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Politics as Theatrical Performance and Backstage Pragmatism: Work and Legacy of F. G. Bailey

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Bailey launched his career in the 1950s with an ambitious ethnographic project in India out of which emerged three splendid monographs. Eventually he published 15 additional books, all of them concerned with political anthropology. Following the Indian phase his interests turned in two directions. One was towards anthropology at home, reflecting his perspective that the discipline has no geographical or cultural boundaries. The other direction was towards general theoretical issues. With the publication of *Stratagems and Spoils* (1969), Bailey was recognized as a key figure in what became known as the transactional or agency model. Yet his crowning achievement may well have been his exceptional analytic capacity to penetrate the public rhetoric of politicians, and to decode (often with imaginative cross-cultural comparisons) the play of power embedded in everyday life.

Frederick George Bailey (1924-) was born into a lower-middle-class family in Liverpool. He went up to Oxford to study Classics on an Open Scholarship in 1942. It was at Oxford where he became aware that (like the Beatles) he spoke a working-class Liverpool dialect called “Scouse,” which eventually gave way to a standard BBC accent. As in the case of so many of his generation, the Second World War intervened. In 1943 he left Oxford to join the British Army, seeing action in France in 1944, and participating in the Allied Occupation of Germany in 1945. The following year he was back at Oxford. After graduating with an M.A. B.Litt. in 1950, he enrolled as a Ph.D. candidate in social anthropology under the supervision of Max Gluckman at Manchester University, at the time probably the leading centre of anthropology in Britain. He received his Ph.D. in 1955 and soon joined the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. In 1964 he founded the anthropology program at the University of Sussex. In 1971 he accepted a position as Professor of Anthropology at the University of California at San Diego, where in 1995 he became Professor Emeritus and continued to publish books at a pace that must have rendered his younger colleagues breathless.

This article will focus primarily on the following: the author’s Indian phase; his groundbreaking work in *Stratagems and Spoils* (1969); his eventual turn to anthropology at home best represented by *Morality and Expediency* (1977); two theoretically-oriented volumes, *Treasons, Stratagems and Spoils* (2001a) and *The Saving Lie* (2003), that were published towards the end of his career; and his final book, an inquiry into the interaction between power and religion in *God-Botherers and Other True-Believers* (2008) [1].

Indian Phase

The Indian research program focused first on a village, then on a region, and finally on the modern system of representative democracy. Along the way tribe, caste, the version of the mercantile economy introduced by British colonialism, and the administrative machinery of the modern state were treated as interdependent but contradictory political structures out of which emerged significant social change.

Caste and the Economic Frontier (1957) is a study of Bisipara, a village located in an isolated and poverty-stricken part of the state of Orissa known as the Kondmals. Bisipara was home to about 700 Oriya-speaking Hindus whose forebears had settled in the area some 300 years earlier. Bailey's focus was on the impact of external factors on political activity in the village, particularly the caste system. His rich ethnography enabled him to explain how the encroaching mercantile economy affected the capacity of peasants to retain control over and ownership of their land, and how two Untouchable Distiller castes were able to gain sufficient wealth to become prominent landowners themselves, which led to their attempts to elevate their positions in the caste hierarchy.

Tribe, Caste and Nation (1960) dealt with a village of about 500 people less than an hour's walk from Bisipara which the author called Baderi. Both Bisipara and Baderi were dependent on irrigated rice cultivation for subsistence, but otherwise were quite different. Bisipara was a multi-caste settlement. Baderi was dominated by a single caste called Konds who Bailey states (p. 263) were formerly labeled Animists or Tribalists and spoke the Kui language. Unlike Bisipara, the fulcrum of political action and social change in Baderi was not the village, but instead the dispersed clan system. Presumably that explains why Bailey focused on the wider region. In this book he examined the power struggles between the Aboriginal Konds and the Hindu settlers, and introduced the term “bridge-actions” to capture the manner in which individuals pursued their interests by mobilizing support across competing political structures such as tribe, caste, and the modern state.

