1962

Sociology of primitive thought

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF PRIMITIVE THOUGHT

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the Senior Scholar Program

Colby College

1962

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Acknowledgement

I want to thank Dr. Kingsley Birge,
my tutor, whose help and advice were in-
valuable.

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

The subject matter of this study is the thought
systems of primitive peoples. Its main emphasis is not on
the thought alone but in the way that these thought systems
are related to the social structure of the various societies
from which they originate.

Although very little work has been done directly
in the field of primitive thought as such, a notable amount
of information has been accumulated about the relationship
between Western thought and Western society. In the main,
scholars dealing with this relationship have been sociologists
or historians. With time they have become known as the soci-
ologists of knowledge; their studies referred to as the
sociology of knowledge.

So before delving into the field of primitive
thought, it seems prudent to spend a little time examining
how, and to what extent these sociologists of knowledge have
dealt with thought, and then using the knowledge gained as a
frame of reference to examine the field of primitive thought
itself.

Although the sociology of knowledge is a specialized field, it does share a common theoretical basis with sociology as a whole. All sociologists, regardless of the individual character of their several areas of study, have a similar perspective, or point of view. Most central to the sociological approach is the concept of the "natural system."[1] The term "natural system" was used most effectively by Redcliffe-Brown. According to him, a "natural system" is an aspect of phenomenological reality. In analyzing phenomenel reality, one is able to isolate those portions capable of isolation, i.e., natural system, from the rest of the universe. He says, "We perform a dichotomy: we have a system, and the rest of the universe becomes its environment; one cannot have one without the other."[2] A natural system, then, is a conceptually isolated portion of phenomenal reality, and it consists of a set of aspects in such relation to one another as to make a naturally cohering unity. The constituent aspect may be events, or themselves systems of events. "A 'natural law' is a statement of the characteristics possessed by a certain definite

[1] A. R. Radcliffe Brown, _A Natural Science of Society_ (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948), p. 19.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 19.

class of natural systems in the universe."[3]

The problem of all science is to describe natural systems in terms of "natural law". A falling body is an example of such a natural system, and the law of falling bodies is the natural law in this instance. Presumably the natural law will hold true for all systems (falling bodies) if we have made our classification correctly. That is, if correctly classified, all systems within the class will have the same characteristics.

The distinction between a "class" and a "system" must be stressed. The relationships of members of a class are relationships of similaries, but the relationships between the elements of a natural system are those of interdependence.

Radcliffe-Brown makes an important distinction between a system and a class which should be mentioned here. He states:

> "To make clear the distinction between
> classes and systems, I should like to pre-
> sent a little drawing. (The drawing shows
> two thick figures chasing two glasses of
> beer.) I am going to suggest that we have
> in these men the members of a class, and
> here a class of glasses of beer. There is
> a very important similarity between this
> group of men and this group of glasses of
> beer. The similarity is that there are two
> of each. The term two is the name of a class
> of which this class of men is one member,
> and this class of glasses of beer is another
> member; and it is also the name of every

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[3] A. R. Radcliffe Brown, <u>A Natural Science of Society</u> (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948), p. 20.

other instance of a diad. The type of re-
lationship that exists between all instances
of the two members, which we may designate
as "r" relationships of similarity.

Now let us suppose that you have two real men
and two real glasses of beer. You then have
something quite different -- a system of men
drinking -- in which there are specific re-
lations of interconnectedness of type "R".
(The relationships would still be real, but
quite different, if you had two men and one
glass of beer.)

You cannot distinguish between relationships
"r" those of classes and relationships "R"
those of systems, on the basis that the
latter are real; both exist in phenomenal
reality. You distinguish them as that the
first are relations of similarity and the
relations of systems are complex inter-
relationships."[4]

The distinctions between a system and a class are

illustrated in the following list of their respective

characteristics:

CLASS	SYSTEM
relations simple	relations complex
relations of similarity	relations of inter con- nectedness
mathematical relations	spatio-temporal relations
without form	characteristic form
no quality of integration coordination by similarity	integrated -- co- ordinated by inter- dependence
members may be separated without violation to them	units violated in separation

[4]A. R. Radcliffe Brown, A Natural Science of Society
(Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948), p. 22.

no cohesion between members of a class	units cohere and thereby isolate the system from the rest of the universe
no functional relationship between members	functional consistency
in aggregate	a genuine whole, having a structure
the sum of its parts (members)	organic unity; not the sum of its constituent units[5]

To summarize, each of the elements of a social system presumably perform some function which is vital and necessary for the continuance of the system as a whole. Each element of the system is presumably connected with every other element in the system. Thus a system might be analogous to very tightly bound knots; but knots in which the individual strands could not be separated. A system is a unit in which no single element may be understood except in relation to all the other elements or in relation to the system as a whole. Likewise, no element may be removed or altered without destroying or changing the total system.

Of course, the importance of all this is that social groupings are natural systems and may be treated accordingly. In a social system the aspects are individual human beings in

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[5]A. E. Radcliffe Brown, _A Natural Science of Society_ (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948), p. 22.

certain relationships to each other. The individuals are units in and of themselves, but they also act as aggregates, or groups. The relationships between individuals are social relationships of which the social system is composed. These relationships and the systems of which they are constituent parts are parts of phenomenal reality. That is, they may be observed and studied.

To say all elements in a social system are inter-related is not to say that all elements are of equal importance. Some general aspects of a social system, such as the economic, for example, are of crucial importance in any social system. Others, like recreational activities carry much less weight. Indeed the relative importance of an element differs according to the society and even within the same society from time to time. Law, for example, was presumably more important in Roman society than in Greek society. Furthermore, religion in the middle ages ostensibly held a more important place in the social scheme of things than it does now. However, re-gardless of the relative importance of an element, it is still interconnected with the rest. Thus it is theoretically possible to begin with a discussion of any element and, through it, bring in the whole system.

In view of the interconnected nature of a social system, the end, ideally, of any sociological analysis is to

discover all of the relationships between all of the elements of a social system. In practice, however, one must all too often be satisfied with the discovery of relationships between two areas of social phenomena only, and in fact, that is what most sociologists attempt.

