

CHAPTER 2

TRACING BUREAUCRATIC LOGIC THROUGH SURPRISE AND ABDUCTION

Author's Note

About a decade ago I was asked to contribute to an edited volume on Israel. The book's editor told me to do the chapter in any way I chose. I decided to concentrate on how the idea of bureaucratic logic came into focus for me. The only way to do this, I concluded, was to follow myself through the awakening to how the world I experienced was organized through lineal classification and categorization, and how so much of this awareness happened through what C. S. Peirce had termed the logic of abduction, as distinct from logics of deduction and induction which I had learned as a student but to which I had never given much attention as a practicing anthropologist. The chapter meanders through glimpses of my early life and, later, of the locations in which I did fieldwork; nonetheless this was how my relationship to bureaucratic logic emerged. The anthropology editor of the press was displeased and gave me an ultimatum: include Israeli materials only; after all, this was the topic of the entire volume. Well, this was not how I had become aware of bureaucratic logic; my search joined Israel to other locations and experiences. Her demand was sheer poetism. Poetism? A theory or presentation whose only claim for consideration is that it is aesthetically pleasing. In this instance the anthropology editor indeed joined together poetism and her own use of bureaucratic logic. Slice and dice the essay until it fit aesthetically within the volume without any regard for the truth of my search, as I understood it. I was content to withdraw the chapter and wait. . . .



Surprise: “A taking unawares or unprepared . . . astonishment . . . shock . . .”

For instance, when discovering the border of a lineal category:

In 1949 my parents and a friend drove from rural Quebec to Miami Beach for a midwinter vacation and took me along. I was ten. In the southern sunshine my skin became darker, and darkened daily. One afternoon my mother and I went to a department store to look around. Mom went to the ladies’ wear. I was thirsty. Looking about I spotted taps for drinking water. They were labeled strangely: White, Colored. During my short, northern country life I had seen hardly anyone “colored,” and I simply felt that I was white. So I went over to the White tap, bent over, and felt a hard, painful clip to my head that staggered me as a bored male voice told me, “Over there, nigger.” Shocked, in tears, I ran to find my mother.

Abduction

“The whole operation of reasoning begins with *Abduction* . . . Its occasion is a *surprise*. That is, some belief, active or passive, formulated or unformulated, has just been broken up . . . The mind seeks to bring the facts, as modified by the new discovery, into order; that is, to form a general conception embracing them” (C. S. Peirce 1903).

For instance, by beginning to fill in that lineal category, above:

Two years previously, in 1947, Uncle Joe, my mother’s brother, had taken me to see the Montreal Royals baseball team play at the old Delormier stadium in the city. The Royals were the Triple A farm club of the Brooklyn Dodgers. The occasion was the opportunity to see Jackie Robinson play. Robinson soon after went up to the Dodgers to become the first African-American player in the, until then, White Only Major Leagues. I was told that seeing Robinson play, breaking the racist color barrier (as it was called then), was a great event. I was so excited even if I didn’t know exactly why. Two years later I had a fuller, more mindful feeling of how a racist category worked and how this moved within me. Until today whenever I think of either of the incidents the other comes to mind and breath catches in my throat.

Anthropology is the art of making connections among unlikes, within social orderings, among social orderings, through the mindful feeling of the anthropologist. Empirical connections one would say, emerging from the doubleness of anthropological research, the empirical presence of the site of research and the sense of the empirical within the anthropologist, within and outside the research site. Mindful feeling is being mindful feelingly since all practice is infused with feeling which enables it to be the practice that it is (See the Introduction to this volume and Handelmann 2004: 101–3). Given the sensuous, cognitive, and social complexities of feeling mindful, the making of connections among the unlike is neither deductive nor inductive, neither knowing and on that basis knowing more (deduction) nor supposing on the basis of knowing and checking whether this is indeed knowing (induction). The art

of making connections among unlikes may be something else, something like C. S. Peirce's idea of abduction, and I turn to this shortly.

In relation to another project, I became mindful of how I thought of the idea of "bureaucratic logic." In this chapter I want to trace the emergence of this idea. In doing this I realized that I had to traverse the personal, the social, and the professional, in a line of flight that was anything but linear. Bureaucratic logic is a logic of classification that is lineal. In lineal classification the boundaries of categories are akin to straight lines (in three and often four dimensions) tending strongly toward the uninterrupted and the unbending. Lineal classification forms categories separated from one another by absolutist boundaries, thereby ensuring that the content of each category is inclusive and exclusive. Lineal classification has the capacity to rupture, divide, and separate the strands of any connectivity: thus, splitting persons from one another though they may be related through socially organic ties, whether of family and kinship or by other powerful connections. Bureaucratic logic is a mainstay (indeed, a weapon) of the organization of the modern state, its institutions, the governmentalities associated with the organization of social ordering, and the state's capacity to control its inhabitants as well as to wield warfare against other populations. Yet bureaucratic logic has a still wider cachet in the formation of realities of classification, and I have used it ethnographically, for example, to understand how certain kinds of "rituals" in Israel and elsewhere are constituted and practiced. Bureaucratic logic is a major modality of shaping and ordering social (and other) forms especially prominent in (yet certainly not restricted to) modern social orders.

To trace the emergence of the idea of bureaucratic logic I needed to follow myself thought-wise, feeling-wise, probably chronologically, through fieldwork sites in Nevada, Israel, Newfoundland, and South India, and through a motley clutch of seemingly unconnected ideas that included ritual, play, welfare practice, bureaucracy, and cosmology. I also realized that were I to write a fictional anthropology in a spirit apposite to that of Borges's story, "The Garden of Forking Paths," I would call it "The Art of Connecting Dissimilarities." The story would be about the recursive nature of the paths we take and those we don't, and, so, about the consequential character of the unplanned yet nonetheless inevitably recursive. Two dynamics are critical for me in connecting dissimilarities, thereby awakening more fully the anthropological imagination—abduction (mentioned above) and recursiveness. The effects of the first may be more immediate while those of the second likely have lengthier temporal trajectories.

