

A Distant View in Michelle Pfeiffer's Smiling Eyes

Already at its beginning, the industrial society – when this beginning took place is perhaps a matter of some controversy – ruined or at least displaced many “traditional” institutions and forms of human relationships. Accordingly, we may accept that the most basic forms of human (co)existence, especially family, were generally understood as mediated by tradition. In almost all cultures this mediation was guaranteed by religion or other beliefs that had been, and still are, incorporated into society through such supposedly traditional institutions as the religious organisations. They are different in various cultures, but as a rule, they all have some form of hierarchy and a “spiritual authority” at the top. During the age of enlightenment, social thinkers discovered the fact that a “tradition” gradually or swiftly changes, and that it is even retrospectively constructed. This implicit and explicit discovery opened the way towards bourgeois society, secularism and individualism. In spite of the intervention of enlightenment, traditions functioned so that patterns and rituals determined the lives of the majority of society. “Tradition incorporates power relations and tends to naturalise them” (Giddens, 1996: p. 61).

The Paradox of Tradition

The rapid developments within different discourses of social sciences and humanities, which moved the notion of culture into the centre of their reflections, can be understood as an attempt to define different manifesta-