In summary, regardless of what particular element one is interested in, sociological analysis involves always the same three or four problems. Mainly:

1. Isolation of the social system.

2. Analysis of the social system into its component parts.

3. Discovery of the relationships between these elements, and their position in regard to the system as a whole.

It is of vital significance to realize that a social system (which according to Radcliffe-Brown is a "natural system") contains within it elements which themselves are not "natural". That is, the members of a social system possess certain social usages which together form what is commonly called <u>culture</u>, and which, as I shall point out, is not itself a part of "phenomenal reality." Culture we may define as those learned and shared <u>patterns</u> that characterize a group, or a society. Analysis of that which can be both learned and shared would, I believe, lead to the conclusion that such phenomena must be <u>ideational</u>. Murdock has indeed made this very explicit in an article on the "Cross Cultural Survey".

In this article Murdock makes the following points which might

be summarized as follows:

1. Culture is learned.   Culture is not instinctive, or innate,
                         or transmitted biologically, but is
                         composed of habits, i.e., learned
                         tendencies to react, acquired by each
                         individual through his own life ex-
                         periences after birth.

2. Culture is inculcated. All animals are capable of learning,
                         but man alone seems able, in any
                         considerable measure, to pass on
                         his acquired habits to his off-
                         spring.

3. Culture is social.   Habits of the cultural order are not
                         only inculcated and thus transmitted
                         over time; they are also social, that
                         is, shared by human beings living in
                         organized aggregates or societies and
                         kept relatively uniform by social
                         pressure.

4. Culture is ideational.

    "To a considerable extent, the group habits of which

culture consists are conceptualized or verbalized as ideal

norms or patterns of behavior. There are exceptions of course;

grammatical rules, for example, though they represent col-

lective linguistic habits are thus cultural and are only in

small part consciously formulated."[6] In short, culture is

ideational (symbolic) and thus any cultural pattern forms a

theoretical system (as distinct from a natural system) and

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[6]George Peter Murdock, "The Cross Cultural Survey",
Sociological Analysis, Logan Wilson and William Kolb (New
York: Harcourt & Brace, 1949), p. 67.

yet -- this is what is important to recognize -- these
theoretical systems as cultural patterns are aspects or
elements of a natural social system, i.e., some group of
human beings.

If we take a total society as the social system for
consideration, the most common way of analyzing it is in terms
of what anthropologists call the "universal culture pattern."
According to the universal culture pattern every society is
composed of the following kinds of organizations, or activi-
ties, or ideational factors: economic, political, social
(s-treatification,) religious, recreational, educational, kin-
ship, artistic, etc. This is certainly the way most ethno-
graphic monographs treat the material.

The position of these ideational factors in relation
to the "natural" elements needs some elaboration. When we
speak of a "natural" element -- a group organized for economic
purposes for example -- we are first of all speaking of people
who are involved in some economic activity or performing some
economic function. In order to reach their desired goals, they
are organized in some way, presumably in the way which will
best aid them in achieving their goals. This organization and
the activities which go along with it are carried on in ac-
cordance with some idea or plan in mind, for it seems incon-
ceivable that they could act in a coordinated manner in a

mental void. In any social institution this triad between
organization, activities, and ideas exists. The religious
element, for example, in any society is a social organization
in that it has a hierachy, or eclesia, or priesthood; there
are religious activities, such as rites, ceremonies, etc.
Then there is the theology, an idea system which guides the
whole. Thus any single institution must be considered as a
tightly knit pattern including activities, organization and
ideas. Ideational factors do not have an existence separate
from their context. It is only for analytical purposes that
they may be isolated at all. In no case can they be isolated
completely. Thus, in a discussion of thought some aspects of
the organization and certain activities are bound to creep into
the discussion.

In the writings of the sociologists of knowledge,
one often encounters the phrase "social structure". This is
an important phrase and one which is commonly misused and mis-
understood. In general, what is meant by social structure
might better be termed "social stratification". This is a
generalization, and one which is not always applicable. In
general, the term "social stratification" may be thought of in
terms of a system of rewards. A society, as we have seen, is
composed of different elements, each of which fulfills some
need. In order to encourage the performance of approved

activities, and orientate persons toward desired goals, the
society distributes the rewards of wealth, power and prestige.
The manner in which these rewards are distributed may be con-
sidered as a basis for social structuring. In explanation,
these rewards are not distributed equally. Usually there is
a small group at the top of any social structure who receive
a disproportionately large amount of all three rewards.
There is a group in the middle which receives an intermediate
amount. Then there is a greater number of people on the bottom
of the social ladder who receive very little reward. These
groups are usually alluded to as upper, middle and lower
classes, respectively. All together these classes form a
social structure.

      The social class of a particular person is relative.
There are no absolute criteria which apply in every case.
The importance of one class is dependent on the subordination
of another and vice versa. If there were no serfs, there
would be no king; and without slaves, no slaveholder.

      With this in mind, I think we are in position to
discuss the sociology of knowledge itself. Just what exactly
is the sociology of knowledge? What are its distinguishing
characteristics? How is it defined? What are its goals and
aims? How do sociologists approach the analysis of thought?
What do these sociologists define a thought? These and many
other questions must be answered before we can profitably

undertake the application of this point of view to primitive thought.

The answers to all of these questions are not clear cut. In truth, they have not even been discussed adequately. One sociologists, Karl Mannheim, has written a book called Ideology and Utopia, a classic in the field of the sociology of knowledge, and which contains one of the best discussions of the field along with its point of view, scope, methods and problems. So in giving a brief survey of the sociology of knowledge, I will depend on Mannheim a great deal. First of all, it should be understood that Mannheim makes no pretense of giving all the answers, but in fact his work is more definitive and inclusive than most.

Though quite vague, Mannheim's definition of the sociology of knowledge is important because it provides a basis for reference. Of the sociology of knowledge he says, "The sociology of knowledge is one of the youngest branches of sociology; as theory it seeks to analyze the relationship between knowledge and existence; as historical-sociologial research it seeks to trace the form which this relationship has taken in the intellectual development of mankind."[7] To me the crucial phrase is "relationship between knowledge and

[7]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, trans. Louis Worth and Edward Shils (New York, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1936), p. 265.

existence". This phrase poses three important questions.
Firstly, what is knowledge? Secondly, what does he mean by
existence? And lastly, how are the two related?

Let's take the first question first. What is
knowledge? What types of ideas are of interest to the sociol-
ogist according to Mannheim? Do they all have equal value for
him, or are some ideas of more sociological import than others?
Mannheim, as far as I can discover, never attempts to answer
this question, but he does make a few comments which have some
bearing on this question.