The spirit of curiosity that has informed modern fieldwork anthropology since Malinowski has been less compatible both with empirically based inductive reasoning and with the deductive, yet much more compatible in practice with abductive reasoning. Few anthropologists knew this term, and few seem to do so today, yet this is what they did in practice and perhaps still do. Charles Sanders Peirce, the nineteenth-century American polymath, wrote of a third logic of inquiry (in addition to the deductive and inductive) that he called the abductive. Peirce understood the abductive

as the form of inquiry best suited to discovery, scientific and otherwise. Unlike both mainstays of rigorous inquiry that in the first instance depend upon the making of order, the abductive appositely depends upon the disintegration of coherence, the questioning of cohesion, the disruption of integration, the valuing of the unexpected. This is so because the practice of the abductive emerges from the eruption of the unexpected, flowers through surprise, and is activated even by plain astonishment that puts to the question whatever has been surmised, accepted, expected.

The logic of abduction is not that of deconstruction. Deconstruction (in its own terms) interrogates the premises of the solidity and certainty of structure that antedate questioning and critique. Contrastingly, the surprise and uncertainty that enable the abductive response happen because they happen, and, so, they continuously re-discover that social life, social dynamics, emerge from ongoing conditions of indeterminacy, and not from pre-existing order. The practice of abduction, born from surprise, responds to its astonishment by searching within and through surprise for interpretation, explanation, and further wonder in relation to the unknown.

If the anthropologist is more or less attentive to and mindful of unknowns, of the vagaries and uncertainties of fieldwork, while alert to the counter-intuitiveness that otherness should encourage, then abduction is the design of mindfulness most suited. In fieldwork, surprises open before the anthropologist in all directions. In an engrossing way the anthropologist as anthropologist exists through the strangeness of others, and if she can't or won't discover this, then anthropology is all the poorer. There is a conundrum in this for the anthropologist. The surprises that might lead to discovery must themselves be discovered in practice through the doings of those others among whom the anthropologist lives. Nonetheless he must not reduce surprise to common-sense understanding, nor should he theorize surprise into understanding. The first deflates the potential for discovery through surprise; the second straight-jackets surprise through the pretense that theory is the imagination at work. There is an intimacy within the mindfully feeling anthropologist that joins together surprise and curiosity as the sustenance of the anthropological imagination, awakening and arousing abductive feeling-thinking. As an old joke has it, after a month in the field the novice anthropologist thinks he know everything; and after a year in the field he knows that he knows next to nothing. I believe that the anthropologist who doesn't experience surprise (indeed many surprises) in fieldwork and, so, feeling-thinking abductively, is not likely to do interesting analytical ethnography.

Recursiveness begins with repetition (see also the discussion on time in the Epilogue to this volume). Most simply, repetition is something happening again, given common-sense perception that repetition is the same (often boring and numbing) thing over again . . . over again . . . over again . . . over itself . . . (and into itself). Repetition innocuously embeds the recursive within itself. Repetition conceals how repetition loops, and one can say that the loop is constituted by "information," yet information of all kinds. Looping carries the information of repetition within it, yet is it the same information that repeats, as we often insist? Or is looping (called feed-

back in elementary systems theory) always connecting dissimilarity? Gilles Deleuze (1994) argues persuasively that every repetition constitutes difference. Therefore every return is a new beginning, given that inside every repetition there is the germ of emerging difference. Nothing is ever exactly the same, and, so, what goes around comes around . . . yet . . . comes around as different. In this regard Deleuze (1994: 57) quotes the nineteenth-century American poet, Benjamin Paul Blood: “the same returns not, save to bring the different. The slow round of the engraver’s lathe gains but the breadth of a hair, but the difference is distributed back over the whole curve, never an instant true—ever not quite.”¹

Within every repetition there is the potential of difference. Gregory Bateson’s insistence (said somewhere) that a difference to be a difference must make a difference can be qualified by saying that recursivity creates powerful difference little by little, and that such difference may eventually generate the creative and the chaotic (the flutter of butterfly wings of chaos theory). Thus the scale of recursive loops may be tiny (the engraver’s lathe) and may be grand; the existence of loopings (as we often experience them) may become noticeable only through duration; yet, in Jung’s terms, they may also become synchronous, the utterly sudden conjoining of unlikes that immediately make a difference, one that we may call insight, illumination—the proverbial lightbulb lighting up in one’s head.² The grander loops initially seem more like lineal trajectories that take off and disappear from one’s ken. One feels that they are gone forever, over and done with, and yet after perhaps lengthy durations returning surprisingly, even shockingly with feeling, striking one suddenly in the back of the head not as a reminder of what was but as the potential of what may be, what may become. This too is integral to ethnography and of course to the life of the ethnographer, saturated with looping (and more often than not with kinds of loopiness that intensive interaction with otherness generates).

So, asking me to be mindful of how I came to think up the idea of bureaucratic logic in relation to Israeli social ordering is asking me no less to consider surprise and recursiveness that in no small measure shaped my becoming whatever I am as an anthropologist, and perhaps as the human being I am. This of course is beyond me in a short chapter, and likely improbable altogether. Yet perhaps I can give a sensuous sense of where this idea came from within myself by recursively joining some bits of personal history to surprises through anthropology in different places.

Growing This Way and That

On my way to the University of Pittsburgh to study for a PhD in anthropology I went to Reno in the summer of 1964 to participate in a field training program at the University of Nevada, and pretty much by happenstance went to live in a small community of Native Americans who (to summarize complexities) were mainly Washo (*Washiu*). In this place lived the aging shaman, Henry Moses Rupert, who during a brief period gave me lessons on constituting reality that much later became strangely

apposite to the idea of bureaucratic logic. For me getting there, to Nevada, (and, so, getting here to wherever I am at present) took a personally arduous route.