Tribe, Caste and Nation is sometimes regarded as the best of the three Indian monographs. This is not only because of the scope of the study, but also because of its methodology and theoretical sophistication. Taking the position that disputes and conflicts are “diagnostic” of the causes and directions of social change, Bailey organized the study around 38 such cases. While the analytic focus was on social structure, the author's discussion of static vs. dynamic and synchronic vs. diachronic advanced the discipline's capacity to deal with social change.

In *Politics and Social Change* (1963) Bailey turned his attention to the system of representative democracy in the State of Orissa. His aim was to discover what impact parliament had on the older political structures of tribe and caste, and what it meant to people in their everyday lives. He began by interviewing about 50 members of the Legislative Assembly in the state capital, and then shifted the inquiry to the level of constituencies and villages. This was a challenging project, and Bailey candidly presented it as an experiment in methodology: whether or not the tools of social anthropology can cope with the complexity of a modern state.

Transactional Model

The Indian volumes were a hard act to follow, but *Stratagems and Spoils* surpassed all reasonable expectations. Drawing on the work of several prominent predecessors, especially Barth, Leach, Firth and Malinowski, Bailey sketched out the nuts and bolts of the transactional or agency model. The study opens with an intriguing comparison between the

Mafia and violent interaction among Swat Pathans in Pakistan as displayed in Barth’s (1959) pioneering study. Bailey’s argument is that both the Mafia and the Swat Pathans arrange their politics in much the same way. This led to one of his most significant claims: beneath the veneer of cultural variation, political activity everywhere, whether in advanced Western states or in tribal and peasant societies, exhibits a common set of principles.

Bailey distinguishes between normative and pragmatic rules of behavior. Normative rules are general guides to conduct; they consist of the public, formal or ideal rules of society. Pragmatic rules are deviations from the ideal rules; they consist of the tactics and strategies that individuals resort to in order to effectively achieve their goals. Bailey does not deny that duty and altruism exist, but his clear message is that human interaction is dominated by pragmatic rules manipulated by choice-making actors capable of rational calculation. As Bailey puts it, in everyday life most of us, guided by self-interest, thread our way between norms, seeking the most advantageous route. This is no less true of politicians who “are all caught up in the act of outmanoeuvring one another, of knifing one another in the back, or tripping one another up….No statesman is effective unless he knows the rules of attack and defence in the political ring” (1969: xi, xii).

On one level *Stratagems and Spoils* is the study of politics and power, but on another level it provides a theoretical perspective for the entire discipline. People are not puppets controlled by the institutional framework; they are active agents locked in competitive struggle. Nor is the social structure unified and static; it is a dynamic entity, continuously being reshaped by the shifting transactions, alliances, coalitions, competitions, and choices that characterize human interaction. The transactional model pushed the image of the social world so far away from Radcliffe-Brown’s structural functionalism as to render a paradigmatic shift. *Stratagems and Spoils* was the capstone study in this intellectual movement, and it consolidated Bailey’s reputation as an emerging star in the discipline.

Anthropology at Home

Morality and Expediency (1977) really did represent anthropology at home: an analytic examination of political interaction in universities. This book is an expanded version of the Louis Henry Morgan Lectures delivered at the University of Rochester in September and October, 1975. Its subject matter is the university as an organization which struggles between the contradictory goals (or “myths” as Bailey labels them) of scholarship, collegiality, and service to society. *Morality and Expediency* picks up the scent of the self-interested, manipulative actor which permeates *Stratagems and Spoils*, and pursues it into even darker corners. The focus is on the unprincipled side of human interaction, on “institutionalized facades, make-believe and pretence, lies and hypocrisy” on what “every public figure pretends does not exist” (1977:2).