One remark which I consider important is the fol-
lowing, "Philosophers have too long concerned themselves with
their own thinking. When they wrote of thought, they had in
mind primarily their own history, the history of philosophy,
or quite special fields of knowledge, such as mathematics or
physics . . . . Meanwhile, acting men have, for better or for
worse proceeded to develop a variety of methods for the ex-
perential and intellectual penetration of the world in which
they live, which have never been analyzed with the same pre-
cision as the so called exact modes of knowledge . . . . it is
the most essential task of this book to work out a suitable
method for the description of analysis of this type of thought
and its changes . . . ."[8]

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[8] Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, trans. Louis
Worth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company,
1936), p. 1

Regrettably, Mannheim does not say explicitly in just what thoughts he is interested. They are defined by the vague "this type of thought". He does not say what "this type of thought" is or what its characteristics are, but I think we can infer from what he says that knowledge to him is not primarily philosophical, nor scientific, nor is it concerned with a more advanced type of thought. Therefore, knowledge is not fact which has logically developed according to a rational scheme, but rather the more spontaneous type of thought by which men actually live -- whatever it may be.

It is possible that Mannheim defines thought as it concerns the sociology of knowledge more in terms of the originator -- the thinker -- than the thought itself. In the beginning of his book he makes it quite clear that the type of thought of concern to the sociology of knowledge is group thought and not the thought of certain individuals as is the case in philosophy, where the main emphasis is on the thought systems of particular individuals. In this regard he comments, "thus it is not men in general who think, or even isolated individuals who do the thinking, but men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterizing their common position."[9]

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[9]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 3.

This attitude seems to be shared in great part by all of the sociologists of knowledge with whom I am familiar. The thought of individuals is rarely discussed and when these sociologists do mention a particular person their interest in him is as a spokesman for a particular group, or as he expresses the spirit of his times, rather than as an individual thinker.

On this note of unity all similarity between the various sociologists ceases. I am sure that there is no one definition on which all the sociologists would agree. The term "knowledge" must be interpreted very broadly because studies in this area have dealt with almost all types of mental "products". As Merton says, "studies in this area ('the sociology of knowledge') have dealt with virtually the entire gamut of cultural products (ideas, ideologies, juristic and ethical beliefs, philosophy, science, technology.)"[10]

However, it is possible that regardless of their particular emphasis, most of the sociologists of knowledge are interested in what is known as "ideology". Indeed these sociologists have emphasized "ideology" to such an extent that Wilson and Kolb in their book Sociological Analysis define "ideology" as the prime subject matter of the sociology of knowledge. They say, "and in the sociology of knowledge the inquiry centers on the social roots of particular

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[10]Robert K. Merton, "The Sociology of Knowledge", Twentieth Century Sociology, George Gurvitch and Wilbert E. Moore (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 366.

cultural systems, especially those called ideologies."[11]
This is a misleading exaggeration. Theoretically, it is
quite clear that many types of thoughts, if not almost all,
are the proper realm of the sociology of knowledge. Yet it
is interesting to note that so much emphasis has been placed
on ideology, and so much space devoted to it, that even such
eminent sociologists as Wilson and Kolb should define the
problem of ideology as the main focal point of interest for
the sociology of knowledge. The term "ideology" is associated
in the main with Marx. Although Marx was not the first one to
invent the term, he was the first to use it in the way that
has become associated with the sociology of knowledge. To
Marx, an ideology was very narrowly conceived. Marx's theory
revolves around the concept of class interest and struggle.
In this picture "ideology had a very important place. Ac-
cording to Marx, an ideology might be defined as a tool in
class warfare -- as a tool in the hands of the upper class
for the exploitation of the lower classes.

Mannheim, as most of the other sociologists of
knowledge, is not interested particularly in ideology as a
tool in class warfare, but he does give credence to the

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[11]Wilson Kolb, Sociological Analysis (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), p. 844.

existence of such ideas. In <u>Ideology and Utopia</u> Mannheim

distinguishes between the "particular" conception of ideology

and the "total" conception. What he calls the "particular"

is the one under discussion here. He defines this conception

in the following paragraph:

> The particular conception of ideology is
> implied when the term denotes that we are
> sceptical of the ideas and representations
> advanced by our opponents. They are re-
> garded as more or less conscious disguises
> of the real nature of a situation, the true
> recognition of which would not be in accord
> with his interests. These distortions
> range all the way from conscious lies to
> half-conscious and unwitting disguises;
> from calculated attempts to dupe others
> to self-deception.[12]

In short, I am sure that Mannheim and the other sociologists

of knowledge would agree that an ideology in this sense might

best be considered as a convenient falsehood rather than a

conscious deliberate attempt to deceive.

In Mannheim's terms, the function of ideology in

this "particular" sense is to "reinforce established patterns".

Now when Mannheim and the rest of the sociologists of knowledge

speak of a "pattern" what they really are referring to is the

patterning of social classes into an overall societal struc-

ture. As has been previously explained, the class system is

set up to benefit the so called "upper" class especially.

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[12]Karl Mannheim, <u>Ideology and Utopia</u> (New York:
Harcourt and Brace and Company, 1936), p. 55.

Marx and some of the other revolutionaries tend to think of ideology in terms of this one class.

More or less, other sociologists think of ideology in somewhat broader terms.

When they think of "established patterns", they are referring to the class system as a whole. Though an ideology may start with the upper class, it is diffused throughout the whole society, and as such is effective in coordinating and unifying the whole. Though an ideology may benefit one group more than others, it is effective only to the extent that it includes the whole social system. It reinforces all institutions, organizations, and activities on all different levels. An ideology is not conceived in terms of one class, but the system as a whole. In short, an ideology is a set of "fictions" used to stabilize the social order to the benefit of a few.

It is for the other, the broader, conception of word "ideology" that Mannheim displays enthusiasm. This Mannheim calls the "total conception of ideology". This "total conception of ideology" refers to any ideology of an age or a concrete historico-social group. Mannheim seems to equate with what he calls "mode of thought" for in places he uses the two terms interchangeably. At no time does Mannheim define explicitly what a "mode of thought" is, but from the way in

which the term is used, it appears to refer to a particular
frame of reference, a way of looking at the world, a point of
view. Perhaps the German words of "Weltanschauung" or "Zeitgeist"
might be substituted for it. What specific modes of thoughts
does Mannheim discuss? In his article on the utopian Men-
tality he lists the types of utopian mentalities as: the
liberal mentality, the conservative mentality, socialist-
communist mentality, orgiastic chiliasm.[13] Each of these
types of mentality is what he would call a "mode of thought".