I was raised in a small town, north of Montreal during the 1940s and 1950s. In a francophone and devotedly Roman Catholic social surround, my parents preferred to send me to the anglophone and low-profile Anglican school, a proverbial little red wooden schoolhouse (painted yellow), with each classroom containing a number of grades and dormice under the radiators. The school bus daily collected kids spread out over a twenty-mile radius. Rote learning predominated, education for its own sake was not valued, and by the age of twelve or so children already were dropping out to go to work. By the last year of high school only four of us were left, and of these but two sat for and passed the provincial high school leaving exams, enabling us to attend university. The other graduate tragically was murdered some years later together with her boyfriend, leaving me the sole surviving graduate of the class of '56. My own sardonic joke was that I could hold a class reunion whenever it moved me to do so.

McGill University in Montreal was an excellent institution of scholarship, yet to me a surprise in terms of learning and not a pleasant one. Studying for a general BA degree I discovered early on that I did not understand what the professors were telling me nor what I was reading. Well, that's not quite accurate: I could outline and schematize study materials yet not comprehend the logics of how they fit together, held together, or were made to do so by scholars. The significance of the interiority of materials escaped me: perhaps by a hair's breadth, perhaps by a country mile, but just about always out of sync and out of reach. The worst (over and again) was trying to relate to formal systems with their own organization of principled rules, to logics that were ruled and precise: grammars, numerics, mathematics, and the reasonings of philosophies. The four years of the BA passed in this way as I accumulated a collection of mediocre grades.

Imagining what to do, thinking of everything I didn't want to do, I decided with trepidation to try for an MA in anthropology. The reason—simple and obtuse—was absurd in terms of choosing (at least temporarily) a career path: during my years at the university the only grade of A I had received was in the introductory course to anthropology. Given my grades, the departmental chair of sociology and anthropology thought my application a joke, yet he suggested, indeed fairly, that I take a make-up year, a double load of courses. If I did well enough, I could enter the MA program. I did this, though with one close call in a small project I was assigned to do. The assignment was to design and carry out a questionnaire-based study in a seminar in social psychology taught by the departmental chair. In my naivete and ignorance I thought that I had to create the questionnaire instrument (and the ways in which to analyze its results) rather than using an instrument already well-tested for its validity and reliability (as, I learned later, all the others in the seminar had done just this). My little study attained incomprehensible results. Following the silence that greeted my presentation of this failed effort, the chair turned to the

others, yelping in his yip-yip voice, “Well . . . some of us have it . . . and some of us don’t!” There was no doubt as to who didn’t have it. At worst I was seen as stupid, at best, as a stolid dolt. Later on I did my MA thesis which turned out alright yet without imagination. After I completed the MA one of the sociologists, a Harvard PhD, came up to me in the corridor, shook my hand and said with a smile, “We never thought you’d make it.” That was the summation until then of my entry into academia.

I write the above neither for didactic nor cathartic purpose, nor to strike a triumphal pose in retrospect. Rather, to underline that I had to learn that which so many years later I would call bureaucratic logic, but to learn this “on my own flesh” (as the saying goes in Hebrew). I was surprised over and over again and learning, yet more through feeling mindful than through analyzing what was happening to me. Feeling the academic categories; feeling how to fit into and use these while masking the rough edges; and feeling that the boundaries of these categories (despite their sometime appearance of flexibility and give-and-take) are quite sharply demarcated, separating those within from those without (with the full double meaning of this). Above all, naturalizing the feeling that academia (for all its stress on creative scholarship) was primarily about making order in knowledge, or, rather, of making knowledge *as* order, even in anthropology (with its often necessarily messy fieldwork). The academic categories and the academic work that fit into them were all about the orderliness of the lived-in world as it is lived by the peoples that anthropologists studied. The academic task above all was to uncover the cultural-social regularities that enable these lived worlds to exist, and largely calling for a neatness and exactness in doing this that I have rejected for quite some time now. Decades later the idea of bureaucratic logic emerged from this early commotion of surprise, feeling, and trying to survive (within) academia.

Nonetheless, decades later I had become so accustomed to the demands of my peers (and myself) for precision in definition and analysis (“Can you be more *precise*?”; “What *exactly* do you intend?”; “How *exactly* does this work?”; and, above all, “SAY IT” with precision and exactness, as if all phenomena of the world exist in just these ways of clarity above all else, for how else could anything be done and known to be done if not said to be done in this way?).

The years of university were my first sustained, precarious experience of a complex bureaucratic organization that processed all of us as bits of information to be evaluated, classified, and assigned to discrete categories of (direct) consequence to our lives. The little yellow schoolhouse didn’t count in this regard. From the bureaucratic perspective of making and sustaining regularity, surprise (and its corollary of abduction) are unwelcome, since surprise (perhaps) opens toward the potential questioning and critiquing of whatever has not played itself out according to expectation. Yet feeling this and trying to adapt were so distant from reflexive, mindful feeling. Above all, I hadn’t a clue that so much scholarship in the social sciences and humanities *precisely* practiced itself into existence in order to do that which academic institutions

did. My Nevada experience, which came to focus on Henry Rupert, added something (inchoate) in this regard.

Nevada: Practical Lessons in Phenomenology

Being with Henry Rupert was as far from bureaucratic logic as one could get. As a young man he had taken his family and left the social orders organized and run by others. He had settled into solitude, raising his children and devoting much of his life to the development of his healing potentialities. In Chapter One of this volume and elsewhere I have discussed Henry's cosmology of healing (Handelman 1967a, 1972). Without going into this cosmology here, how he came to talk to me after some weeks of denying that he was a shaman is relevant here. Without realizing the implications, I confused an academic anthropological category (the life-history) for one that was quintessentially Henry (his life, his selfness). Despairing of ever learning about his shamanism, I instead suggested to him that we do his life-history—family history, kinship, upbringing, schooling, the kinds of work he had done, and so forth.

