

Octavio Paz.
**CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS:
 AN INTRODUCTION.**
 Translated from the Spanish
 by J.S. Bernstein
 and Maxine Bernstein.
 Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U. Press,
 1970.
 159 pp. \$6.95.

In this small volume, Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet-diplomat, has brought his unusual perspective to what he describes as a resumé of his "impressions and reflections" after reading the works of the famed anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss.

Although Lévi-Strauss is best known to those social scientists who share his concern for the place of man in the natural system, his influence, according to Paz, has spread far beyond the confines of the social sciences. The writings of Lévi-Strauss, in Paz's view, have a threefold importance: anthropological, philosophical and aesthetic. Specialists in many fields, he says, find in Lévi-Strauss's work a brilliant and disturbing contribution to the literature of their respective disciplines. For example, Paz gives some attention to "the particular relation which connects Lévi-Strauss's thought with linguistics" (p. 12). After a brief review of the transition from functionalism to structuralism, in America in the twenties, the author describes how Lévi-Strauss applied, with daring ingenuity, the structural method of linguistics to anthropology to reveal the relations between the universe of discourse and non-verbal reality. In reference to *Le Cru et le cuit*, one of Lévi-Strauss's best-known books, Paz points out: *Lévi-Strauss's purpose is not so much to study all American myths as it is to decipher their structure, isolate their elements and relational terms, discover the way in which mythical thought works.* (p. 46)

Paz has some ideas of his own

to offer the reader of this "introduction" to Claude Lévi-Strauss. In the manner of Ivan Illich, he is caustically critical of the U.S. He sees it discredited by a large section of its own citizenry who are alienated and ashamed. The sins of the U.S. have been an "overevaluation of change" and overcommitment to progress. "It is a giant which is walking faster and faster along a thinner and thinner line."

Again, Paz takes issue with McLuhan on the "new media of oral communication" and their power to reintroduce face-to-face dialogue:

Despite their restoring to the word its verbal dynamism... radio and television increase the distance between the one speaking and the one who is listening... The true foundation of all authentic democracy and socialism is, or ought to be, conversation... (p. 108)

However, most of the text is devoted to an assessment of the writings of Lévi-Strauss and the play of his ideas on the theme of human nature as a harmony and a proportion. These are ideas of fundamental significance to the educator.

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J.A. Corry.
**FAREWELL THE IVORY
 TOWER: UNIVERSITIES IN
 TRANSITION.**
 Montreal: McGill-Queen's
 University Press, 1970.
 121 pp. \$7.50.

Dr. Corry, former Principal of Queen's University, adds his name to a growing list of educators — Eric Ashby, Clark Kerr and James Perkins among others — who, in recent years, have spoken and written perceptively on the role and character of the university in contemporary society. This book is a collection of addresses delivered by the author to university audiences between 1961 and 1969.