Each of these four "modes of thought" might be
described as that of a particular political party. They are
very different from ideologies in the "particular" sense.
Mannheim is interested in them, not so much as attempted dis-
tortions due to deliberate effort to deveive, as with the
varying ways in which objects present themselves to the sub-
ject according to the differences in social setting. In this
regard he says, "Thus mental structures are inevitably dif-
ferently formed in different social and historical settings"
and it is this interpretation that fascinates him. Its main
problem or interest is to discover what kinds of mental
structures are resultant with which historical-social periods.

It should be pointed out that the social base is of
as much interest to the sociologist of knowledge as is the

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[13] Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York:
Harcourt and Brace and Company, 1936), Chapter IV, "The
Utopian Mentality", p. 192.

thought. With this we will concern ourselves presently.

To discuss one of these modes of thought at this time would take too much time, for they are most complex and explained in great detail. Another sociologist, Max Scheler, gives a paradigm which might be regarded as an outline of what Mannheim calls a "mode of thought".

Scheler is interested in characterizing the idea systems or "modes of thought" of the upper and lower classes of French society in the eighteenth century. This paradigm is as follows:

LOWER CLASS	UPPER CLASS
1. tendency to look forward	tendency to look backward
2. emphasis on becoming	emphasis on being
3. mechanistic conception of the world	teleological conception of the world
4. realism in philosophy; the world as resistance	idealism in philosophy; the world as a realm of ideas
5. materialism	spiritualism
6. induction, empiricism	a priori knowledge, rationalism
7. oragmatism	intellectualism
8. optimism with regard to the future; the past as the bad old days	pessimism with regard to future; the past as the good old days
9. a dial ctical mode of thinking; search for contradiction	search for identies and harmonies
10. emphasis on environmental influences	emphasis on heredity and tradition.[14]

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[14]Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 77-78.

Much could be said in detailed criticism of this scheme, but criticism is not our purpose. The important point is that this paradigm represents an outline of what Mannheim would call a "mode of thought" -- that which all sociologists are interested in obtaining.

According to Mannheim then, there are two meanings to the word "ideology". In the "total conception of ideology" we speak of an ideology of an age or of a concrete historico-social group. p. 56. It is upon this conception of ideology that our attention will be focused. "The 'particular" conception of ideology implies an attempt on the part of one to deceive another. Ideas regarded in this light are more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of the situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with one's interests."[15] This later conception of thought is related to class interests, and is generally thought of as being the product of a certain class which has its own welfare and special interests in mind. This is ideology in the Marxian sense of the word.

In all of this discussion, I have tried to make it quite clear that there is no explicit statement anywhere as to what type of mental constructs these sociologists are defining

[15]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1936), p. 55.

as knowledge. Theoretically all thoughts can be included. However, there are some generalizations that one can make about thought as the sociologist of knowledge conceive of it, and these might be summarized by the following outline:

    1. However these sociologists conceive of knowledge, we may be sure that they are not primarily interested in philosophical or scientific thought -- although these types of thoughts are not excluded. They are more interested in those ideas which are closest to human behavior; and those by which men actually live.

    2. Sociologists are interested in thought as a group or social or historical phenomena, and not as the product of an individual mind. It is the thought stemming from what Mannheim calls "social historical situations".

    3. Sociologists seem to show particular interest in ideology in its narrowest political sense; i.e., as a method or tool by which one group exploits or takes advantage of another.

    4. Generally speaking, knowledge may be defined as an outlook on the world, or a weltanschauung, through which one perceives the world. This is what Mannheim terms "mode of thought".

    5. Knowledge as it is used in this sense is, I believe, a misnomer, and as a result, is misleading. Knowledge has the implications of validity or truth. These types of

thoughts covered by the term knowledge are certainly not true in the objective sense.

It is possible to say that the sociologist of knowledge are interested in what could be called _subjective knowledge_, or perhaps _belief_ might be a better term for it? In a general sense, this is so. I believe Mannheim would agree. Yet there are other sociological studies, as we shall see, which deal with what is known as scientific thought and so it cannot be said that this is so absolutely.

Whatever the central orientation of "knowledge", the central orientation of this study remains the same; its primary concern is with the relation between knowledge and what Mannheim calls "existence". This definition is vague but a more specific statement is impossible, for it would not include all the diverse approaches which have been developed.

Having discussed the term _knowledge_, let us now persue the subject of the existential base.

What does Mannheim mean by the term "existence"? Mannheim never defines this term, but he does shed some light on its meaning. In relating thought to what he calls "existence", he says, "This means that opinions, statements, propositions, and systems of ideas are not taken at their face value but are interpreted in the light of the life-situation of the one who expresses them. It signifies further that the specific character and life situation of the subject

influences his opinions, perceptions and interpretations.[16]
The key term here is "life-situation" and this includes all
experience. Almost everyone would agree that experience in-
fluences thought or that thought stems in part from experience,
but what we want to know is what part of experience, or the
life-situation, is most intimately connected with thought.
The answer to this question Mannheim does not provide. In
other words, this definition, if one can call it that, is so
broad as to be almost meaningless. Certainly no sociologist
of knowledge attempts to relate thought to all of experience
of the total life-experience. Instead he singles out one
aspect which seems significant to him, elevates it to the
position uppermost in importance and attempts to relate to it
the ideas in which he is interested.

Not only does Mannheim not define the term existence,
neither does he give any good explanation of what social
factors are most crucial in influencing thought. Thus in ex-
plaining the term "existence", Mannheim is of little or no
help in that he does not give a general definition of the
term. So in order to obtain some understanding of the term,
we must become more specific and describe in some detail the
work that has been done in the field.

To mention all the sociologists of knowledge for a
moment, there seem to be about seven basic points of view as
to what social factors they consider as the social roots of

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[16]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936), p. 56.

thought. These have been listed by Warner Stark in The
Sociology of Knowledge. First of all, it seems to me that
the term is used not only by people to cover the social factors
which have a bearing on thought, such as religious, economic,
political, but others as well, of which the most important is
environmental.

The first school of thought that I would like to
take up is what Warner Stark calls geographical determinism.
"Existence" according to this approach is defined in terms of
geography and physical environment. Thinkers of this school
maintain that in the last analysis, what man think depends on
his physical environment.

This principle of derivation of thought can be seen
in Buckle's attempt to explain the predominence of democratic
ideas in the northern parts of Europe. In short, Buckle
maintains that persons living in cold climates need a high
carbon content in their food; therefore they must eat animal
meat; therefore they are obliged to hunt; thus they become
self-reliant people who will not stand for authoritarian
methods of government.[17]This is an over-simplification and
one which makes Buckle's analysis look rather ridiculous. I
would like to assure the reader that although many legitimate
criticisms could be made of Buckle's analysis, he is by no
means as naive as my paraphrasing of his idea might make him
appear to be. However, as brief as this description might be,
I think that one can get some idea of what the so called

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[17]Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe,
Illinois, The Free Press, 1958), p. 217.