Bailey distinguishes between public and private interaction. Public arenas are where principles, goals, and slogans flourish, and are the locus of non-rational debate. Principles and beliefs are devoid of criteria of ultimate worth; they can be proclaimed but not demonstrated. The private arena, uncontaminated by the urge to play to an audience, is where things get done. This is because under the protection of privacy, principles can be relaxed and compromise can prevail. To the extent that this occurs, the private arena is where rationality takes over. Yet the public arena is not merely an irksome ideological screen. It is there where people persuade each other that the world is orderly and therefore meaningful—what Bailey labels the basic lie, without which we might all go mad.

One of the most impressive chapters in this study is that devoted to committees. Committees are a sub-section of the bureaucracy. As such they should be guided by rationality and impersonality. Committees are quite different than communities or the collegial dimension of university life. Bureaucracies ideally only consider that part of an individual pertinent to the task under consideration, such as whether her or his record of publication warrants reward. Communities deal with the full, rounded person. With great insight, Bailey shows how in reality the community dimension always invades committee deliberations. Through casual remarks and gossip, committee members exchange personal information about the individuals under discussion. Not only does this occur, but it is Bailey's argument (p. 66) "that such committees cannot work effectively unless they use such information, without formally admitting that it exists."

In a later chapter Bailey reduces the political faces of his colleagues to 10 analytic constructs which he calls masks. Although he emphasizes that these are sociological rather than psychological constructs, they seem to stand mid-way between role and personality. There is Reason, described as a "technician of the intellect," who is unconcerned with first principles, believes that every problem has a solution, and questions the sanity of anyone who fails to see things his or her way. Another mask is Baron, "the man with moustaches, with testicles…" (p. 134). For Baron, the university is an arena of competing interest groups where intimidation is the weapon of choice. This chapter on masks displays Bailey's imaginative capacity at its best, and the book as a whole provides remarkable insight into the workings of universities, and possibly other types of formal organizations as well. Yet it probably never had the same impact on the discipline as his previous books, and the reason is apparent: anthropology at home still cannot seem to compete with the discipline's traditional focus on the (increasingly elusive) exotic "Other."

Theoretical Works

Treasons, Stratagems and Spoils was intended as a sequel to *Stratagems and Spoils.* Among its highlights are sections on how leaders control followers, the differences between politicians and bureaucrats, and especially the portrayal of Lyndon Johnson as a superb pragmatic politician whose rise to power was marked by stunning deceit and ruthlessness.

The term "treasons" in the book's title signals another significant change in Bailey's approach to politics. Treasons for Bailey connote morality. Previously the emphasis was on rational and pragmatic calculation in the competition for resources and power. Now room had to be made for duty and conscience. The recognition that people are motivated by more than self-interest no doubt was empirically justified, but it rendered the author's conception of the actor and political behavior much more complex than in *Stratagems and Spoils*; this in turn had far-reaching implications for the author's prior fidelity to positivism, for treating social systems like natural systems as Radcliffe-Brown had advocated (1964).

It should be noted that in the *Prevalence of Deceit* (1991) as well as the "Postscript" to the new edition of *Stratagems and Spoils* (2001b), Bailey had already commented on his shift from a commitment to the scientific study of society to an appreciation for the sheer untidiness of human interaction. He confessed to no longer being a simple (and thus happy) positivist, confident that “truth” was within the grasp of the eager ethnographer.

I suppose that at this juncture of his career Bailey might have been vulnerable to the anti-scientific stance of postmodernism and even to the extreme relativism of Geertz. Yet in different books he rejected postmodernism as a dead-end compilation of dubious and pretentious assertions, and was equally dismissive of Geertz’s “thick description” and its related implication that every culture is unique and thus cross-cultural analysis is problematic. In the end, all that Bailey claimed is that sufficient pattern exists both within and across cultures to warrant at least a watered-down version of the comparative method.

