

Gobbet:

Source 2 is an extract from the 1963 book, 'Structural Anthropology' by French Anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss. In this text, Levi-Strauss is defending his position on Marx and Engels' work in the light of facing criticism for the claims that his theory of Structuralism generalised societies and groups and compromised the ideas and foundations of the anthropology. Within the latter part of Structural Anthropology as a book, Levi-Strauss finds himself arguing against his critics, namely Rodison in terms of his views on Marxism, and highlights that he had been 'wrongly' accused for his connection between structuralism and marxism, stating, 'my conception is infinitely closer to Marx's position than his' (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.336), referring to Rodison. In this source, he is arguing for Structuralism and defending a marxist perspective within the anthropological discourse.

In the beginning of this source Levi-Strauss argues that the theory of Marxism is not an approach that can be applied to all existing societies and that it does not coincide with all of humanity as an entity within itself. Essentially Levi-Strauss draws upon the argument that Marx and Engels never did intend for the idea of class struggle and oppression ideology between the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat to be applicable in every group of people; namely large scale and small scale societies. Instead Levi-Strauss, through the work of Marx and Engels, recognises that 'primitive', or more notably known as small-scale or Indigenous societies and groups, are not governed through their economic relationships and that the power dynamics within these particular groups lies within 'kinship', through blood ties. Ethnographically this has been proven to be the case for many Indigenous societies. It is therefore, one could argue, that Marx's theory of false class consciousness and the oppression felt by the workers of the ruling class can only exist within larger scale societies on a macro level, as in his own words, Levi-Strauss exemplifies that 'the temporal category applicable to them has nothing to do with the one we employ to understand the development of our society' (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.337). One cannot apply the theory of Marxism to Indigenous groups that are not controlled by an economy or trade relationships. In contrast however, for the latter part of the text, Levi-Strauss is clearly in agreement that the theory of Marxism can still be proven across many existing societies on a larger scale. He does not discard the ideology of class struggle and oppression simply because it cannot be applied to small scale societies as well but instead stresses that this still doesn't contradict Marx and Engels writing of the Communist Manifesto that claims that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.337). Instead he argues that class struggle is not 'co-extensive with humanity' (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.337) in itself but that it is applicable for the societies that Marx had always originally intended it to be. Notably the civilisations across history where class struggle has been apparent. Levi-Strauss uses Marx's letter to Weydemeyer to support this claim in which Marx himself argues that his theory proved the existence of class and class struggle only coincides with 'particular historical phases in the development of production' (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.337). This argument is the reason why it can be suggested that Marxism as a theory can not provide a comprehensive understanding for economic relationships within small scale societies but is easily applicable for civilisations and societies across history that have grasped the development of production, which in turn,

Marx and Levi-Strauss would argue, causes the oppression and existence of class struggle and false consciousness.

This source is a direct text from Levi-Strauss's book 'Structural Anthropology' which has been notably known as a big contribution to the discourse and helped pave the way for the theory of Structuralism. Levi-Strauss used this book as his tool to argue for a more holistic and structural approach to anthropological studies. The theory of structuralism itself, revolves around the idea that human culture should be understood by way of its relationships to a larger overarching system known as 'the structure' (Levi-Strauss, 1963). It is a theory where structure is applied to culture as a means of understanding human phenomena. '...Theories of culture, insofar as they limit themselves to global societies, are ethical-moral ideological constructs which makes possible the primitive ensemble of individuals in orderly systems' (Nutini, 1971, p.538). Equally, Marxism as a theory shares resemblance to Structuralism by the fact that both theories are applying an overarching structure as a means of explaining society and both take a macro-scale perspective; applying the same rules or structure to large groups of people, rather than individuals or smaller groups. Arguably, this is why Levi-Strauss within this source is clearly showing his support to Marx and Engels and frequently shows his fondness to Marxism as a theory because it can be seen as a structural theory. However, if one looks at the context of this source, Levi-Strauss's book was published in 1963 at a time where Communism was under heavy persecution namely within North America (Eriksen, 2015, p.25-28). This explains as to why Levi-Strauss was met with many critics when he links Structuralism and Marxism and is why at the beginning of the source he seems to be defending his position that his engagement with Marxism does not hinder his contribution to the anthropological discourse as he argues against criticism that Marxism as a theory cannot be applied to small scale societies, much like the criticism that Structuralism faced for 'generalising.' He does however, continue to show his support of Marx and Engels further on in the text as his argument clearly shows that he still stands by the argument that class struggle and oppression is evident through history in larger scale societies and is prevalent when studying his own society and those whose current economies were built on the development of production. Therefore this source shows the connection that Levi-Strauss develops between the theory of Structuralism and the theory of Marxism, paving the way for engagement of Neo-Marxism in the anthropological discourse (Eriksen, 2015, p.25-28).

