EXEMPLARS AND THE REPRODUCTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE: THE AMHERST AFFAIR

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Beginnings and endings frequently provide opportunities for institutions to present themselves and their social functions in a favorable light. The commencement ceremony which marks the end for young men and women of their lives as students and the beginning of their lives as adults – as fully-engaged members of society – is one such occasion for an American liberal arts college. Those graduating are given assurance that their expensive educations have given them the skills and the values necessary for them to flourish as productive members of what is assumed to be the social order. Significantly, while being congratulated on the development of their intellectual capacities, they are, at the same time likely to be enjoined that they should temper or channel their self-interest so that their own personal prosperity will contribute to the common good.

It was as part of such an injunction that President Peter Pouncey of Amherst College recently presented Odysseus and several more contemporary figures as heroes, as individuals for the Amherst graduates to emulate as they went forth in the world. President Pouncey's speech with its allusions to classical literature and its references to the heroic did indeed seem to be entirely consonant with this moment in the life of an elite liberal arts institution. But, on further thought, the two of us – one on the commencement platform and the other on the periphery of the audience – wondered how this speech could have been persuasive: how, given that the life and and times of Odysseus were so vastly different from our own, could he be presented as a feasible model for emulation by these Amherst students?

This essay has grown out of our collective thoughts about our reaction that Odysseus must certainly have been wrenched from his original context to serve as an exemplar to these students. What, we wondered, did he have to become so that he could serve as a model for these Twentieth Century American lives [1]? Indeed, why was it necessary to present these students with exemplars at all: what was the nexus between the invocation of heroes, the nature of these American lives, and the kind of society into which these students were being introduced? And, conversely, to get a sharper focus on these questions, we also thought about the circumstances in which the invocation of exemplars would be either unnecessary or inappropriate.

These questions have led us to the more general objective which we pursue in this paper: We wish to understand the nature of the sociocultural context that produces the concept and image of the *the hero as exemplar*. Since such a project is necessarily comparative, we will juxtapose our examination of the American context in which exemplars do have a significant role with a context in which they do not, specifically that provided by another group with whom we have first-hand knowledge, the Chambri of Papua New Guinea [2]. Still retaining our interest in President Pouncey's speech about heroic exemplars, an important concern in this paper will be to contrast that text with several Chambri accounts of their big men.

In understanding the differences between ourselves and the Chambri with regard to the

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employment of exemplars, we have found useful Bourdieu's discussion of the ways that relationships of domination are effected. Bourdieu contrasts two modes of reproducing social order: "On the one side, there are social relations which not containing within themselves the principle of their own reproduction, must be kept up through nothing less than a process of continuous creation; on the other side, a social world which, containg within itself the principle of its own continuation, frees agents from the endless work of creating or restoring social relationships [3].

If relationships of domination may be established in these, among other, contrasting ways – Bourdieu's social typology should not necessarily be taken as complete or as fully refined – then strategies for achieving these relationships necessarily differ in comparable fashion. Bourdieu contrasts these strategies in this illustration:

> it is not by lavishing generosity, kindness, or politeness, on his charwoman (or on any other "socially inferior" agent), but by choosing the best investment for his money, or the best school for his son, that the possessor of economic or cultural capital perpetuates the relationship of domination which objectively links him with his charwoman and even her descendants [4].

These strategies and the relationships of domination which ensue, pervade and indeed, comprise, much of everyday life. Correspondingly, the reproduction of the mode of domination is, in major respects, the reproduction of everyday life. Bourdieu argues, that much of this social reproduction takes place through mimesis, through the imitation of the daily routines, preoccupations, body movements, and patterns of speech and response of other actors.

It seems to us, however, that the differences between these two worlds with respect to the mode of domination will also result in differences in the social understanding of the role mimesis plays in social reproduction. Specifically, each of these types is likely to differ in the degree to which its members are conscious of the importance of mimesis in social reproduction. Each type would, therefore, seem to convey a different sort of awareness about the social system itself.

For the type of society in which the relations of domination are maintained by mechanisms apart from the consciousness of actors, what must be communicated is other than the nature of the system. Under such circumstances, recognition of the actual importance of mimesis in social reproduction is likely to impede that reproduction. To return to Bourdieu's example of the charwoman and her employer: Although it is undoubtedly the case that her children will learn to replicate much of her everyday behavior, nonetheless, to the extent they realize that it is likely for them to replicate her and her class position, they may become aware of the systemic nature of their domination.

In this mode of domination, where members of the "dominant class have only to *let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their own domination [5]," the system works most efficiently to the extent that its existence is not recognized. For this mode of domination to be reproduced most effectively, individuals, particularly those not of the dominant class, must be taught, not how the system works, but that it does not exist. It is not constraint per se, but the pattern and consequences – the systemic nature – of that constraint, which are obscured.