Actually, the vast bulk of Bailey’s books could be regarded as a celebration of cross-cultural analysis, but his approach has little in common with the formal manipulation of variables in order to establish causality. Sometimes his comparisons are extensive such as his focus on Hitler and Gandhi (2008). More often, however, with admirable brevity and imagination he demonstrates the underlying similarity between apparently unrelated phenomena. One example is the overlap between the manner in which the Mafia and the Pashtuns organize their political behavior (1969). A second is his insight that both Mao’s Cultural Revolution and Gandhi’s non-violence are in essence theatrical performances (2001a:179) A third is his reliance on an incident in Bisipara to explain how Michael Dukakis’s 1988 presidential ambitions in the United States were demolished. Tuta, an Untouchable who increased his wealth and attempted to elevate his caste position, was falsely accused by his hostile caste superiors of employing a spirit to kill a young woman. In Dukakis’s case, fabricated rumours about his mental illness and alleged tolerance of violent criminals such as Willie Horton drove a stake through his campaign (2001a: 4-6). Both men, as Bailey points out, were victims of witch-hunts.

It is unsurprising that Bailey largely draws his comparisons from his own field work experience and his knowledge of anthropology and related fields of inquiry. What is unusual is the degree to which he turns for inspiration to his personal life, especially his working-class background and school days in Liverpool, his war experience, and the different cultures of his various academic posts in Britain and America. In short, the comparisons he marshals resonate with his life experiences as a scholar and human being.

All of Bailey’s books are analytically sophisticated, but rarely does he debate the contributions of his colleagues or stray into the lofty realm of grand theory. *The Saving Lie* (2003) is different. First of all, it addresses some of the major changes that have occurred in anthropology since the Second World War, especially the dramatic rejection of Radcliffe-Brown’s structural functionalism and natural science model by his former student, Evans-Pritchard. In the latter’s inaugural lecture as the new chair of anthropology at Oxford in 1948 (which, incidentally, Bailey attended), he preached from the same structural functional scripture that Radcliffe-Brown had helped compose. Just two years later in his Marett Memorial Lecture, Evans-Pritchard had experienced a religious-like conversion (or, more probable, had finally publicly clarified his loss of faith in the old dogma). He argued that rather than being a science, anthropology was a branch of history, and thus fell under the umbrella of the humanities. Moreover its ethnographic goal should be to model society as a moral system, not a natural system. The task for the ethnographer was to erect an imaginary construct (by definition a set of ideas) of the essence of a society.

Bailey, who expressed great admiration for *The Nuer* (1940), had misgivings about the assumption that the essence of a society could be captured in a single master image, but he was less disturbed by the implicit emphasis on ideas conveyed by the imaginary construct. Indeed, another major shift in Bailey’s approach to anthropology was from social structure and the observable event that dominated his early work in India to the ideas that people carried in their minds. This idealist tendency was more compatible with cultural anthropology than social anthropology, suggesting that had Bailey not relocated to the United States he may not have embraced a conceptual scheme that assigned analytic priority to ideas rather than structure and behavior. It should be pointed out, however, that while still at Sussex his interests had already turned to cognitive anthropology.

Even more significant is Bailey’s comparison of neoclassical economics and structural functionalism. On the face of it, these paradigms (or models) have little in common. The heart of neoclassical economics is expected utility and the self-interested individual. The core of structural functionalism is group behavior and the imperative of duty even if it comes at the expense of individual gratification. Yet both paradigms share the assumptions that they are expressions of the natural order and thus scientific, and that they exist in a state of equilibrium.

Here the similarities end. Neoclassical economists (like the late Milton Friedman) assume that equilibrium is a spontaneous expression of natural law. In a sense it is amoral because it operates independent of human volition. Indeed, any intentional intervention of the market, by government for example, upsets the naturally-generated balance between supply and demand. The structural functional paradigm, in contrast, is moral to its core. Equilibrium is attributed to the impact of duty and conscience at the level of group interaction. The central value system and priority given to consensus over conflict assure that the collective will of citizens maintains society in a state of harmony and stability; in other words, equilibrium.