The academic category of life-history, despite its pretensions to being open-ended, could not be other than a representation of aspects of a life, a pragmatic rendition of a life in parts existing for anthropological purpose, a categorical partiality that shapes human being as one kind of thingness, indeed as a creation of academic linear logic. To himself within his selfness, Henry was an entirety, a whole, within which boundaries were erased and differences were woven through one another. Especially so for him as I came to learn, since he had revolutionized traditional healing by, for example, bringing together spirit helpers of disparate logics while doing away with their opposition to one another (see Chapter One). After I suggested a life-history we drifted into a long silence. After many minutes he spoke without any preamble: "My life has always been concerned with psychology. I was never a happy-go-lucky man like other Indians. I was always something of a recluse. I always tried to follow the laws of nature." I was astounded. This moment was the severest jolt I have experienced as an anthropologist, until then and since. I was driven from my academic typifications, knocked out of the conceit that I had any entitlement to a privileged vantage point on the lives of others, out of the idea that I had any authoritative imprimatur on the creation of knowledge, out of the Other as object (Handelman 1993: 138–39; Handelman 2016).

I was conversing with a man who had lived his life abductively, not accepting traditional understandings but trying to come to grips with the surprises of his own explorations of cosmos, treating these experiences and upsets empirically, as facts to be apprehended within his own changing comprehensions of the cosmic. I emphasize that his explorations were neither "deductive" nor "inductive." They were what, indeed whatever, he encountered in the holism of his world in which every action was consequential (which separated him from the scientist who almost always distinguishes between his or her disciplinary work and the world as lived and experienced).

My trying to make some (anthropological, personal) sense of Henry's world was not a matter of how reality was defined—in other words, if defined as real it is real in its consequences, to paraphrase W. I. Thomas's succinct and incisive understanding of the social definition of the situation, a mainstay of social-science thinking with strong resonances of phenomenology. Henry told me clearly and concisely a number of times that his reality was not my reality. In doing so he recursively turned my academic learning back on itself. In his world, reality was not the outcome of social negotiation or of consensus, nor for that matter the outcome of relations of social power. Nor were differences in his reality a matter of arbitrary distinction that were naturalized through use into common-sense expectations (as the sociologist, Harold Garfinkel, and others argued).

There are profound differences in how definition is done that are not covered by theories of the definition of the situation or by present-day constructivism. Nor are these differences covered by anthropological perspectives on relativism. Henry's (changing) cosmos could not become linear without being destroyed. His cosmos was entirely alive in all its elements, without any necessary or clear distinction between beings and objects (e.g., Ingold 2006). His cosmos was consciously recursive, in that every action effected everything else. And his cosmos was held together from within itself, a kind of integration for which there is no word in the English language. A cosmos so unlike the monotheistic that is closed off and held together from its boundary by an omnipotent God (see Chapter Eight and Handelman and Lindquist 2011). I understood little of this then nor for many years afterward, yet in some ways the knowledge was within me. Surprise and the abductive propensity in the field sedimented in me as they never had during my academic learning. And indirectly I learned about academia and academic knowledge through Henry Rupert. As mindful feeling, I understood Henry Rupert better than I had the teachings of my professors.

The academic knowledge of arbitrary boundaries, of categorical typologies, of categories sharply and distinctly separated from one another is the kind of analytical thinking that makes a virtue of the fragmentation of knowledge, of being, of existence torn into distinct and manageable parts.³ An academic world in which fuzziness is largely perceived as futile and as the result of lazy thinking.⁴ After Nevada I tried to be careful not to confute academic-style classification with that of people I studied, though in my Israeli experiences the two not only crisscrossed but also became interlocked in varying degrees. Through my Nevada experience I also learned with some surprise that phenomena that began to interest me deeply as an anthropologist and a human being were ones that I met in the field and not in book or classroom learning—the concrete phenomenon absorbed me, not the abstract, yet I found myself consistently theorizing the concrete, thereby (abductively) entering into concrete abstraction. With Nevada began a lifelong interest in ritual, though I had yet to encounter directly the phenomenon of bureaucracy as part of fieldwork research.

Israel: Ubiquitous Bureaucracy, Taken for Granted

The Israel I encountered first in 1967 (nineteen years after its founding) prior to the war of that late spring was a highly centralized state, put together top-down in so many spheres of organization and living, espousing socialist ideals (or at least this rhetoric), proud of its revolutionary initiatives and its martial prowess, and engrossed in the “ingathering of the exiles,” bringing together Jewish immigrants from all over the world. I had come from the University of Manchester (where I ultimately submitted my PhD) as a member of Max Gluckman’s Bernstein Israeli Research Scheme. The project was intended for the study of what then was called the “absorption of immigrants,” the ways in which the new state was taking in Jewish immigrants in very large numbers and their responses to these great upheavals in their lives. My colleagues on this project mainly studied “communities”—collectivist moshavim and kibbutzim and new towns established especially for recent immigrants. Underlying and informing all of these and just about everything else in this country was bureaucratic infrastructure (and so it had been from the first socialist-Zionist efforts here in the 1920s [Shapira 1976]). The great bulk of anthropological studies of Israel at the time had pages filled with the doings of bureaucratic institutions (the richest of these was Dorothy Willner’s *Nation-Building and Community in Israel* [1969]), yet as a subject in itself little attention was given to bureaucracy in contrast to politics, ideology, economics, ethnicity, and so forth. Bureaucracy was ubiquitous, yet was treated either as the unproblematic, natural servant of all those other structures that were making the country what it was becoming or was handled as an institution to be studied mainly in the tradition of Max Weber. This was the perspective of the then master of Israeli sociology S. N. Eisenstadt and his students, and also pretty much that of my supervisor, Max Gluckman.

Initially I was no different in my Israeli research. Bureaucracy was treated either as a backdrop to other doings or was studied as an organization. Though when one encountered bureaucracy in fieldwork it might arouse more reflexive perceptions, as in the following instance I recollected from May 1967.

