence point and the war point – for as Reo [Fortune] says it's just a Lowie "they do and they don't" point while what you want to say is "they do and they don't incredibly" and it takes a whole culture to do that.

> . . . make it a single theme essay – all in your own style – scrap all the other articles – don't ever look at them, and aim at a high audience. It will then be a fine thing, consistent in itself and with you, with no Boasian-Lowie-ish-Germanic scraps in it. [Mead 1959:335–7]

With that combination of subtle insight ("they do and they don't incredibly" – actually Reo Fortune's comment on *Patterns*) and diluting compromise (simplify! simplify!) that became her trademark, Mead demands of Benedict an interpretation more integrated than Benedict wished to make. Happily, on this occasion Benedict was a match for Mead's will; in 1933 she wrote in her response: "Classes are over and I'm working on the book. I'm distressed that you don't like it, the part you've seen. But I've consulted everybody I can think of about omitting the first two chapters, and they are strong against it. . . Well, I hope you won't think it's all awful. . . The blanket disapproval I can't do much with, but I've tried to bring the first chapters closer to my own standards" (Mead 1959:337–8). Moreover, she left Lowie (and Boas) in. *Patterns of Culture* (1934) – one of the few classics of American ethnology – survived. In its final form it continued to speak from many vantages despite Mead's pleas that it be reduced to thematic conformity. The weeding out of Lowie would have undermined its contrastive essence. A Sapir-like linguistic analogy frames the entire study – a portion of which Mead, too, would have preserved:

> It is in cultural life as it is in speech; selection is the prime necessity. The numbers of sounds that can be produced by our vocal cords and our oral and nasal cavities are practically unlimited. The three or four dozen of the English language are a selection which coincides not even with those of such closely related dialects as German and French. The total that are used in different languages of the world no one has even dared to estimate. But each language must make its selection and abide by it on pain of not being intelligible at all. A language that used even a few hundreds of the possible – and actually recorded – phonetic elements could not be used for communication. . .
>
> The great arc along which all the possible human behaviors are distributed is far too immense and too full of contradictions for any one culture to utilize even any considerable portion of it. Selection is the first requirement. Without selection no culture could even achieve intelligibility, and the intentions it selects and makes its own are a much more important matter than the particular detail of technology or the marriage formality that it also selects in similar fashion. [Benedict 1934/1961:23, 237]

Benedict used psychological labels to situate the relative position of certain cultures along her arc of configurations. More precisely, the labels pertained to the ritual emphases in each culture's self-exaggerations. She selected her two primary examples for their heightened contrast: pacific, ceremonious, prayerful, priest-controlled Zuni versus orgiastic, exhibitionist, shaman-bedazzled Kwakiutl. When Benedict appends psychological labels – "monomaniacal" Kwakiutls – she seems to be posing intrinsic traits. When she phrases the matter in distorted borrowings from Dilthey, Spengler, and Nietzsche as

contrasts in *Weltanschauungen* – Faustian/Apollonian or Apollonian/Dionysiac – her argument sounds more relational, with neither quality representing a lapse from some standard norm. Finally, when Benedict introduces more cautious Boasian historical notes or Lowie-like particular contrasts, *Patterns of Culture* avoids artificial, substantive reification altogether. Her suggestions might be paraphrased in the following way: The Zuni, in strongest contrast to the Apache (their neighbors and rivals who engage in vision quests and individualistic warfare rites), organize themselves ritually around nonvisionary ceremonies, more so even than the Hopi; and, compared with the Haida and other neighbors, the not yet matrilineal Kwakiutl are property obsessed, accentuating the mother's brother tie through transmission of status objects.

Patterns of Culture began and remained a contrastive study of the vision quest and the ritual and social uses to which it was put; but, unlike Lowie's work, it compared the most extreme cases, not the entire field of minute contrasts. Moreover, one of the extremes, the Zuni, was a culture that seems to have selected against the trait, that appeared almost to style itself ritually in counterdistinction to violent visions. The book also revolved around matrilineal variations, including both the Zuni and the Dobu and extending to the Kwakiutl who, although nonmatrilineal, both typologically and historically must be assessed in light of matrilineal possibilities displayed by their neighbors. Benedict's third case, the Dobu (a Melanesian people described in Reo Fortune's monograph [1932/1963], who participated in the kula trade with the Trobriands and other islands), was matrilineal as well, but residence alternated between husband's and wife's natal groups, which fact produced an exaggerated, "paranoid" effect in Dobu social life. The combination of the Dobu and the ambitious Kwakiutl helped Benedict point out parallel extremes in our own culture.