Under these latter conditions, the importance of mimesis in reproducing the class differences which characterize everyday life is likely to be disguised. One of the mechanisms by which disguise is effected is through the presentation of carefully selected exemplars, images of the heroic. These, we will argue, appear to convey the possibility of transcending a particular social context, of becoming quite unlike one's associates, of freeing oneself from particular constraints. We will discuss this process with respect to the reproduction of patterns of domination in American society. (We are, of course, not the first to concern ourselves with the manner in which social processes may become obscured [6]. Furthermore, we note that

in identifying images of the heroic as a mechanism in the process of social reproduction we are not at this time addressing the question of how convincing these images actually are; nor are we appraising the relative importance of this *particular* mechanism in reproducing patterns of dominance; nor are we suggesting that, despite this and other mechanisms, social mobility never takes place.)

Conversely, for the type of society in which relations of dominance are maintained through the activities of individual actors, what must be communicated to those actors is the nature of the system. In these cases, the characteristics of society would seem to be *relatively* apparent and social reproduction can be effectively and openly ensured through mimesis: accurate social reproduction proceeds through the straightforward and acknowledged imitation of those who, through building and maintaining relationships of power, are engaged in the continual process of social creation. (Of course, obfuscation is never *entirely* absent in this or any other system of dominance. For instance, it may be argued that certain categories of individuals, such as women, are excluded from exercising power for reasons of indigenous ideology that serve to mystify [7]. However, we would still regard these systems as relatively well understood if it were generally known who those were who could play the political game and what the nature of the game was.)

In these cases, as we will show with reference to the Chambri, heroic exemplars need not exist. While powerful men are admired, neither they nor others become heroes: they are not cultural images presented for didactic purposes [8]. The nature and basis of political life need not be disguised for the reproduction of the system of domination to continue [9].

EXEMPLARS IN SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

President Pouncey began his commencement address by examining the question of what has happened to our sense of the heroic now that epics – the genre of serious literature celebrating heroes – were no longer written [10]. As part of a final message of instruction to those graduating from this elite institution, he told them that "it can be heroic to reach for a true personal identity, to 'have one's personality advance to fill all its surfaces,' against all the pressure to conform to other shapes [11]."

This "gradual growth, against the grain of conformity, into a strong and balanced sense of oneself," he continued, "is the labor of a lifetime, and one that often requires a kind of heroic insistence." He cited, as specific examples of such a struggle, the lives of the Black American abolitionist and former slave, Frederick Douglass, and of the naturalist, feminist and essayist, Mary Hunter Austin.

Heroism, in this view from the podium of a liberal arts college, is to be achieved through a persistent and highly personalized search which seeks to achieve fulfillment and consequent individuality through nonconformity of a socially valued sort [12]. Significantly, this message – although of course with different specific examples – is also expressed within our culture by those occupying a very different position on the stage of life. Jimmy Douglas, who operates a surface coal mine during the week but is a rodeo steer wrestler on weekends, stated in a recent newspaper interview:

> The same spirit that drove people the whole way across this country takes the cowboy and his beat-up old trailer to the rodeo every week. The Wild West might be gone, but the Wild West inside the man isn't gone. I think all these people [rodeo performers] are living 150 years after their time. ... Being a cowboy is being something everybody else isn't. It's a rebellion against the establishment. It's a fraternity of hard knocks, long drives and a wild night out once in a while. It's getting out of the rat race [13].

President Pouncey is presenting examples of heroism in the past in order that the men and women who compose the College Class of 1985 will strive to lead heroic lives; the steer wrestling Jimmy Douglas is presenting himself as

embodying the same heroic spirit which conquered the frontier and made America great but which is now largely lost. Each is selecting examples of those who should be emulated if important values of individuality are to be perpetuated.

Before we can discuss why these two men, despite their very different positions in American society, should each present for emulation an example of individuality, we must further examine the social context in which exemplars are likely to exist. Our reference point of contrast is as we have mentioned, the Chambri, whose society fits Bourdieu's description of one in which relations of power must be continually created. Significantly, although male Chambri admire and emulate powerful men, neither these living individuals nor mythic persons are presented as exemplars. Chambri, as we will see, although they recognize some men as extraordinary, do not propose them – or others – as models of how life should be lived.

THE MEN CHAMBRI VIEW AS REMARKABLE

Chambri regard men to be noteworthy because of the extent of their power. As we have argued elsewhere, Chambri men derive both their personal identity and their personal significance from their totemic powers which enable them to become and to control natural forces [14]. These powers are regarded as the property of particular clans and take the form of esoteric names. They are the means by which men regulate the natural world as well as achieve and display political eminence. Thus, for example, a man who is regarded as having the power to control a particular species of fish is also regarded as having the power to effect an advantageous marriage or to ensorcell a rival.

In their efforts to become powerful – in their efforts both to accumulate and conserve power – men are thrown into conflict with those not only in other clans but within their own. A man will frequently attempt to steal the names which convey power from those in other clans, while at the same time will resist transferring power to junior agnates [15]. A powerful man, thus, almost necessarily makes enemies of those around him.