After breakfast in the institute where I am living and studying Hebrew, I board the crowded, clanking bus to the bank, to change British pounds into Israeli *lirat* [currency]. The excitable to the stolid. Three clerks, a line of metal folding chairs, and forms, many of them. As the first client moves over to the second clerk, the first sitting in line goes to the first clerk and the rest of us stand, almost synchronized, and move over one seat. From clerk to clerk, each with mounds of paper and a host of stamps standing like chessmen, to be moved strategically from form to form, adding, deducting, checking, checkmating the client over to the next clerk. From seat to seat we stand, move over, sit. Endgame, toppling under paper, spewed onto the pavement melting in the sun. Where in heaven’s name do

they keep all that paper, tripled, quadrupled, stacked in packets, packed in racks, racked on shelves, shelved . . . somewhere, more likely under the earth. Huge underground storage vaults crowded to their metal ceilings with paper, silent, orderly, stamped into submission. The paper substrate of the Zionist State, the textual foundations of its pioneering subjects. . . . (Handelman 2007: 119)

For personal reasons (I had met my future wife two weeks after arriving in Israel) I went to live in Jerusalem and had to find a subject or site for my doctoral fieldwork. Quiet, introspective, I was intimidated by the ferment and fervor of Israel and by the interpersonal pushiness and aggressiveness of Israelis and came very close to quitting altogether the Manchester project, though I spent much time walking and wandering through both sides of the city, the Jewish west and the Palestinian east, learning many of its ins and outs and ways around.⁵ I was also learning what I was not: not an anthropologist of projects, not one who conceived of and furthered research initiatives in the academic world that thrived on research-as-project (and the monies needed to carry this through). However, wherever I found myself, I would find something that became intrinsically fascinating and that initially was not recognizable to me through my book learning to that point. Indirectly this is related to my later formulation of bureaucratic logic. Bureaucratic logic is a pushy concept, an idea that acts forcefully in the world—as when I understood much later that, perceived through bureaucratic logic, bureaucracy itself ceases to be simply the staid and immovable repository of piles of regulations and documents and instead becomes probably the most forceful agent of deliberately making change in the colonial and postcolonial worlds. This understanding would not have come to me had I not spent a good deal of time later on in the company of bureaucrats. Nor would this understanding have come without surprise and the logic of the abductive.

After dithering overlong I grounded (thanks to the help of Emanuel Marx) in a complex of workshops that employed aged, poverty-stricken men and women. The work was repetitious, often boring, very low paid and at times demeaning, given the domineering and patronizing control, attitudes, and interventions of the women who ran the organization. So it was on the surface of things. With the months, my looking interiorized into seeing, and seeing turned into mindful feeling. Stories, jokes, humor, songs, ridicule, sadness, tragedy, emerged mindfully into my purview. Erving Goffman, a seminal thinker on interaction whose work I had met at McGill through my excellent MA supervisor, Dick Salisbury, found me once more. My PhD thesis took Goffman's wonderful idea (quite ignored in anthropology) of the "encounter" and turned it into a basic unit of social organization, one that only comes into existence with the onset of interaction, emerges and takes shape as the interaction continues, its emergent form affecting and effecting how the interaction proceeds as it is ongoing, and folds up with the end of that segment of interaction, whether lengthy or brief (Handelman 2006a and the Epilogue to this volume).

That period of fieldwork closely seeing the *how* of practice served me well from then on. Surprise is traced abductively first and foremost through how events are done or practiced. Perhaps only in this way can surprise be traced socially into its surprising character for the anthropologist and the effects and consequences this has for him and his work. The greatest surprise I had during that period of research occurred when I witnessed the creation of a highly playful game in one of the workshops. It came into existence, into practice, silently, without comment, and after a month or so of being played intensively disappeared quietly, never commented upon yet fraught with local significance in that workshop and fragile in its constitution (Handelman 1998: 86–101). Something that had to be seen to be believed, yet something that could not be interrogated while in existence and something that was never responded to by players and others after it had disappeared. A transient phenomenon full of meaning, yet one that if I hadn't seen it could never have been recouped in retrospect. Play, one of the great unstudied phenomena of academia (even as, ironically, it is basic to virtually all imaginative scholarly work) had appeared to me, play that had to be felt mindfully. I spent periods of the next two decades tracing my way through play and through what Brian Sutton-Smith (1997) called the playful attitude, also bringing this into contrast with “ritual” and entering into phenomena of play-within-ritual.

Bureaucracy made its appearance as part of this workshop research, not as surprise but as an inevitability in the kind of state and society that constituted Israel. Since many of the workers had come to the workshops through the welfare system, trying to trace their bureaucratic biographies there was integral to understanding at least portions of their late life-trajectories.⁶ I related to the organization of welfare—its social workers, its files—as an institution. I discovered that the people in the workshops were perceived as debris, as the detritus of Israeli society regardless of their past lives (Handelman 1976). In this I learned too of how merciless this society (socialist and not) was to anyone and everyone (unless they were wealthy, political, and/or otherwise connected) who was impaired, disabled, deviant, incarcerated (in all kinds of institutions), or who otherwise rejected societal norms. It was a basic lesson in Israeli-ness stemming from the brutality of its pioneer heritage and its constant struggle for progress and disdain for weakness, yet for all that not to be forgiven regardless of the sacrifices of those who were perceived (and perhaps perceived themselves) as worthy of being sacrificed. Again, ironically, this elementary lesson has been so overlooked in studies of Israel throughout the decades, shuffled into, hidden and lost in arguments over inequalities in gender and ethnicity (and submerged in social class difference, though the latter is conveniently overlooked by anthropologists). At any rate, I had by then acquired ideas of ritual, play, and a small sense of bureaucracy, and I began to position these in relation to one another in terms of what Gregory Bateson (1972) called metacommunication, communication about communication, metamessages that implicitly guide one's voyages through situations, contexts, places, times. In my thinking the metamessage of ritual bespoke, “This is truth”; that of “This is play”

referred to the multiplicities and falsehoods of “reality”; while bureaucracy didn’t yet have a metamessage name, for I hadn’t realized just how arbitrary and brutal were its classifications. Yet I did begin to comprehend just how different were bureaucratic phenomena from those other modes of organizing reality (or so I thought then).