"geographical deterministic school" is attempting.

A second theory seeking to explain the factors de-
termining man's mind is the "technological doctrine".
Thought, according to this approach, depends upon man's
artificts and his techniques and tools. In his Social Worlds
of Knowledge, Gordon Childe gives one example of how thinking
may stem from technology. He writes that "a conception of
celestial mechanics was impossible to a society that did not
use and make rotary machines more elaborate and complicated
than the boe-drill, the lathe, and the potter's wheel."
A little while later he points out that, "From the seventeenth
century the leisured philosophers who have been formulating
the world-view of European and American societies have been
familiar with machines, operated by impersonal forces of
water, wind, steam and electricity rather than mules or
human slaves . . . . Their speculation has been directed to
producing a model or reality based on the machine as they
see it."[18] His logic eludes me, and certainly seems a bit
far-fetched, but nevertheless, Childe's comments are repre-
sentative of a serious point of view.

In summing up, Childe asserts that, "the historical
worlds of knowledge must each have been, and be, conditioned

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[18] Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe,
Illinois, The Free Press, 1958), p. 218.

by the whole of the society's culture and particularly its technology".

A third approach to determining man's mind concerns physiological factors. This school is predominently European, as such theories are discredited in the United States. The basic theory of this school is that the thought processes of different races or stocks are different by virtue of that fact alone. There has been much written on this subject, and perhaps one of the most widely known, if not the most perferted theory of the twentieth century, is the Nazi doctrine concerning the Jews. This notion that the Jews were an inferior species stemmed from, and perhaps was the end result of, a whole school of thought. The Nazis were not scientific in any degree in their assertions, but their allegations were derived from a European school of long existence.

Of far more importance has been a fourth school of thought which asserts that man's mind is determined by a set of drives. Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the "will to power" is an example of this approach. Perhaps this should be elaborated upon. The key to everything, according to Nietzsche, is the "will to power".[19] He interprets this as a drive-a tendency of the will -- which is directed toward a

[19]Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958), p. 219.

specific end. This can become the basis not only for human action, but for human thought as well. This drive, says Neitzsche, is innate in man. In the strong this drive manifests itself in an open, natural form, and produces the best and proudest of human types, the warrior. In the weak, however, who are incapable of attaining the power which all humans crave, the drive appears in a "watered-down" or perverted form, and produces such characters as the demogogue and the minister. It is they who produce ideas to captivate the masses in an indirect attempt to gain power. To Neitzsche, then, the employment of ideas, rather than overt action, is a substitute for the "will to power" by those who are too weak to gain their ends openly.[20]

Nietzsche's prime object of derision is Christianity with its value placed on suffering, meekness and equality of all human beings. This is to Nietzsche a typical "slave philosophy", and hence, reprehensible.

In any case, and this is the important point, the ideas put forwarding, according to Nietzsche, are explicable in the light of the underlying "will to power".

The most significant approach has been that of explaining mental phenomena in terms of self-interest: the

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

terms _interest_ always denoting selfish interests and usually
the interests of a class.

Many eminent sociologists have taken this view
either completely or in some modified form. Among them are:
Max Weber, Emile Durkhieim, and Max Scheler. Certainly
this approach is implied in Mannheim's idea of ideology in
its "particular"[21] sense. Much of the writing by people
taking this approach has concerned eighteenth and nineteenth
century economic theory. The point made generally is that
what is known as "classical economic theory" advanced the in-
terests of the newly rising "capitalistic" class.

Erich Roll in his _History of Economic Thought_ applies
this approach to the "classical economist".[22] A few quota-
tions will suffice to show how he went about the task.
"Misselden's immediate motive for theorizing", he writes,
"was to provide a background for policies designed to foster
the interests of the class he represented." Another quote,
by the author, "It has often been said that Adam Smith
represented the interests of a single class. This is un-
doubtedly true not only in an historical sense, but even

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[21]Karl Mannheim, _Ideology and Utopia_ (New York:
Harcourt Brace & Company, 1936), p. 56.

[22]Warner Stark, _The Sociology of Knowledge_ (Glencoe,
Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), p. 221

subjectively." In speaking of Ricardo, he says, "he was
forced by the same social purpose which was inherent in the
Wealth of Nations to imply the productivity of capital, he
was also determined far more than Smith to represent the
claims of landed property as economically unjustified. The
resulting theory of rent reflects these two capitalists in-
terests.[23]   And still another -- "Malthus was a reactionary
characterized by "advocacy of pre-capitalist interest' in an
already capitalist society."   p. 76, 152, 185, 213 (1950)

I am not going to attempt to criticize what Roll has
to say here. That would only be a waste of time. These
quotes by Roll were intended as an expression of a certain
point of view, and not as an object for criticism.

The sixth and seventh approaches are of most in-
terest to us. Both of these maintain that it is social
life which determines and explains human thought, but where
one singles out some specific social factor or factors, the
other maintains that society as a totality (all social re-
lationships) is the force in shaping man's mind. For the
sake of simplicity let us call the latter the total-causative
theory and the former the single-causative theory.

Both Durkheim and Scheler are adherents of the

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[23]Ibid., p. 221

single-causative school. Concerning Durkheim, Robert K.
Merton has done such an excellent job of characterizing his
whole approach that I can do not better than to quote him.
In speaking of.Durkheim, Merton, in his Social Theory and
Social Structure says (p. 226, 1949) "In an early study with
Mauss of primitive forms of classification, he maintained
that the genesis of the categories of thought is to be
found in group structure and group relations, and that they
vary with changes in the social organization. In seeking
to account for the social origins of categories, Durkheim
postulated that individuals are more directly and inclusive-
ly oriented toward the groups in which they live than they
are toward nature. Scientific experiences are mediated
through social relationships, which leave their impress on
the character of thought and knowledge. Thus, in his study
of primitive forms of thought, Durkheim deals with the
periodic recurrence of social activities (ceremonies, feasts,
rites), the clan structure, and the spatial configuration of
group meetings as among the existential bases of thought.
And, applying Durkheim's formulations to ancient Chinese
thought, "Grabet attributes their typical conception of
time and space to such bases as the feudal organization
and the rhythmic alternations of concentrated and dispersed

group life"[24] So much for Durkheim.