Patterns of Culture quivers with the tension between diversity and integration. The Boasian chapters (1–2) are juxtaposed to the thematic treatments of Zuni, Dobu, and Kwakiutl in a way that reinforces a sense of integration arising from a field of contrasts, whether in the book (Zuni/Dobu), or in the actuality of tribal contacts (Zuni/Apache, Dobu/Trobriand), or in the forgotten history of tribal diversification (Kwakiutl/Zuni). Benedict's book does not replace Boas–Lowieish scraps of detailed diversity with more comfortable integration; rather it strikes integration off against diversity to vitalize both. "You know," she wrote to Mead concerning cultures, "I like them scandalous" (Mead 1959:331).

To read Benedict in continuity with Lowie is not to overlook her distinctive achievement. She managed to "polarize" Zuni/Kwakiutl plus the Dobu as a kind of odd culture out. It is important to recognize how fundamental this methodological strategy of interpretation (to be discussed further in Chapter 4) remains in anthropology today. Louis Dumont, for example, in a Durkheimian register polarizes "Indian civilization and ourselves", counterposing

hierarchy/equality as principles of cultural order, although at another level both are variations on Indo-European possibilities. Dumont even wonders whether individualistic–egalitarian views of social order do not preclude thorough comparisons:

> We are separated from traditional societies by what I call the modern revolution, a revolution in values, which has taken place, I believe, through the centuries in the Christian Occident. . . how and why has this unique development that we call "modern" occurred at all? The main task of comparison is to account for the modern type in terms of the traditional type. For this reason, most of our modern vocabulary is inadequate for comparative purposes: *the basic comparative model* has to be nonmodern. (On a different level, is it not a reason why his *Formes élémentaires* is relatively so seminal in Durkheim's work?) [L. Dumont 1977:7; emphasis added]

Or Clifford Geertz in a Weberian register polarizes Java/Bali in terms of economic entrepreneurship (1963), Bali/Morocco in terms of cultural aspects of irrigation (1971), and Java/Bali/Morocco in terms of native viewpoints (1979). Indeed, even Geertz's first book about Java alone (1960) polarized Javanese religion and culture against itself, so to speak, by articulating a threefold distinction among the folk–ritualistic/reformist–Islamic/aristocratic–courtly variants of Javanese religion (*abangan/santri/priyayi*). Geertz thereby reoriented views of Java away from simple historical sequences and from any singular center of folk, reformist, or elitist principles, to point up the dramatic pluralism, highlighted in ritual and politics. Geertz's subsequent works demonstrate how this process of interpretation facilitates less reductionist comparison. That Islam in Java and Morocco is actualized so differently – standardized around neither an orthodoxy nor an orthopractice – allows (indeed requires) anthropologists to constitute "Islam" contrastively (C. Geertz 1968). That both Morocco and Bali irrigate, but in vividly contrasting ways, enables subsistence to be situated culturally. Characteristically Geertz begins with what might appear at first blush a singular entity: "Javanese religion," "irrigation technology," "Islam"; but through his interpretations, ethnographic particularities themselves emerge as subtle, operational ideal-types. Benedict, on the other hand, beginning with the vivid contrast Zuni/Kwakiutl/Dobu, sought some level of institutions or values that would lubricate the comparison of the relative integrations. She opted for clumsy psychological glosses, when what she really required was a theory of differentiated ideal-types. But she did not take Durkheim seriously (Benedict 1934/1961:231), and she read Dilthey and Spengler, rather than Weber.

Finally, would it be going too far to say that Lowie's distrust of centralization and related Enlightenment values rivals that of contemporary social theorists who challenged such assumptions more directly, although more narrowly? Consider, for example, Horkheimer and Adorno's resounding *Dialectics of the Enlightenment*, written in America after their departure from Frankfurt. M. Jay reminds us: "Marx of course was by no means the major target of the

Dialectic. Horkheimer and Adorno [1972] were far more ambitious. The entire Enlightenment tradition, that process of allegedly liberating demystification that Max Weber had called *die Entzauberung der Welt* (the disenchantment of the world), was their real target" (Jay 1973:259). Indeed, Horkheimer and Adorno trace disenchantment to the bourgeois philosophy consolidated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

> In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant. The program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy. Bacon, the "father of experimental philosophy," had defined its motives. . .
>
> The disenchantment of the world is the extirpation of animism. . .
>
> Bacon's postulate of *una scientia universalis*, whatever the number of fields of research, is as inimical to the unassignable as Leibniz's *mathesis universalis* is to discontinuity. The multiplicity of forms is reduced to position and arrangement, history to fact, things to matter. . . Formal logic was the major school of unified science. It provided the Enlightenment thinkers with the schema of the calculability of the world. The mythologizing equation of Ideas with numbers in Plato's last writings expresses the longing of all demythologication: number became the canon of the Enlightenment. The same equations dominate bourgeois justice and commodity exchange. . . Bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities. To the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion; modern positivism writes it off as literature. [1972:3–7]