Newfoundland: Doing Lineal Classification

After I received the PhD my wife and I decided to spend most of a year in Newfoundland where I looked more closely at welfare bureaucracy. After some months of learning the nuts and bolts of welfare in a city (and province) of very high unemployment I discovered the child welfare department, something of a revelation to me. At that time, child welfare in North America largely was dominated by the emerging formation of the distinction between child abuse and child neglect, the former phenomenon more active in directly damaging the child, the latter more passive in damaging the child. It became clear to me that these categories highly complemented one another, in that areas not covered by one was covered by the other, together forming something of a hermeneutic world of damage to children. Part of the job of caseworkers was to form and practice cases that established whether or not particular children in particular families qualified for inclusion in one or the other of these broad categories.

Much of the information (a good deal communicated anonymously) that triggered investigations came from family members and neighbors. Settling scores could be prominent. The caseworkers often had to adopt an investigative stance toward case-building. In cases of hard-core abuse the evidence could well be unequivocal. Other instances of suspicion were much grayer. In these latter instances, caseworkers had to construct realities that fit the (often conflicting) evidence of a case. I am not saying that they manufactured realities to suit their tasks. Yet in order to make the phenomenon called a case, and to make it stick, caseworkers did shape the resources at their disposal to form a reality within which a person or persons could be held culpable, at times with harsh consequences. In other words, caseworkers formed cases within which they could function as caseworkers. I began to see that these were exercises in practical phenomenology on the part of caseworkers (Handelman 1978). In one of the instances that I was able to document in detail the caseworker succeeded in obtaining the incarceration of a mother for ninety days of psychiatric observation *in order to* remove her from her child so that then the child could be taken into foster care and not returned to the mother for some time, if at all (Handelman 1983: 22–31). This mother likely had neglected two of her children who were put into foster care, but the child in question she called her “love child” and the little girl was in fine health in all respects. Nonetheless, within the forming of the case-world the mother was suspect and the child she loved had to be removed from her in whatever way possible. Shaping bureaucratic reality through the case enabled the social worker to act on and in the client’s world. Henry Rupert and his practical phenomenology looped

into Newfoundland child-welfare case-formation. After the caseworker obtained the order of incarceration, she reflexively exclaimed, “I could put away my own husband if I wanted to!” A moment of surprise, yet without an abductive response.

Henry was always aware, especially aware, of his experiences. Shaping his reality he was self-aware of how he did this and simultaneously fully aware that he became integral to the innerness of this reality. As I noted, Henry’s cosmos was organic, held together within itself, through itself, since everything was alive, intra-connected, intra-related. As such, like many other organic varieties of cosmos, this one had no exterior boundaries; nothing held it together from its outside (Handelman and Lindquist 2011; Chapter Eight, this volume). So Henry’s practical phenomenology was no less organic, springing from this kind of cosmos. In the Newfoundland research I realized more clearly than I had in Israel just how different were the bureaucrats’ forming of reality (and how like their reality was my own). Bureaucratic shaping was always piecemeal, always arbitrarily sliced and spliced in relation to bureaucratic categories into which they needed to fit.

This enabled me to be mindful of the effects of bureaucratic classification on all kinds of populations—communities, those populations occupied by military rule, kin groups, families, neighborhoods, work groups, the poor, the infirm, and on and on. Bureaucratic classification was abrupt and linear rather than organic and continuous. Bureaucratic classification dismantled, ripped apart, and dismembered the organic. Bureaucratic classification insisted in the main that these rips and ruptures were neat cuts, virtually surgical, clean, complete, absolute, turning continuities and continua into total and totalizing differences. Indeed nothing was sacred before such onslaughts. Bureaucratic classification put these parts, these bits and pieces, together in different ways, new ways, insisting that they clamp and clump together, holding them together by forcing them to do so. If all this were so, and I thought it was, then these dynamics were no less significant than understanding bureaucracy as organization, as institution. I was edging into a logic of organization that sprang from the lineal classification of categories of inclusion and exclusion—this is the logic I later called “bureaucratic.”

“Rituals” and Bureaucratic Classification

After Newfoundland I no longer studied bureaucracy *per se*. I began to focus more on ritual (and play within ritual), though primarily through reanalyzing case studies written by others. I had no set goals in doing this; I read a lot of ethnography and would awaken into analysis when struck with surprise that the analysis I was reading could be understood quite differently in terms of itself, without importing another theory to make a different case (Evens and Handelman 2006: 162–63). For some years I did a variety of these reanalyses, relating to each one as a quite separate piece, without any urge to move them all in any particular direction. A kind of Deleuze and Guattari intellectual rhizome, moving this way and that. I had no qualms about

spending many months (and sometimes an entire year or more) on one article and then beginning another that had no seeming connection to the previous or to others.

In 1979 we went to Sri Lanka to visit Bruce Kapferer, a most dear friend. This was my first introduction to South Asia and we ended up doing some fieldwork on aspects of a great ritual complex dedicated to the South Indian deity, Murugan (a son of Shiva). Back in Israel I met David Shulman soon after he had completed his PhD in Indology. Discussing with David was fun, informative, enlightening. My knowledge of anything South Asian is largely self-taught and David was always supportive and helpful, nurturing my fascination as only he can do, and redirecting me whenever unwittingly I veered off the paths of possibility. With David's encouragement I began to study a cosmology of Murugan (known in northern India as Skanda or Kartikeyya). Henry Rupert returned, cosmology once more, yet very different from anything I had experienced, and just how different I wasn't really to realize for years. Yet my experiences with Henry were strangely more in resonance with these materials of medieval South India than were what I had learned about Western classifications. A recursiveness I hadn't an inkling of until it pierced me, awakening thoughts dormant for a long time; Henry bounding through my life with his ancient vigor. My interests in cosmology and ritual strengthened one another, powerfully aided by an ongoing fascination with India (Handelman and Shulman 1997, 2004; Handelman 2014).