Bailey refers to the grand totalizing paradigms of neoclassical economics and structural functionalism as one-sided fictions or saving lies. They are fictions because their claims to universality do not accord with the complexity of human interaction; they are saving lies because they provide us with the psychological comfort that the world is orderly and meaningful.

In the final part of the book Bailey focuses on rhetoric and agency. Rhetoric implies persuasion and agency implies choice. Their ethnographic target is the detail, particularism, strategies and complexity that have been bracketed out by neoclassical economics and structural functionalism. At the same time they generate a host of alternative structures or models that are more closely connected to the empirical realm. As Bailey points out, choice between these alternative structures has less to do with evidence or truth than with the sheer power and persuasion of those who promote them. In this context Bailey evokes Isaiah Berlin’s famous distinction (1957) between the hedgehog and the fox. The hedgehog has one big idea, the fox a host of small ideas. The hedgehog, Bailey suggests, is a figure of speech for totalizing structures and the fox for the numerous alternative structures revealed by rhetoric and agency.

The Saving Lie is an intellectual treat. It is the analytic product or big statement of a lifetime of inquiry into politics. Especially impressive is Bailey’s knowledge about the discipline of economics. Although his interest in the economy was evident in his first book, *Caste and the Economic Frontier*, had he not moved from SOAS to Sussex where he interacted regularly with economists, it is questionable whether he would have developed the sophistication exhibited in *The Saving Lie*.

Admirable clarity has been Bailey’s trademark since the publication of his first book. From *Morality and Expediency* onwards there was a noticeable change in his writing style. It began to exude elegance and charm and a flair for the memorable expression. *The Kingdom of Individuals* (1993), for example, an investigation into the contradiction between individualism and collectivism (and probably the author’s most autobiographical book) is written with a degree of seductive grace unsurpassed even by Geertz.

Among the several volumes published by Bailey in the 1980s and 1990s, the most surprising may well have been the three new books based on his field work in India forty years earlier. The first of them, *The Witch-Hunt* (1994), is where Bailey unraveled the politics behind accusations of witchcraft related to the death of a young woman; the second, *The Civility of Indifference* (1996), explained how cultural norms prevented ethnic conflict from exploding into a political crisis; the third, *The Need for Enemies* (1998), focused on the challenges and turmoil that emerged in one part of India (Orissa) in the years following independence in 1947.

There is a saying in anthropology that if one’s field work is extensive and thorough, one can “dine out” on the data for years. If ever there were doubts about Bailey’s exceptional flair for field work, these three new monographs lay them to rest.

Power and Religion

I now turn to Bailey’s final published book: *God Botherers and Other True-Believers* (2008). On the face of it, religion would appear to be an unusual subject for the author unless his purpose was merely to pound another nail into theism. In his unpublished and undated autobiography (*Lower-Middle-Class: a Template*), he reveals that by the age of 15 or 16 he had become an atheist. In *God-Botherers* (p. 19) he confirmed that he remained an atheist at the time he wrote this book. He also expressed wonderment that any educated person could believe in God. In several of his books he revealed his personal distaste for fanatics or true-believers of all stripes, whether they occupy space in religion, politics or even academia. Consistent with this attitude was his personal admiration for moderation as a model for living. What is therefore impressive is the balanced, fair-minded and thoroughly scholarly character of the book. In fact by its end Bailey no longer saw any incompatibility between higher education and religion as long as the two spheres remained in separate compartments. Equally important was his insight that all of us, religious-oriented or not, rely on what he labels pre-suppositional faith. This consists of beliefs and values that persist as unquestioned guidelines as long as they are judged to be useful.