This view is not unlike that of Foucault's characterization of the classical episteme, built around abstract measure rather than interpretive similitudes (see Chapter 2). Horkheimer, Adorno, and their companions in the Frankfurt School were able to perceive the Enlightenment (and certain vestiges of it in Marx) as a set of political rather than natural values. Foucault manages to pose the classical episteme as a set of historical–cultural values as well. One interesting aspect of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectics* is the anthropological evidence it enlists: Robert Lowie on language, Hubert and Mauss on primitive mana, Durkheim and Mauss on classifications. Such sources lead them to surmise:

> When language enters history its masters are priests and sorcerers. . . The dread which gives to *mana*, wherever it is met with in ethnology, is always sanctioned – at least by the tribal elders. No sector of language or society has monopolized conspiracy.
>
> Just as the first categories represented the organized tribe and its power over the individual, so the whole logical order, dependency, connection, progression, and union of concepts is grounded in the corresponding conditions of social reality – that is, of the division of labor. But of course this social character of categories of thought is not, as Durkheim asserts, an expression of social solidarity, but evidence of the inscrutable unity of society and domination. [1972:20–21]

I think they here misconstrue Durkheim; as we saw above, his achievement was to make such "unity" scrutable, after all, by attending to the institutional

specifics of varieties of solidarity. Moreover, Lowie was doubtless making subtler arguments about individual autonomy versus tribal dependency than they imply. A careful reading of Durkheim, Hubert, and Mauss and of Lowie's evocation of actual social systems in *Primitive Society* would indeed have supported a suspicion that the seeds of domination are with society from the start, but not in any simple conspiratorial fashion. Lowie's sombre view of history, we recall, poses women implicated in militarism, bourgeois Crow, and so on: Is there no lost pure state to be regained? Thus, Lowie was in advance of Horkheimer and Adorno's lingering sense of some prior, essentialist–animist condition, perpetuated in and as systems of exploitation by elders. No sector of language or society has monopolized conspiracy.

An elective affinity between social theorists like Weber, with his paradoxical sense of rationality, and ethnologists like Lowie and Benedict resonates in the latters' ironic response to centralized authority and standardized states. To conclude on an extreme note of this kind, about 1925 Benedict extracted from the ethnographic record a ritual means of salvaging humanity's fate from its History:

> We have already had recourse to many quaint primitive customs our fathers believed outmoded by the progress of mankind. We have watched the dependence of great nations upon the old device of the pogrom. We have seen the rise of demagogues, and even in those countries we consider lost in a mortally dangerous idealism we have watched death dealt out to those who harbor the mildest private opinions. Even in our own country we have come to the point of shooting in the back that familiar harmless annoyance, the strike picketer. It is strange that we have overlooked cannibalism.
>
> Mankind has for many thousands of years conducted experiments in the eating of human flesh, and has not found it wanting. . . Secret societies of the men were all-important on Vancouver Island; the whole winter was given over to their rites. And they were sufficiently aristocratic; membership was limited to first sons of noble birth. . . the noble youth returned to the village with the Spirit of the Cannibal upon him. . . But when he had bitten the corpse, the ecstasy left him, and he was "tamed." He drank the emetic, and retired again to solitude in a state of great sacredness, where for months he observed the endless taboos of the newly initiate.
>
> It is obvious that nothing could be more harmless to the community; one useless body per year satisfactorily satisfied the craving for violence which we have clumsily supplied in modern times in the form of oaths, blood-and-thunder, and vows to undertake the death of industrious households. [In Mead 1959:44–8]

Benedict proceeds to notorious cases from Malaya and the Maori; then she concludes her "modest proposal": "Our well-proved methods of publicity give us a new assurance in the adoption even of unfamiliar programs; where we might at one time well have doubted the possibility of popularizing a practice so unused, we can now venture more boldly. While there is yet time, shall we not choose deliberately between war and cannibalism" [Mead 1959:48]. Lowie, on the other hand, runs his 1920 masterwork into the sands of its data:

> It is true that social organizations differ in complexity, but that difference fails to provide a criterion of progress. When the Andamanese evolved or borrowed the notion of segregating bachelors from spinsters, and both from married couples, their social culture gained in complexity, but it is not easy to prove that it experienced either improvement or deterioration. If our enlightened communities coped as successfully with, say, the problem of maintaining order as ruder peoples in a simpler environment, then it might be conceded that our complex administrative machinery represents an intellectual advance. But the condition is contrary to fact, and our cumbersome method of preserving the peace and the more elegant solution of the same problem in simpler circumstances remain incommensurable. [1920/1961:439]

Lowie's characteristically uncaustic prose ends by confronting the outer limit of incommensurability, after calmly proclaiming us, morally speaking, sub-Andamanese.