Thinking of ritual (and cosmology) in Israel of the early 1980s I drifted into studies of State and state-related "ritual." At that time this subject was a near *tabula rasa* in Israel. The sociologist of communication, Elihu Katz, and I studied the Israeli national, civil "rituals" of Memorial Day for the War Dead and Independence Day; and Lea Shamgar-Handelman and I studied how the national emblem of Israel was chosen and, at the tiny end of the social spectrum, holiday celebrations and birthdays in Jewish kindergartens, which we found to be strongly State-related in how they socialized little children. I began to comprehend two things, surprises indeed to me. One was that although State and children's state-related "rituals" were called ritual or ceremony and the like by anthropologists and other scholars, the interior logics of *how* these were organized were utterly different from the rituals of Henry Rupert or those of traditional India and elsewhere that I had read about. I mean that these modern civil and civic "rituals" and traditional ones had *nothing* in common as far as I was concerned; and so the roof concept of "ritual" lost its value for me since it utterly skewed any radical, comparative, understanding of "ritual" (Handelman 2006b). Another surprise was that the interior logic of State and state-related "rituals" actually resembled more the kinds of classification I had found in studying bureaucracy in Newfoundland and those I encountered and read about on a daily basis in Israel, a state founded in and continuously reproduced through bureaucratic infrastructures and their social classifications, something quite taken for granted and considered hardly worth studying by anthropologists here.

We know from many "rites" of tribal and traditional social orderings that their logics of organization do transformation—of person, of social order, of cosmos. By contrast,

the state, civil, and civic “rituals” I was studying did nothing (in my terms) within and through themselves; they were more like “presentations” and “re-presentations” organized through clear-cut classifications of sets of categories, and at times these classifications were shuffled around as set pieces, like cards in a deck, like snapshots in a stack. Around this time my friend, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, told Sue Allen-Mills, then the anthropology editor at Cambridge University Press, who was going through universities in the US looking for new book manuscripts, that it was worth visiting me in Minneapolis where my wife and I were spending a sabbatical year. I told Sue about my ideas for a more comparative work on “ritual”; she was enthusiastic and supportive; and I spent the rest of that sabbatical thinking further through these ideas.

I had read a lot on simple cybernetic ideas of “system” through Gregory Bateson and others (see the Epilogue to this volume) and began to perceive abductively that one didn’t need to think of large-scale (Radcliffe-Brownian or Parsonian) social systems in order to see that a social order could have particular domains that were organized systemically while others were not. So, what of these “rituals” that did transformation in tribal and traditional social orderings? One way of thinking through such a “ritual” was to think of it as a small, even tiny, system organized to create a specific outcome through its own interior relational workings, an outcome that would be quite different from when the “ritual” began. In these social orderings, it was through these “rituals” that controlled and directed change was made in social and moral orderings, and in cosmos. By contrast, the interior organizations of state and civic “rituals” did nothing apart from exhibiting bureaucratic-like taxonomies and classifications.

A theory of comparative “ritual” organization, based first and foremost on the organization of forms of “ritual” and their interior dynamics (and not on cultural or social contexts) took shape. I threw out the term, “ritual,” and instead used a more neutral one, “event,” which enabled events as logics of form and dynamics to be compared across cultural and social orderings—and without any kind of event having primacy or pride of place. One such form was the event-that-models the world (an event that is organized systemically); another was the event-that-presents the world (the event organized through the presentation of bureaucratic-like classifications); and a third was the event-that-re-presents the world (the event organized to do reversals, inversions, and the like, e.g., carnivals and many festivals). So, too, any particular event could have phases or aspects of any or all of these modalities and variations thereof.⁷ And then, surprise once more.

If events-that-model the world were premier loci of making deliberate, focused change in tribal and traditional social orderings, then where would I find their equivalents in a modern social ordering like Israel, where I lived? To put this otherwise, *how* is deliberate, focused change made most routinely and mundanely in a modern social ordering like Israel? I felt the answer lay in the multitude of social taxonomies through which people and things are classified and organized. This is the domain of

modern bureaucracy in its myriads of form doing great and tiny acts of classification according to existing taxonomies, but also routinely making changes in existing taxonomies, altering the categories of classifications, and indeed inventing entirely new taxonomies. The simple fact is that even a tiny alteration in an existing category speedily and causally effects (and often affects) the persons who are the objective of the change, and of course others who are related or connected in various ways to the former. I cannot emphasize enough just how routine is the making of change through bureaucracy in modern social orderings. Making change through events-that-model the world was (and likely still is) a special event, perhaps invoking cosmic forces, perhaps the sacred, involving careful preparation, and perhaps fraught with danger as participants enter into and alter the very lineaments of cosmos (Turner 1967; Kapferer 1997). By contrast, making change through bureaucratic classification and the altering of classification are often so mundane and matter of fact.

Israel was a treasure trove for this kind of thinking about classification. That is, Israel was good to think with about bureaucratic classification. A moral and social ordering that valued the initiator, the doer, the actualizer (summarized in Hebrew by the term, *bitzu'ist*), while to be passive was to be perceived as a patsy (*friyer*); Israeli Jews never ready to bite the bullet; a State continuing as highly centralized, awash with bureaucratic decision-making effecting virtually all domains of existence; a powerful armed forces that are deeply organized through bureaucracy; a military power occupying and grabbing Palestinian lands through endless and endlessly invented and modified regulations that are first and foremost bureaucratic edicts with the force and impact of military law.