Word Count= 1019 words

Reference List:

Eriksen, T.H. 2015. *Small Places, Large Issues*. London: Pluto Press. P.25-28.

Levi-Strauss, C. 1963. *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books. P.337

Nutini, H. G. 1971. *The Ideological Bases of Levi-Strauss's Structuralism*. Found in American Anthropological New Series, Vol 73, No.3: Wiley. P.538.

Blog Post:

An Imagined Ideology in a Nation that doesn't exist

'Make America great again.' A statement that has been heard time and time again. A media frenzy that has dominated news outlets over recent years. A slogan that has headlined one of America's and the world's most controversial political campaigns. But what does it mean? Recently, the Washington Post labeled the slogan and infamous red MAGA hats as 'a symbol of rebellion' (Parker, 2019) and writes that it is 'perceived as a statement either of patriotic pride or racist malice' (Parker, 2019).



Donald Trump at a campaign rally.
(Neibergall, The New Yorker, 2015).

It is true, no matter your political standing, that such a slogan is understood to be the embellishment of ideas and beliefs held by America's 45th President, Donald Trump, that has taken the nation by storm. It is an ideology. This concept of an ideology of the nation was one of Marx's and Engels. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1932) put forth an idea of the collective beliefs of the masses to be that of an illusion; just as Marx and Engels wrote about 'false class consciousness', the question can be asked, what about 'false STATE consciousness?' What power can an ideology of the masses hold on a nation or the world?



The recent controversial "stand off" between Covington Student Nathan Sandmann and Native American elder Nathan Phillips.

(Essence, 2019).

President Trump's political reign has, for the most part, indulged in controversy and conflict

literally dividing America and what it means to be an American. From immigration bans, building a wall and an increase in violent claims of white supremacy and inherit racism, it is a political ideology that if not carefully examined has the power to deconstruct the ideals of the so called, 'land of the free.' Having been built on immigration and the promise of a better life, America is a nation that has always welcomed newcomers and invited the world to indulge in the 'American Dream.' So what changed? Trumps ideology of 'make America great again' suggests that America lost its greatness. But who to? His ideology seems to blame Donald Trump's 'other.' Muslims, Mexicans, refugees, foreigners and those who in Trump's eyes don't reflect what it is to be an American. But if America has always been a land built upon immigration, then what 'America' is Trump trying to make great again?

Benedict Anderson in 1983 published the book, 'Imagined Communities.' In this book, he challenges nationalism as an identity and the nation as an entity. He writes, 'it is an imagined political community' (Anderson, 1983, p.6) and 'nationalism is not the awakening of nation to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist' (Anderson, 1983, p.6). What is a nation? What is America? If you take Anderson's ideas of nations being imagined communities, then already you can begin to deconstruct Donald Trump's ideology on the basis of it surrounding the ideas of nationalism.



The US-Mexico border.
(Huffaker, The Washington Post, 2017).

At the core of it, countries and nations are social constructs. They were invented by the human race as a way of controlling and defining the use of land. Yes, naturally earth provides us with lands separated by sea and mountains, but borders and our definitions of countries and land divides are purely a human construction. Therefore, it can be argued, that nations don't exist and nationalism is merely just a concept. This isn't to diminish anyone's cultural identities, heritage or love for their country but opens a broader discussion into what is actually important when policies are being created to keep the favoured ones in and the 'other' out. Recent events surrounding the charge to 'Make America great again' has been met with a rise of racism and hatred. Not only are there claims of Donald Trump's association with white supremacists, but groups are using his political ideology to justify their own remarks on what should be superior and inferior. Essentially to be called a Trump supporter is becoming the same as being called a racist. Nationalism is a concept but racism is not. So what if the ideas of nationalism were taken

out of the equation? What would Trump's political ideology have left to stand on? What happens when you take America out of 'make America great again?' Perhaps, the indoctrination of 'Trump' would fall apart.



Trump supporters in Manchester, N.H. February 9, 2016.
(Raedle, National Review, 2016).

Reference List:

Anderson, B. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Courier Companies, inc.

Marx, K. Engels, F. 1932. *The German Ideology*. International Publishers co.

Parker, K. 2019. "Make America Great Again' is no longer just a slogan. It's a symbol of rebellion." *The Washington Post*. 22nd February.

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(Accessed 8th March 2019).