Scheler's theory is a bit more confusing. Scheler thinks in terms of an ontology which distinguishes between different spheres of reality which are organized into a hierarchy. For Scheler, the most fundamental of these spheres is the _we_. The _we_ precedes both _nature_ and the _I_, both subjectively and objectively, as a matter of experience. He also speakes of the law of primacy of existence of the social structure over all other structures of existence. It is clear from this that Scheler sees social reality as the sub-structure of thought.[25]

I realize that I have hurried through the explanation of the first six schools of thought concerning the nature of the "existential basis of thought". I do not want to spend much time with them, for it is not crucial. My single intention is that the reader have a general idea as to what the adherents of each school maintain.

The seventh approach to the basis of thought is, in my opinion, the most significant, and with it, I would like to deal at length. The seventh school, which includes what I have called the proponents of the "single-causative theory",

[24]Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1951), p. 120.

[25]Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), p. 224.

in contrast to the total causative theory, emphasize the importance of only a few social factors. The most prominent adherents of this school of thought are: Max Weber, R. H. Tawney, and C. F. Calverton. Of course, I cannot examine all of the works of these three men at this time, but I would like to give enough so that the reader has a fairly good understanding of their particular point of view. Within the confines of this seventh approach -- this so-called single-causative theory -- the most important work of the sociology of knowledge has been done. I think the whole concept of this area of study, along with its problems, methods, scope and conclusions can best be communicated by an analysis of the work of these three men who have contributed so much to the field of the sociology of knowledge. One of the many projects that Weber undertakes is the attempt to trace the effect of occupational activity upon religious thought. The three groups in whose thought he is interested he calls artisans, peasants and proletarians.

Weber uses the potter as the model of the artisan. If the potter wishes to make a vessel, he first conceives the shape for it in his mind and then fashions that shape by forcing his will upon the clay which resists the efforts of his guiding hands. Thus, Weber concludes, he undergoes, in his daily work, an experience which can become the inspiration

of a religious philosophy: namely, that the human urge to
create can become the model of a devine "demiurge". A
deimurge may be defined as a supernatural being imagined
as creating or fashioning the world in subordination to
the supreme being. Weber felt that such a conception of
the diety would naturally be acceptable to a society of
artisans for it would fit in with their whole lives and ex-
periences.

The peasant has a very different life-experience,
and from it comes a substantially different brand of re-
ligious thought. While the craftsman is the master in that
he controls the production of his product, the peasant is
the master of nothing and in fact is the slave of unfore-
seeable, and uncontrollable forces. His crops are depend-
ant upon factors over which he has no control whatsoever,
and economic ruin is an ever present danger. Consequently,
his God will not be a rational, or even personal, creator,
but more likely a mysterious treacherous, unpredictable
power who can never be controlled but only propitiated.
This is the second religious outlook.

The industrial proletariat will feel differently
again about religion. According to Weber, the proletariat
will be very prone to atheism because there is little in
his activity to stimulate religious feeling. In the waste-
land of the factory the worker does not experience personal

creativity, and so he does not conveive of the diety as a personal creator. He is not apt to believe in irrational forces, because he has experienced only the well organized factory routine. This is the third type of thought in which Weber is interested.[26]

As I look back over my paraphrasing of Weber's work, I realize that I have made his ideas look somewhat simpler and less reasonable than they are in reality. I would like to assure the reader that Weber does a very complete study of these different types of thoughts from occupation.

It should be pointed out that Weber is elevating occupation to the status of prime casual agent to the exclusion of all other factors. With this, let us go on to Tawney.

Tawney is another who has contributed especially to the sociology of knowledge. Though Tawney, I am sure, would classify himself as an historian and not as a sociologist of knowledge, his book Religion and the Rise of Capitalism definitely takes the point of view associated with the sociology of knowledge. In this book Tawney discusses the relationship between religious thought and certain economic elements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Tawney first describes the historical development

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[26]Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), p. 223.

of modern European society. He begins with a discussion of
the latter part of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages were
dominated by a rural outlook. The great majority of the
people earned their livelihood through agriculture. The
feudal system, with its strict class system, indenture
system, and inflexible point of view, was the dominant social
form of the day. Cities were in their infancy, and trade,
manufacturing, and other features associated with cities
were undeveloped and relatively unimportant. Urban life
was generally unknown in most of the population and was
rather foreign, and hence, evil to them.

Ideologically, the Middle Ages were marked by an
anti-economic emphasis. Man was thought of as primarily
a spiritual being who must indulge in the mundane affairs of
this world in order to survive and achieve salvation. The
maintenance of existing standards of economic well-being was
thought to be necessary, but the acquisition of material
goods for themselves was thought to be spiritually suspect,
if not downright evil. Accordingly, trade, manufacture and
those who took part in these activities, were not rendered
much respect. Poverty was considered a virtue. Usury,
avarice, and the like were thought to be sins meriting
punishment.[27]

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[27]R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitolism
(New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1926), p. 39, chap.
1, Part II.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as the feudal system disintegrated, new social forces rose to prominence. Cities expanded and commerce in general evolved and prospered. A new social system arose; one dominated by the middle class and its entrepreneurs and capitalists.[28] While the old economic values and attitudes hung on until well into the sixteenth century they were never adequate for the new middle class, for the middle class was intimately involved in all of those activities which were condemmed by the medieval philosophy. The new middle class could not accept the idea that money and moneymaking were evil; to do so would be to condemn one's self and this is never easy. Yet the middle class had no replacement for this philosophy. In short, the new middle class was left in an ideological vacuum. Into this void, says Tawney, stepped Calvinism. Calvinism was just made for the middle class.[29] Though Calvin did not set out to deliberately form an ideology for the newly prominent bourgeoise, his teaching filled a great need, as can be seen by the great number of adherents that he obtained from this class. To say that Calvinism was a middle class movement would be no exaggeration.

Of all of Calvin's ideas, the doctrines of pre-destination and the emphasis on moral duty are the most

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[28] Ibid., p. 77, 78.

[29] Ibid., p. 92.

important for our purposes. Basically, predestination is
the idea that everything, including man's fate, has been
prearranged by God. Calvin taught that there are those, the
elect, who are God's favorites, who will automatically be
granted salvation. The remainder of mankind will be con-
signed to an eternal hell, though this punishment is through
no fault of their own. Virtue and merit have nothing to do
with the judgment of God. This is just the nature of the
universe -- some are chosen and others are not. Those who
are the chosen lot benefit not only in the next world but in
this one as well, in that they receive the material benefits
of this world. Therefore, according to the doctrine of
Calfin, the possession of wealth is a pretty good indication
that one is of the chosen few. It is scarse wonder that
Calvinism appealed to the newly rich middle class. It made
them feel that the possession of wealth was God's will and
their possession and acquisition of this wealth not only
inevitable but their God-given right.