Early on (pp. 2-3) Bailey provides his definition of religion: “Any belief…is religious to the extent that it is asserted with dogmatic finality, held on faith, without evidence, without doubt, immune from criticism, immutable, and eternal.” Note that although a belief in God is not included in the definition, this alone does not explain why Bailey embraced its secular version such as communism, fascism, humanism, and even free-market capitalism and his own atheist orientation. The more significant reason was his repeated identification of fanatics and true-believers throughout the mundane realm, including the belief systems above.

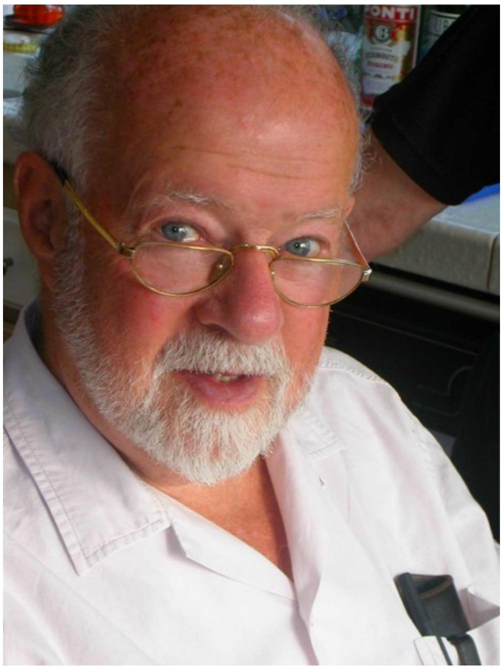
The main focus of this book is first on the religious right in America, then on Hitler and National Socialism, and finally and most extensively on Gandhi and non-violence. Bailey points out that the religious right in America overwhelmingly supports the Republican Party, which obviously makes it political. His harshest criticism is reserved for televangelists. He regards them as hypocrites who exploit the anxieties of their gullible flocks in order to amass fortunes which they shamelessly flaunt. Yet, as he adds, in the larger picture of sins arguably committed by religion such as its basis in numerous wars, and in comparison to Hitler and Gandhi, the televangelists are small fry. Bailey’s own word for them is perfect: pipsqueaks.

Hitler is portrayed by Bailey as a true-believer in its most odious sense, but conventional religion cannot be blamed. This is because although Hitler was raised as a Catholic and attended Catholic schools, he eventually despised Christianity. According to Bailey, Hitler did retain a vague belief in a spiritual force, but his real religion was secular: National Socialism. One of the reasons that Hitler opposed Christianity (and organized religion in general) was political; he thought that the Church would distract the population away from or even oppose his political goals. A second reason was his belief that the essence of the spiritual realm had been corrupted by institutional religion, resulting in flawed and damaged human beings. The task of National Socialism was to create the new human being, armed with a sword in one hand and a copy of *Mein Kampf* in the other.

If Hitler epitomizes evil, Gandhi epitomizes good. He was of course a true-believer in the religious sense, confident that he was guided by God. He also thought that education is a threat to religious belief, yet he was a trained lawyer who practiced for 20 years in South Africa. Whereas Hitler reveled in violence, Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence was the polar opposite. Yet one of the key aims of both of them was moral regeneration of their respective societies. Although Gandhi was a Hindu, his spiritual orientation embraced all religions, and his dream was that the mundane world would evolve in the direction of peace and respect where animosity and enemies would cease to exist. As Bailey cryptically remarks (p. 195): “Gandhi’s is a religion for societies already in Heaven….”

Nehru, a religious skeptic, had little patience for Gandhi’s spiritualism, but he recognized that no other leader in India possessed the charisma to inspire the nation towards the goal of independence, which was achieved in 1947. Before attributing the victory solely to Gandhi, it should be pointed out as Bailey does (pp. 187-90) that in the aftermath of the Second World War, Britain with its devastated economy and newly-elected socialist government (the Labour Party) had lost its taste for its colonial empire. Of course, independence was accompanied by what Gandhi must have regarded as one of his most devastating failures—the partition of the country along religious lines into India and Pakistan. One year later, in 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by Hindu fanatics who could not forgive him for doing what his faith demanded: reprimanding Hindus for their abuse of Muslims.