When Chambri men and women discuss those who control a remarkable amount of power, they frequently mention two deceased individuals: Klarkie and Yangintimi. Following is our description of each as compiled from a variety of Chambri accounts [16].

Klarkie

Klarkie was the biggest of Chambri big men. He understood the inner workings of things. He could control the fish, fruit, mosquitoes, eggs of birds, appearance of fog, lightning, eclipses, earthquakes and the stability of buildings. He controlled men outside his own clan. He could both kill men and summon them. Indeed, he summoned the Germans to the Sepik in order that they would kill a group of Iatmul from Japanaut Village. He lived to a very old age and killed all but one of his children, a son, whom he allowed to live. This son, Pandan, was attacked by Iatmul men from Parambei Village who had come to market. Pandan called out to his father who came to help him and he and his father were both killed and their heads chopped off.

Yangintimi

Yangintimi had so much power that he could make anything happen: He could cause fish to come up in the men's house; he could cause crocodiles to appear any place – indeed on top of Chambri Mountain. He could talk to crocodiles, to fish and to water and bush spirits. His eyes were like a lamp; they could see everything. He could see which man had stolen what and he could tell where magically treated plants used in sorcery had been hidden and get rid of them. He predicted when the first airplane would fly over Chambri and promised that the war (World War II) would not affect the Chambri people. By

lifting his hand to the sky, he prevented bombs from falling upon Chambri Island. He regulated the world for the benefit of all and did not charge money.

Yangintimi knew when he was about to die. He knew that members of another clan were jealous of him because he controlled their powers. Members of this clan poisoned food which he ate, even though he knew it was poisoned. He said it was better to die if others wished him to.

Klarkie and Yangintimi used their remarkably extensive powers in different ways. Klarkie used his, not only to control natural phenomena, but to kill others through sorcery. Yangintimi, in contrast, used his to protect people from danger, including attack through sorcery. However, that Klarkie and Yangintimi each had such a wide array and concentration of powers necessarily meant that each usurped powers from those in other clans and, in addition, had refused to relinquish these powers to junior agnates. Consequently, each had made enemies. Klarkie dealt with his enemies, including all but one of his sons, by killing them. Yangintimi allowed himself to be killed by an enemy.

It would be a mistake, though, to conclude that in Chambri perception Klarkie is a villain and Yangintimi is a hero or that Chambri are being enjoined to disdain the former and to emulate the latter. Klarkie is not regarded as flawed: his behavior follows in perfectly predictable fashion from the fact that totemic power is the basis of prestige and to concentrate power and, thereby, to establish pre-eminence means that a man comes into conflict with others, including his sons. Indeed, in discussing Klarkie, an informant explained, "Big men always kill their children because they want to be the only one."

From the Chambri perspective, Klarkie did not do the right thing, or the wrong thing – he did the only thing – and as a consequence of the characteristics of Chambri society, he became someone who might in our culture be regarded as an "antisocial" figure. Although Yangintimi from our perspective appears "beneficent" – helping others evade sorcery without charge – he literally lacks viability. Unlike the eminently – quintessentially – realistic Klarkie, Yangintimi, *as he appears in this depiction*, could never actually exist.

Interestingly, the Yangintimi Margaret Mead knew is described by her in *Sex and Temperament*, not as an indigenous philanthropist, but as a particularly aggressive Chambri who was, she thought, subject to "unaccountable acts of rage and violence [17]." Indeed, she depicts him in much the same way as she does others such as Kaviwon and Tanum who later acquired reputations comparable to that of Klarkie [18]. Given the nature of Mead's description of him, given that generalized benevolence is not a viable political strategy for a Chambri big man, and – in addition – given that no living Chambri is ever described by other Chambri as displaying such benevolence, it appears that Yangintimi's reputation has been substantially altered over time. To understand the reason his reputation has been transformed we need to focus not on his alleged powers to perform miracles – since such are an essential component of the reputation of any contemporary big man – but on his use of these powers in such a consistently benign and *therefore* ultimately self-destructive way.

Instead of providing a credible alternative to Klarkie, the depiction of Yangintimi serves to substantiate the inevitability of Klarkie's behavior. Yangintimi's ultimate ineffectuality – his willingness to die simply because others wished his death – is inconsistent with the fact that he had accumulated power: to be a big man is to have enemies who wish your death; to succumb to your enemies simply because they are your enemies is incompatible with being a big man, even with being a Chambri man [19]. Since the process by which political eminence is achieved and demonstrated is also the process by which enemies are created, the only way to remain a big man is to use one's power to attack one's enemies: the process by which power is

acquired thus determines the way that power is used.

Rather than exploring questions about legitimacy in the acquisition and use of power, Chambri are concerned with understanding the nature of power [20]. Indeed, in our view, Yangintimi is like several other Chambri figures who *serve as the propositions that comprise Chambri political theory*. If Yangintimi conveys the proposition that possession of power determines use of power, another mythic figure, Arione, conveys the proposition that the possession of power is at the expense of agnatic relationships. Arione, whom we have elsewhere described, is able to concentrate power only through absorbing his kin and then living apart from society [21]. Arione is, in this respect, comparable to Klarkie and the other big men who kill their children "because they want to be the only one."

