



TRISTES TROPIC: LÉVI-STRAUSS (1955)

- ‘The Making of an Anthropologist’
 - Freud: basic pattern represented by geology
 - Researcher faced with ‘impenetrable phenomena’
 - Elements of a complex situation

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST

- ‘Introduced to a seemingly incoherent mass is neither contingent nor arbitrary’.
- Project in time basic characteristics of a the physical or mental universe

ON MARX

- At 16 introduced to Marxism
- Describes him as a 'great thinker'
- Came in contact with a 'line of philosophical development running from Kant to Hegel'
- His admiration for Marx remained constant

- Broaches sociological problems first by rereading a few pages of 'the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* or the *Critique of Political Economy*'
- Marx's quality has nothing to do with whether he foresaw certain historical developments accurately
- Argues, Marx, following Rousseau, 'established social science is no more founded on basis of events that physics is founded on sense data'

- Argues Marx proceeded in the same manner as geology and psychoanalysis
- Understanding consists of reducing one type of reality to another
- True reality is never the most obvious
- Argues key issue: relationship between reason and feeling
- Aim to integrate the two: calls it a 'superrationalism'

- Finds phenomenology objectionable, problematises the suggested continuity between experience and reality
- Argues that the transition between the two is discontinuous
- “To reach reality one has first to reject experience, and then reintegrate it into an objective synthesis devoid of any sentimentality”
- Reality encompasses and explains experience

- Argues phenomenology anything but a legitimate reflection due to over indulgent attitude towards the illusions of subjectivity
- Aim should be to understand being in relation to itself and not myself
- Marxism and psychoanalysis are social sciences one orientated towards society the other towards the individual

- Anthropology is a form of history, linking up at opposite ends with world history and my own history - it reveals the rationale common to both'
- In proposing the study of humankind, anthropology freed Strauss 'from doubt, since it examines those differences and changes in human kind which have meaning for all [humans], and excludes those peculiar to a single civilisation, which dissolve into nothingness under the gaze of the outside observer'

SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

- Structuralism: The search for the underlying patterns of thought in all forms of human activity
- Focus on relations between units