In his several books Bailey has argued that no leader can be successful without resorting to deceit and manipulation. Gandhi, who was not entirely adverse to political gamesmanship but in Bailey's judgment came closer to the ideal of the honourable statesman than almost any other figure of his stature, may be the ultimate and tragic proof.



F. G. Bailey 2004
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Criticisms

Not everyone has been enthusiastic about Bailey's approach to politics. Sydel Silverman (1974–5) criticized *Stratagems and Spoils* for ignoring the larger social structural context within which choice and manipulation operate. Yet Bailey has repeatedly stated that a focus on both agency and structure is obligatory in any inquiry. Joan Vincent (1990:348) has contended that Bailey ignored the politics of the powerful. Yet his early books covered such illustrious figures as Churchill and de Gaulle, and in later years Johnson, Hitler and Gandhi. Recall, too, that *Politics and Social Change*, the third of his original books on India, dealt primarily with professional politicians.

Stratagems and Spoils has also been criticized for promoting an overly-cynical view of the human condition. Yet not only has it been translated into French, Spanish, Italian and Japanese but it also has been praised as the modern successor to Machiavelli's *The Prince* (see Bailey 2001b: 238). Many anthropologists, indeed, would regard it as the fieldworker's model *par excellence.*

All of the above assessments, both positive and negative, have been aimed at *Stratagems and Spoils*. Curiously, this book appears to have made such a huge splash that there has been a tendency to define Bailey by it ever since. Certainly if the several books that followed *Stratagems and Spoils* were put under a microscope, critics would face a much greater challenge because Bailey has been a moving target. Structure and the observable event gave way to agency and manipulation; duty and conscience eventually surfaced alongside self-interest; finally, ideas were elevated to the analytic starting point. The trajectory of these shifts in Bailey's approach has been in a single direction: a movement away from positivism, a recognition of the slippery character of "truth", and the portrayal of the external world as quasi-chaotic. In his early work Bailey expressed "a repugnance for disorder" (1969: XIII). In his mature phase, disorder had become embraced as a defining feature of society.

It should be pointed out that there is some repetition in Bailey's books. Occasionally the same arguments and even ethnographic examples reappear, but in his defense they often acquire fresh significance each time his perspective changes. Of course, some degree of repetition is probably unavoidable for any scholar who consistently probes a single field of inquiry. Like Evans-Pritchard, Bailey also is "old school" in his stance that the accumulation of knowledge is sufficient justification for academic labour regardless whether it brings benefit to humankind [2]. In this era of applied and public anthropology the implied criticism might appear to be justified, but without a solid ethnographic and theoretical base any effort to be useful and relevant is likely to be compromised.

How, then, to sum up the impact of Bailey's lifelong devotion to the study of power and politics? Let me give the last word to Donald Kurtz [3]: "Bailey simply has no peers in anthropology—probably not even in political sociology or political science—when it comes to analyzing politics [4]."

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[1] A short version of this paper titled "Frederick G. Bailey" was previously published in Robert Gordon, Andrew P. Lyons and Harriet D. Lyons, Eds. (2011). *Fifty Key Anthropologists.* London and New York: Routledge.

[2] By sheer accident and good fortune I became one of Bailey's students when I decided to switch from the doctoral program at the University of Cambridge to the University of Sussex in 1968 in order to study under the guidance of Peter Lloyd, who at the time was the leading British anthropologist specializing on the Yoruba of Nigeria.

[3] Kurtz's glowing assessment appears on the back cover of *Treasons, Stratagems and Spoils.* Having published a fine study of his own on political anthropology (2001), he was well-qualified to evaluate Bailey's contribution.

[4] I am indebted to Chris Griffin for his astute critique of an earlier draft of this paper.