Although no Chambri has in fact encountered a Yangintimi or an Arione, these figures serve to establish as inevitable the system which *actually* does produce those "Klarkies" whose political activities pervade their everyday lives. Yangintimi and Arione demonstrate that Klarkie is the only form a Chambri political actor may take. Furthermore, neither Yangintimi, nor Arione, nor the entirely realistic Klarkie should be regarded as exemplars. No one is being *enjoined* to be either like or unlike them; indeed, all big men must necessarily become like Klarkie whereas no one could be like Yangintimi and Arione [22]. (Nor should it be thought that Yangintimi's death establishes him as a martyr for the principle of non-violence. Nor does Klarkie's death establish him as a war hero who sacrificed himself for some greater cause. Instead, it demonstrates the limits of Klarkie's power.)

If we employ Bourdieu's perspective and regard the relationships of domination which compose the Chambri political system to be the direct product of the strategic actions of political actors, Klarkie, in an essential way, embodies – *is* – the system. Therefore, to understand the activities of big men like Klarkie is to understand *both* the practice of Chambri politics *and* the Chambri political system. (That Chambri know what big men do – and the system in which they operate – does not, of course, mean that it is easy to become a big man.) Under these circumstances, no Chambri need be enjoined to be like Klarkie, nor need there be much explanation of the nature of the system in which he operates.

ON EDUCATION AND AMERICAN HEROES: AMHERST COLLEGE AND THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

Unlike Klarkie, Yangintimi and Arione whose "lives" display and clarify the system, the lives of those presented to Americans as heroes, we argue, often serve to distract attention away from, and thus obscure, both the existence of the system and its mode of functioning. Indeed, from the American perspective – whether that of the President of Amherst College or a steer wrestler – the individuality these heroes display derives its meaning by appearing to create a significant contrast between a person and her/his social context.

This Western assumption that we acquire validity by developing our individuality is perhaps no better illustrated than in the educational philosophy of the liberal arts college [23]. There a student is taught to "think for himself" and so become a unique individual. After receiving this education, we believe our liberal arts student will have transcended her/his social background. She/he has become uniquely different from her/his parents, and indeed, form anyone else she/he knows.

Moreover, she/he has not only become unique but autonomous. According to *This is Amherst*, an Amherst education will enable a student to acquire "the intellectual techniques that enable a person to be versatile – to make decisions when there are no longer teachers or parents to help; to develop effective means of control and action,

effective ways of dealing with the world [24]." As measure of her/his autonomy such a person should be able to function with confidence and competence wherever she/he finds herself/himself – to be as much at ease at a rodeo or at a Nigerian embassy dinner as at an Amherst College football game.

The autonomous individual who emerges from this liberal arts education will be able achieve success in the world at whatever she/he *chooses* to do. She/he has become flexible and innovative – creative – in her/his thinking and will, therefore, be able to make choices and decisions which manifest and confirm her/his individuality. She/he is in the position to become, in the terms of President Pouncey's speech, a hero [25].

The promulgation of this model which defines the hero in terms of a capacity to demonstrate autonomy through choice serves, however, to obscure both the fact that the occupants of some social positions have greater opportunity to choose than do occupants of others, and the fact that these various social positions are linked together to form a social system. That this model obscures important aspects of social reality is not, though, likely to affect adversely the lives of many Amherst College graduates. The "objective mechanisms, which serve the interests of the dominant group without any conscious effort on the latter's part [26], regardless of the degree to which they understand their system, these graduates will be in relatively favorable positions to exercise choice.

The implications of the model of hero may be less advantageous for those less well placed in the system. Like their more privileged compatriots, those who perhaps received technical educations at community colleges or even those who must rely on "street savvy" acquired at the "school of hard knocks" also extol individualism and subscribe to the same definition of heroism (although they may apotheosize different individuals as heroes). But, they are less well served by a model of social reality which affirms both the possibility and the importance of choice in defining personal worth [27].

The model of hero *attempts* to demonstrate that either success or failure should be seen as the outcome of individual choices and, hence, as the measure of individual accomplishment. Since the capacity to choose is an essential component – in fact, is constitutive – of individualism, for someone to regard her/his choices as systematically constrained is to make it more difficult to assert the individuality which is the basis of her/his self-worth 28]. Individuals are, therefore, led to affirm their autonomy through asserting their capacity to choose and enact choice. As a consequence, the lives individuals actually lead are seen by them and others as the product of their own choices and, hence, become measures of their self-worth.