In Tawney's own words; "the doctrine of predestina-
tion satisfied the same hunger for assurance that the forces
of the universe are on the side of the elect . . . . he
(Calvin) taught them to feel that they were the chosen
people, made them conscious of their great destiny in the
providential plan and resolute to realize it."[30]

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[30]_Ibid._, p. 31.

Whereas the doctrine of predestination reinforced economic activities only indirectly during the period in which Calvin lived, as time went on Calvinism grew more and more along the lines which naturally recommended itself to a community of businessmen. For example, Puritianism, which was a later English offshoot of Calvinism, made the acquisition of wealth a positive virtue.[31] Tawney says that the puritians believed that man was put on earth for a purpose, and that purpose was to glorify God. The God of the puritians could not be pacified by words or good intentions -- these were not enough. It was only through work could one prove one's spiritual worth. Tawney quotes a puritian Divine as saying that "God doth call every man and woman to serve him for their own and the common good."[32] Thus, work became not merely a means of sustenance, which was to be laid aside at the earliest possible moment, but a spiritual end to be carried on even after there was no need. Following this line of logic, idleness and sloth were made sins against God. Virtues such as thrift, diligence, patience and enterprise which resulted in economic gain ostensibly for the greater glory of God, were invested with supernatural sanctions.

Of this Tawney says, "To such a generation, a creed

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[31]Ibid., p. 199.

[32]Ibid., p. 200.

which transformed the acquisition of wealth from a
drudgery or a temptation into a moral duty was the milk
of lions. It was not that religion was expelled from the
practical life, but that religion itself gave it a founda-
tion of granite."[33]

To say that Tawney related religion and certain
economic factors, namely incipient capitalism, is true,
but to stop at this point would be to leave undiscussed his
main contribution. More than just relate the two, Tawney
showed how they fused; how religion became economics, and
how theology became economic theory.

The third and final point of view I am going to dis-
cuss is that of C. F. Calverton as expressed in his essay
Modern Anthropology and the Theory of Cultural Compulsives.
The essay deals, in the main, with the history of modern
anthropology in which we are not much interested. But
Calverton's essay is significant from the viewpoint of what
he has to say about the role of anthropological thought in
the intellectual life of the latter part of the nineteenth
century. His basic point is that even anthropology, which
is ostensibly scientific, is essentially the product of a
time and therefore subject to the same pressures as any other
type of thought.

Calverton begins his essay by saying that the biblical
doctrine, which he says has been the foundation of Western

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[33]Ibid., p. 210.

thought up to that time, was replaced by the doctrine of evolution in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[34] According to Calverton, the reason for this fundamental change and the immediate acceptance of evolution by Western civilization is to be found in the great "emotional and intellectual needs"[35] which this doctrine supplied.

The crux of Darwin's doctrine, says Calverton, is the theory of natural selection. All life, Darwin states, "is a struggle for the survival of the fittest",[36] and that which survived was, by that fact alone, superior.

Following this line of logic into the realm of social thought, Western civilization has survived very successfully, and consequently it follows that it represents the high point on the evolutionary scale. Accordingly, the values and social organization of Western society were thought of as being the most advanced in the history of the human race. "Private property, the monogamous family, democracy, individualism, capitalism, had survived and consequently by that very fact, the best that could possibly be." So certain factions in the late nineteenth century were want to think.

Calverton then goes on to conclude, "in other words,

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[34]V. F. Calverton, "Modern Anthropology and the Theory of Cultural Compulsives", The Making of Man, (New York: Random House, 1931, Modern Libraries), p. 2, 3.

[35]Ibid., p. 3.

[36]Ibid., p. 3.

the Darwinian theory of evolution proffered the best just-
ification of the status quo of the nineteenth century Europe
that had appeared in generations."[37]

Calverton then goes on to say that the nineteenth
century was split down the middle between the conservatives,
who are usually alluded to as Victorians, and the radicals,
who are now called Marxists. Both of these groups accepted
the doctrine of evolution, but they utilized it to different
ends. The conservatives thought of it as a buttress for the
existing social order, while the radicals used it to under-
mine that same social order. The Marxists reasoned that
evolution was a continuing process and that Victorian
society was just one stage in the historical development of
the society and not the culmination of civilization as the
conservatives wished to think.

As for the institutions of nineteenth century society,
they were not permanent either, according to the Marxists.
"The radicals reasoned these institutions of Victorian
society were destined to disappear with the next advance in
the social process."[38]

The prospect of having everything they held so dear
disappearing, so frightened the conservatives, says
Calverton, that they began to search for "absoluted" which

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[37] Ibid., p. 4.

[38] Ibid., p. 7.

would uphold the permanency of the current social system.
To this end private property was declared an instinct com-
mon to all men, religion was defined as impulse, and as such
innately a part of the human makeup. Monogomy was declared
the basic form of marriage. Through the invention of these
and similar concepts, the conservatives countered the radical
blow. Now they felt that regardless of how the evolutionary
process went, the essentials of Victorian society would be
safe.

The radicals, not to be outdone, began to reinforce
their theories with scientific evidence which was primarily
anthropological in nature. The argument that raged over the
matter of the family might be interesting to explore in
greater detail. On the matter of the family, they used
Morgan, one of the pioneer anthropologists, as spokesman for
their cause. The radicals were anxious to prove that the
family, like every other social institution, had evolved
and was still in the process of changing, and Morgan served
their purpose nicely. In a nut shell, Morgan believed that
the family had passed through certain definite stages, be-
ginning with sexual communism, which changed into group
marriage, and finally ended up with monogomy.[39] The radicals
took this to prove their thesis that all forms of marriage

[39]Ibid., p. 5.

were flexible and that certainly no one form of marriage
was innately human.

The conservatives, anxious to back up their con-
tention that monogomy was the only natural form of marriage,
and the most advanced form at that, elevated Edward
Westermarck to the position of scientific authority for
their faction. Westermarck's theory, in brief, is that
monogomy is the rightful and natural form of marriage for
human beings.[40] He even went so far as to say that monogony
was an instinct, and that any other form of marriage was a
perversion. Westermarck spared no effort in search of
evidence for his theory. Calverton uses very strong language
in describing Westermarck's theory. He does more than in-
sinuate that Westermarck's theory came first and the evidence
for later warped to fit the theory, instead of drawing the
theory out of the evidence. Much of Westermarck's evidence
was taken from studies of primates. Calverton shows how
Westermarck twisted around his evidence to come up with the
conclusion that apes were monogomous. Carrying this con-
clusion a little further, he reasoned that if primates were
monogomous, then the monogamous instinct must surely have
been transferred to human beings. Thus was monogomy made

[40]Ibid., p. 7.

an absolute.