Bureaucracy invents classifications and makes new distinctions and divisions within existing ones. In either case time-space is opened in order to contain people and things defined in certain ways, according to certain criteria specific to inclusion (and exclusion). In this way, forms of the bureaucratic expand through a kind of cellular division of difference yet sameness—the adding of more units of organization to itself (a new title, a new office, a new subcommittee). Claude Lefort (1986: 108) comments that, “it is essential to grasp the movement by which bureaucracy creates its order. The more that activities are fragmented, departments are diversified, specialized, and compartmentalized . . . the more instances of coordination and supervision proliferate, by virtue of this very dispersion, and the more bureaucracy flourishes . . . Bureaucracy loves bureaucrats, just as much as bureaucrats love bureaucracy.”

Michael King’s argument enables extending the impact of the bureaucratic making of order to that made by the law. King argues that, “in the legal system social events derive their meaning through the law’s unique binary code of lawful/unlawful, legal/illegal . . . These categories are mutually exclusive.” Then he adds a crucial point, “Any act or utterance that codes social acts according to this binary code of lawful/unlawful may be regarded as part of the legal system, no matter where it was made and no matter who made it” (1993: 223). King is saying that in modern social orderings the implementation of division and contrast in terms of absolute categories

of inclusion and exclusion has something of the feel, force, and aesthetic qualities of legal decision and mandate (see also Gray 1978: 141). In my terms, the phenomenal forms created by bureaucracy have embedded within themselves the feeling of the force, impact, and aesthetics of the symmetries of law. These distinctions certainly need not be binary, in the sense of a choice between two and only two possibilities. The crucial point is the maintenance of the *logic* of form, the symmetrical, absolutist distinction between inclusion and exclusion, such that truth is necessarily made into a singularity, and is rarely if ever a multiplicity.

In the ways that they make intentional, directed change, bureaucracy and law have important commonalities. And in studying Israeli state and civic “rituals” I learned just how much these events did *not* make directed change, unlike “rituals of transformation” in tribal and traditional social orderings. As I said, “rituals of transformation” and state and civic “rituals” have nothing in common. But in their stress on linear classification, state and civic events and bureaucracy have a great deal in common; and I often thought of the former as masking the latter, making the logic of the latter more aesthetically presentable and palatable, indeed, making it seductive.

In Israel the loci of making directed change through inventing and altering social classifications lay and lie primarily in bureaucracies of all kinds, while the in-forming of this kind of ordering and change is widespread. For example, in studying Israeli Jewish kindergartens in the 1980s Lea Shamgar-Handelman and I (Handelman 2004: 77–90) discovered that birthday parties there consistently taught children to experience and to witness how, from a societal perspective, they themselves were constituted through a lineal taxonomy of exact age. Through this taxonomy every year another precise numerical slice was added—a sort of sliced-salami model of age. No less, children could be de-constituted by taking them apart into a collection of yearly slices. It seemed that wherever I looked in Israel—for example, the official opening “ritual” of Holocaust Remembrance Day (see Chapter Five, this volume) or a memorial “ritual” following a civil disaster (Handelman 2004: 3–18, 101–17)—I found widespread support for the thesis that this social ordering was constituted in large measure through the making and changing of taxonomies of lineal classification, even as within me surprise dissipated and the abductive response lessened. Then it was easy for me to slip into the more formal phrasing of bureaucratic logic, which brought together all the attributes I have discussed here.

Things come together, but not neatly, not cleanly, not evenly, not according to any protocol or schedule or research method. Things come together then immediately are beginning to unravel and open up because the worlds we live in and study are endless in their ongoing complexity. Things begin to unravel because we cannot do other than be surprised and surprise, I argue, opens to abductive, mindful feeling . . . and . . . during these years I also did fieldwork in Andhra Pradesh and through this discovered cosmologies of female deities that these rituals open from and into (Handelman 2014). The contrast between the organic cosmologies we find in South India and the arbitrariness and abruptness of bureaucratic logic that slices and forms much

of Israeli ordering is so striking that surprise revives. Now the contrast is leading me toward the cosmology within which bureaucratic logic was formed (at least in part) very long ago, that of monotheism as a very broad Judeo-Christian sensibility. And this may open me again to Israel as a place in which Jewish ontologies and bureaucratic logic may thread through and knot with one another (see the Epilogue to this volume). To arbitrarily close off this ongoing connecting of seeming dissimilarities would be poetism—a presentation whose major claim for consideration is that it is aesthetically pleasing. Here, I render this as closing before its time. Time will do its closing when its time.

Notes

1. Looking on the net at graphics of computer-driven repetitions one realizes that through astronomical numbers (209 billion iterations in one instance) these become highly complex and fully support Blood's poetic reverberations.
2. In the 1930s Bateson (1972) developed his pathbreaking though schematic theory of schismogenesis, in which social difference is generated through the repetition of patterned behavior. In other words, he argued that recursiveness contains the potential for difference generated through repetitive, customary interaction.
3. Brought out beautifully through western literature in John Vernon's *The Garden and the Map* (1973).
4. See, for example, Timothy Fitzgerald (2009). Fitzgerald calls Saler's use of "family resemblance," Wittgenstein's logic of classification, lazy thinking. See also the debunking of "fuzzy logic" by the logician, Susan Haack ([1974] 1996).
5. I use the term, Israeli, as it should be used, as was once used, and is hardly used any more. Israeli refers to all who hold Israeli citizenship. Today the term is used almost exclusively to refer to Jews who hold Israeli citizenship and so to exclude Palestinians who have Israeli citizenship.
6. I was helped by my late wife, Lea Shamgar-Handelman, and this in turn contributed to her research on the life situations of widows of the 1967 War (Shamgar-Handelman 1986).
7. Later I added Deleuze's (1993) idea of the "fold" and Maturana and Varela's idea of self-organization. Folding and self-organization are discussed in the Epilogue to this volume.

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