The emphasis on achieving worth by effecting one's own choices has manifold consequences. Because failures are regarded as personal failures, rather than manifestations of systemic processes, individuals will, if at all possible, deny to themselves and others the fact of failure. For instance, we were recently told by an elderly janitor sweeping out the laundromat in Rock Creek, Montana that he would not wish to change places with his World War II army buddy who had made it rich in California [29]. What could he get, he asked us rhetorically, with a million dollars a day that he did not already have: a place to live, food on the table, friends and good kids. His rich friend, in contrast, was continually afraid of losing what he owned. Without deprecating this janitor's achievements or disputing that his life may have yielded him satisfaction, it is important to note that his choice not to change places with his rich friend was constrained. Although his friend could have easily – though improbably – chosen to be a janitor, the janitor could not as readily have chosen to be a successful executive. Yet, in order to validate himself as the product of his choices, he described the system as open and fair – that choices count – and described his choices as the right ones, not as the only ones.

We had heard comparable themes a few days

earlier while en route to Rock Creek. While eating breakfast at a Thrifty Scot Motel in Western Minnesota, we conversed about our accommodation with another patron. In the course of this conversation, she told us that because she was a maid in a motel elsewhere, she got a terrific discount at any motel where she and her husband chose to stay. This is why, she said, "It's so smart being a maid."

Nonetheless, on occasions such as loss of a job, the evidence of failure – personal failure – may appear inescapable. Much of the literature on effects of unemployment suggests that laid off workers blame themselves, and thereby suffer tremendous loss in self-esteem, for no longer providing for their families. Even when there is general recognition that times are hard and rates of unemployment are high, failure is still likely to be interpreted in personal rather than systemic terms [30]. (We reiterate that these mechanisms which obscure the nature of the system are not always convincing. Certainly the idea of the hero has not precluded the widespread recognition by Blacks, for instance, that many of the circumstances of their lives, including high rates of unemployment, are the result of a pervasive system of racism.)

Conversely, success in the accumulation and exercise of power for those whose efforts are facilitated by the mechanisms of domination is not likely to bring recognition of the systemic nature of constraints. In fact, the existence of the system as a set of constraints is most likely to be acknowledged when success is achieved in the face of adversity. Significantly, this seems to be the circumstance productive – indeed definitional – of heroes. Thus, in what is perhaps an image drawn from venture capitalism, President Pouncey celebrates Frederick Douglas for his "persistent heroism against long odds." Under those conditions in which the system is recognized as constraining, heroism lies in overcoming the constraints one has encountered. Douglass is, in addition, a kind of meta-hero. His struggle against adversity helped to establish – and is seen as representing – the system in which heroism is possible, the system in which choice and individualism can exist. However, by focusing on him, we are encouraged to contemplate the indomitability of his spirit, rather than on those systemic conditions which first perpetuated and then led to the abolition of slavery.

More generally, the focus on those who may triumph over the human condition is likely to draw our attention away from a concern with understanding the sources and pervasiveness of that condition. Indeed, often with a particular triumph over adversity, as for instance in the case of the grass roots union organizer depicted in the movie, *Norma Rae*, we may be led to think that this general kind of evil has been vanquished [31]. Moreover, and perhaps of even greater importance, the focus on the heroic implies that others too could have surmounted obstacles if they had just tried hard enough.

Heroes are particularly likely to be created in times of war, or in similar circumstances when overtly coercive methods of ensuring compliance – such as rationing, conscription and military discipline – are employed. Heroism under these conditions shows war to be not so much productive of mindless and brutal regimentation as of ennobling choice. "We salute," as President Pouncey says, "the individual heroic act – the soldier who throws himself on a hand-grenade in the trench to save his friends' lives ... " Even an unknown soldier becomes great as someone who has voluntarily jeopardized and, indeed, sacrificed his life. The heroism of a soldier serves to justify the struggle rather than elucidate its causes and consequences [32]. (For the Chambri, in contrast, success in warfare – like success in sorcery, debates, and marriage presentations – is simply a measure of a man's totemic, that is, political, power.)

THE ANTI-HERO: THE REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

Individuality by its definition can only be

demonstrated through establishing distinction, generally in the context of a struggle against constraint. Both the liberal arts student and the war hero can thus be seen in comparable ways: one develops her/his unique set of potentialities through a process of intellectual challenge; the other reveals her/his unique constellation of virtues through a circumstance of physical challenge. The individuality of both, although defined in terms of non-conformity, serves, we have argued, to sustain the system, in part by obscuring its nature and existence as a system. Indeed, those whose individuality is established simply through their apparent opposition to constraint may be regarded as, in some respects, heroic.

Significantly, although these anti-heroes, such as James Dean, reject social constraint, they present neither alternative visions nor analyses of society. In fact, it is their naivete about the conditions of life which is appealing. Although personally committed to a few specific individuals, they are, as rebels without a cause, unlikely even to attempt to effect social change.

Although no James Dean, Jimmy Douglas – the steer wrestler described earlier – presents himself in partly anti-heroic terms. His performance as a rodeo cowboy is "a rebellion against the establishment," a means of "getting out of the rat race." To be noted, his non-conformity was reported in an article entitled "Today's rodeo cowboys hold 'real' jobs as well," appearing in a politically centrist newspaper [33]. The article indicated that, whatever the rewards of non-conformity, rodeo performing is dangerous, physically debilitating and so poorly paid that most contestants must have other jobs just to subsist.

The rebellion of anti-heroes, while establishing the importance of individuality, is not likely to lead to widespread emulation: the life of the drifter, whether working in the oil fields or on the rodeo circuit, is hard. Anti-heroes, thus, do not establish rebellion as a viable way of life.

Although we probably do not wish to emulate the rodeo rider with respect to particular choices he has made, we do wish to emulate his capacity to choose. He, as well as other anti-heroes, gives us the illusion we have chosen – not their lives – but our own. Their display of non-conformity suggests to the rest of us that the constraints we experience in our lives are voluntarily assumed – rather than systemically imposed. Perhaps as well, the non-conformity of the rebel serves to establish the distinctiveness of the more conventional. Conformity, when it appears as a matter of choice and as establishing distinction, may, thus, assume the guise of individuality.

Because they appear to embody the capacity to choose, the anti-heroes, like the heroes, may be regarded both by others and, in some cases, by themselves as the great patriots. Jimmy Douglas, for instance, makes his patriotism apparent when he says, as cited earlier, that the spirit which conquered the American frontier is still alive in the heart of the rodeo cowboy. A comparable patriotism is expressed by contestants and spectators at the Home of Champions Rodeo in Rock Creek, Montana. Always scheduled to occur on Independence Day (July 4), the rodeo opens with the presentation of the American Flag, singing of the National Anthem and, while the crowd is still standing, reading of the "Cowboy's Prayer." After describing the distinctiveness of the rodeo – and by extension, the ranching, way of life – the Prayer concludes:

> Guide us in this arena as in life's arena so that our efforts to succeed will be tempered by honesty and fair play and finally, counsel and protect our leaders so that the Free Enterprise System and the American Way of Life will endure and we ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

For Americans, then, heroes – and anti-heroes – are important because they are quintessential examples of choice and thus of individuality. The social phenomenon of "hero" serves to maintain a particular aspect of a system of domination by concealing the fact that there is a *system* of domination at all. If the system of domination were not concealed, our everyday life would be revealed as futile and our sense of

individuality negated.

In contrast, if the Chambri system of domination were not apparent, they would become quite disoriented. It is this system that gives their everyday life its form and meaning. Although, in fact, Americans cannot any more than Chambri act outside of their social system, Americans may nonetheless – to greater or lesser degrees – convince themselves, in part through the mechanism of the model of the hero, that their social life is essentially the product of their choices [34].

NOTES

1. See, for instance, E. Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 3–23, for an explicit argument that Odysseus defines his identity as a person in a fundamentally different way than does someone living in the contemporary West.
2. The 1,500 Chambri live in three villages located in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, south of the Sepik River on an island-mountain in the middle of Chambri Lake. They are sedentary hunter-gatherers who subsist on sago acquired through the exchange or sale of surplus fish.
3. P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 189.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 189–190. Recent writers such as J. Fablan, *Time and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), have argued that much anthropological analysis serves to establish distance between ourselves and those we study. However, in our view, the contrast that Bourdieu is making between different strategies of domination does not necessarily foster the kind of "we-they" opposition that reduces the other to an object. Indeed, the utility of this contrast to the argument of this paper is that, rather than reducing the "other" to an object, it enables us to be more objective about ourselves, particularly about the ways in which social relationships of inequality are perpetuated in our society.
5. Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
6. Social analysts such as S. Aronowitz, *False Promises* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973); E. Chinoy, *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955); H. Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America, 1815–1919", in *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976) pp. 3–78; C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), "The Theory of Balance", in *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp.242–268, and "The Mass Society", in *op. cit.*, pp. 298–324; R. Sennett and J. Cobb, *Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Knopf 1972); and P. Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness* (Boston: Beacon, 1976) are among those who have concerned themselves with this phenomenon in the American context. Somewhat broader theoretical perspectives on this subject may be found in, for instance, J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon, 1975); H. Marcuse *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon), 1964; and T. Schroyer, *The Critique of Domination* (Boston: Beacon) 1973.
7. See B. O'Laughlin, "Mediation of Contradiction: Why Mbum Women Do Not Eat Chicken," in M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds.), *Women, Culture and Society*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974) pp. 301–318, for a classic analysis of this kind.
8. The concept of hero is central to such influential writings of Ernest Becker as *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1975). Becker regards the urge to pursue the heroic as universal, as the product of natural narcissism which combines with a basic need for self-esteem to produce a "creature who has to feel himself an object of primary value: first in the universe, representing in himself all of life" (*ibid.*, p. 3). Our concerns with the processes of social reproduction have led us to define the hero in a somewhat contrasting way: as an exemplar, as a cultural image presented for didactic purposes. We are, in addition, more concerned than is Becker in examining the social context in which these images appear.
9. Bourdieu's typology of societies according to their modes of domination is, of course, susceptible to further differentiation. This present study is limited in its comparison to a relatively egalitarian tribal and a capitalist society. The nature of exemplars, for instance, societies with overt and ascribed hierarchies would require a separate discussion. In the latter case, images of the heroic would, presumably, not be regarded as suitable for emulation except by a few. See, for example, M. Young, *Magicians of Manumanua* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), which is an account of clan leaders who model their lives on the careers of mythical heroic predecessors and M. Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), which is an examination of the "heroic history" made by Polynesian kings. Comparably, the present discussion is not, as well, intended to cover the nature of the hero in socialist states.
10. We are grateful to Amherst College for providing us

with the text of President Pouncey's speech.

11. The cost of tuition, room and board for an Amherst College student at the time of Pouncey's address was $13,400. Of those 433 freshmen admitted to the College in 1985, 288 received no financial aid from the College; the remaining 145 received an average of $5956 in financial aid: only 6 of these received $10,000 or more in assistance. Of these freshmen, 38% were admitted from private or parochial high schools.
12. The subject of heroism has been of special interest to several other members of the Amherst College community. Theodore Greene, a professor of American studies, analyzed the changing models of success, as presented in American magazines between 1787 and 1918, with respect to changing social circumstances. He concluded that during World War I, the individualistic model of success was transformed: heroes became portrayed no longer as entrepreneurs but as corporate managers. See T. Greene, *America's Heroes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. John William Ward, another Amherst colleague (who later became President of Amherst College), takes a different view of the meaning of individuality in this post-war period. See J. W. Ward *Red, White and Blue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). Rather than argue that individuality per se was no longer valued, instead Ward suggests that individuality became measured by the degree to which an "individual participates in society. The individual becomes himself by furthering the good of the collective group, large or small, of which he must become a functioning part" (*ibid.*, p. 259). To the extent that a person – Charles Lindbergh, in one of Ward's examples – allows others to believe that it is possible to "have both, the freedom of the individual and the power of an organized society" (*ibid.*, p. 37), that person is a hero. While agreeing with Ward that recognition of the importance of the collective life may change the form but not the significance of individualism, we nonetheless ask whether the display of apparent freedom by the hero does not, in fact, serve to preclude the actuality of freedom for all but the privileged.
13. "Today's Rodeo Cowboys Hold 'Real' Jobs as Well", in *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, (Northampton: Massachusetts, August 27, 1986), p. 22.
14. F. Errington and D. Gewertz, *Cultural Alternatives and a Feminist Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
15. See, for a comparable Sepik example, S. Harrison *Stealing People's Names*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, (Canberra: Australian National University, 1982).
16. Gewertz derived most of this material by asking the ten or so men gathered in each of three men's houses to identify and describe those who had been their most important leaders. On three additional occasions, other men have offered comparable descriptions of Klarkie and Yangantimi to us both.
17. M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament* (New York: William Morrow, 1935), p. 272. Mead describes Yangintimi ("Yangitimi" in her spelling) as a deviant male because he resisted acknowledging his wife's domination by, for instance, engaging in light chatter with the magician presiding over his wife's childbirth. His wife was then forced to assert her authority over him by commanding his attention through moaning conspicuously and in delaying her delivery for a day (*ibid.*, pp. 273–74). In our view, Yangintimi's behavior, as presented by Mead, was entirely normal for a Chambri male.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 272–275.
19. In some Chambri accounts, powerful men allow others to kill them in contexts in which death is inevitable. Thus, for example, a man may say to one of the enemies who surrounded him that he is giving him the present of his death. He is thus asserting his power by refusing to admit that his enemies have the better of him and is at the same time trying to deny them the satisfaction of their victory. Because Yangintimi's death was entirely avoidable, no Chambri would interpret his actions as a realistic display of bravado.
20. We are indebted to B. Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture", in C. Holt, et. al. (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), for his important contrast between traditional Javanese and contemporary Western concepts of power. This study established criteria for the comparative study of cultural concepts of power which we have found useful in understanding Chambri political theory.
21. F. Errington and D. Gewertz, "The Chief of the Chambri: Social Change and Cultural Permeability among a New Guinea People", *American Ethnologist*, vol. 12, (1985) pp. 442–454.
22. Significantly, although G. Bateson, *Naven* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp. 160–170, describes "preferred types" among the neighboring Iatmul, he does not suggest that the "man of violence" or the "man of discretion" is presented as a model for emulation.
23. We are adopting here the perspective toward education which C. Hurn, *The Limits and Possibilities of Schooling* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1985), describes as the "conflict paradigm." Most generally, this perspective regards "the main functions of schools [to be] the reproduction of the dominant ideology, its forms of knowledge, and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of

labor" (H. Giroux, "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A critical Analysis", *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 553, (1983), p. 257. See, also, R. Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 36 (1971), pp. 1002–1019; S. Bowles and H. Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York, Basic Books, 1977); P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977); and M. Apple and L. Weis, *Ideology and Practice in Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), for further discussions within this perspective.

24. G. Ruga, *This is Amherst* (Amherst: Amherst College, 1983), p. 7.
25. President Pouncey's exhortation to the graduating seniors that they can lead heroic lives is an appropriate culmination to a liberal arts education which tended to focus on the "Greats" – on the great events, lives, and books of Western Civilization. Indeed, his Commencement Address was filled with references to these lives, events and books. The possibility should not be overlooked that in our effort to enrich our own lives we may be distorting the lives of those we are presenting as heroes by paying insufficient attention to the fact that their sociocultural contexts may differ in important respects from ours. Consequently, the extent to which a modern reader identifies with men such as Odysseus may well be a measure of the degree to which their consciousness is being misread.
26. Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
27. Thus, when Marlon Brando, in the film, *On the Waterfront*, reproaches his brother for having made him throw a fight by saying, "I could have been a contender," he is lamenting that he has lost an opportunity to become a hero. See E. Karan, *On the Waterfront* (Burbank: Columbia Pictures, 1954).
28. As we have indicated, we do not claim that the "hero" is *necessarily* effective as a mechanism to diminish awareness of the existence of class. Nor do we, in this paper, provide an analysis of the extent to which this and other mechanisms do *in fact* diminish awareness of class. However, we do again note that many studies have indicated that although working class Americans may frequently recognize that their own prospects are constrained by the circumstances of their lives, nonetheless, they possess a poorly developed class consciousness. See R. Sennett and J. Cobb, *op. cit.*; and S. Aronowitz, *op. cit.*
29. During the summers of 1980, '81, and '82, Errington did field research in the south central Montana mining and ranching town of what we call Rock Creek. During the summer of 1985 he was joined by Gewertz in this research.
30. See, for instance, the classic studies of the Depression by R. C. Angell, *The Family Encounters the Depression* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1939); E. W. Bakke, *Citizens Without Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940); M. Komarovsky, *The Unemployed Man and his Family* (New York: Dryden Press, 1940), as well as more recent analyses of contemporary unemployment such as L. Rainwater, Lee, et. al. *Working Man's Wife* (New York: MacFadden, 1962); J. T. Howell, *Hard Living on Clay Street* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1973), and L. Rubin, *Worlds of Pain* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
31. In this film, the heroism is that of a young woman, Norma Rae, who directly confronts the management of a textile mill through working to convince other employees to risk their jobs by voting to join a union. Norma Rae is successful in her efforts and the union is established through a majority vote of the workers. Because the film ends with this vote, it gives the impression that the workers are now generally triumphant over their bosses – whereas, in fact, it is likely that their struggle for job security and decent wages, benefits and working conditions has just begun. Moreover, because of Norma Rae's success, we are likely to believe that fight for union representation will be effective elsewhere. See M. Ritt, *Norma Rae* (Hollywood: 20th Century Fox, 1979).

    Significantly, those like Norma Rae, who demonstrate autonomy through political activism, are likely to encounter attacks on their moral characters. To the extent that their political objectives are to reveal and discredit the mechanisms of control, their actions are likely to be presented, not as heroic, but as self-serving and illegitimate efforts to gain power, money and publicity. Their private lives are likely to be closely examined for indications of sexual or other forms of misconduct which might support the argument that their characters are flawed and thus their motives suspect. The examples of Martin Luther King and Karen Silkwood come immediately to mind.
32. In this regard, efforts to probe the systemic causes of the Vietnam War were often seen as an insult to those who had sacrificed themselves during that war. Correspondingly, a focus on the sacrifices of those who served results in a largely episodic view of war. The official citations in *The Congressional Medal of Honor: The Names, The Deeds* (Forest Ranch, California: Sharp and Dunigan, 1985), while clearly demonstrating that each of those awarded the Medal of Honor has performed a "deed of personal bravery or self-sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty" *(ibid.*, p. 1), convey little of the context in which these acts of physical bravery occurred. In many cases, even the immediate causes and consequences of a heroic

act are only vaguely described; moreover, the causes and consequences of the campaign, to say nothing of the war itself, are left entirely opaque. That individuals from humble backgrounds are often celebrated as heroes by an entire nation further dispels perception of such systemic phenomena as class. See J. P. Mackley, "The Dead and the Wounded", in *The Short-Timer's Journal*, (publisher unknown, 1981) p. 3–7, for a comparable discussion of the images of the war hero conveyed by Hollywood films and by war memorials.

33. Ironically, this newspaper had recently displayed its editorial sensibilities by temporarily banning the "Doonesbury" cartoon. This cartoon was engaged in lampooning the Reagan administration because it had made a hero of Frank Sinatra by presenting him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
34. The extent to which our social life should be entirely determined by individual choice is, of course, a matter of debate. The view expressed earlier in the Cowboy's Prayer on the subject of the Free Enterprise System represents a libertarian perspective on this issue. In this view, the Free Enterprise System is virtually a non-system system.