Westermarck's conclusion pleased the conservatives.
It was just what they wanted. Taking their clue from
Westermarck, the conservatives reasoned that if monogomy
was instinctive, then neither evolution nor revolution could
alter it.

After this discussion, Calverton then goes on to
make the following statement, of such importance, that I
quote it in its entirety:

> "In both cases (Morgan and Westermarck) we
> have made a clear illustration of a cultural
> compulsive. Class factors were clearly at
> work here as an obvious detriment. Westermarck
> was so uncritically accepted by the middle
> class intellectual because his work supplied
> the dynamite for the fortification of the
> proletariat position. Morgan was so un-
> critically accepted by the radical in-
> tellectuals, Engles, Kantsky, Plechanov,
> because his work supplied the dynamite for the
> fortification of the proletarian position.
> Once accepted thus, Westermarck and Morgan
> became immediately authorities for the classes
> whose logic they defended. The work of each
> man became a cultural compulsive -- the
> cultural compulsive being determined by the
> class factors involved."[41]

In regard to Calverton himself, it is interesting to notice
his own emphasis on class factors. Of all the possible
functions that these ideas could have played in Victorian
society, Calverton stresses class factors. In his insistence
"the class logic here is obvious".[42]

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[41]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[42]V. T. Calverton, *The Making of Man* (New York:
Random House Library, 1931), p. 8.

Calverton is following the line of many of the sociologists
of knowledge. I don't believe it would be an exaggeration
to say that most of the major sociologists of knowledge are
interested in thought as it relates to social class.

The various approaches are too numerous to mention
here, and we have at hand two examples. Both Tawney and
Calverton are excellent examples of this class approach.
Tawney is interested in religious thought as it involved
the economic fortunes of the middle class, and Calverton
stressed that scientific thought could serve class purposes.
A further analysis of this problem would not serve our in-
terests at this time. In general most sociologists of
knowledge maintain that one of the most important functions
of thought is to buttress and reinforce the existing social
order which of course is set up to benefit the elite most.

In regards to class, various sociologists, too
numerous to mention, have suggested the following functions
of thought. We must remember that a sociologist is always
interested in functions. These functions might be listed
as follows: to maintain power, promote stability, orienta-
tion, exploitation, obscure actual social relationships,
provide motivation, channel behavior, divert criticism,
deflect hostility, coordinate social relationships.

With a moment's thought, I think the reader can see

how each of these functions imputed to thought could uphold
the position of the ruling class.

Now if there is any one lesson to be learned from
this, it is that the sociologists of knowledge believe that
social class has a great deal to do with thought. When we
get to the field of primitive thought, this might be well
worth exploring. Of course, primitive peoples do not have
the same type of class relationship as we in our civiliza-
tion, nor do they think the same thoughts. Thus, at this
time it would be foolish to attempt to predict exactly what
influence class relationships might have upon their thought.
However, would it be possible to say that if social class
is important in influencing thought, then might there be
some major cleft between those societies which have clearly
developed thought systems and those which do not? Perhaps
so, but we'll have to wait and see.

In summary, then, the sociology of knowledge is in
an interesting position. It is defined as being concerned
with the relationship between knowledge and existence, and
yet, as I have tried to demonstrate, there is as yet no
general agreement as to the definition of either term.

There are, however, three important similarities
in the works of all the sociologists who have been mentioned
to date.

CONTENT AND CATEGORIES

To understand the first similarity we must mention one distinction which Mannheim makes in Ideology and Utopia. Mannheim distinguishes repeatedly between the "content"[43] of thought and the "categorical structure"[44] of thought.

Though Mannheim never really defines either term, their meanings are not difficult to discern. The term "content" is fairly straight-forward, and means the ideas or the thoughts themselves. It refers to what is thought. The term "categories of thought" refers to the conceptual framework, or the way in which ideas are conceived. It is a way of thinking. It is perhaps how one thinks. Mannheim infers that both the "content" and the "categories of thought" differ from socio-historical groupings. This is important as far as dealing with primitive thought is concerned. Primitives do not only think different thoughts, but their method of thinking differs from ours as well.

The essential point is that all of the sociologists we have discussed so far emphasize the "content" of thought to the total exclusion of the "categories of thought". This can be seen in many ways, but none more clearly than in the diagram that Warner Stark presents in his book The Sociology

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[43]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company) p. 82, 267.

[44]Ibid., p. 82, 86, 187, 188.

of Knowledge. The diagram is as follows:

The subject and his approach	The Categorial Layer of the Mind	
	The Physical Apparatus of Perception	The concern of the socio-logy of knowledge.
	The Axiological Layer of the Mind	
The Objective World	The Objects of Knowledge	
	The Materials of Knowledge 45	

This is a scheme of the elements involved in the

process of cognition. This scheme designates as the area

of concern of the sociology of knowledge the connection be-

tween (1) the Objects of Knowledge (2) the Axiological Layer

of the Mind. Basically, this comes down to an emphasis on

what Mannheim calls "content", (what is thought). It in-

volves preoccupation with minor changes in emphasis due to

different historical circumstances. The emphasis is still

on thought in different historical situations. Stark uses

the word "image" and says, in essence, that our images change

with a change of situation. He uses as an example of an

axiological change the following:

> "The historian of 1650, when he speaks of the
> causes of a war, is apt to concentrate on
> feudal titles, marriage contract, family
> trees and other things of that order; the
> historian of 1950, confronted with the

45Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe,
Illinois; The Free Press), p. 108.

same theme, is more likely to talk at
length about raw materials, outlets to
the sea, the control of markets and
similar factors."[46]

Stark then goes on to say that these changes in
outlook have come about "not so much because our thinking
has changed . . . but because life has changed in its
totality". In other words, our manner of thought has re-
mained the same, but our new historical situation demands a
different emphasis.

Still speaking of this same scheme, he makes the
most interesting statement of all! "nothing need be said
in the present context about the formal categories of our
intellect and the physical receptors of our body."[47]

I am not interested in the comment on the "physical
receptors"; that may be so as far as I am concerned. But if
I understand the rest of the statement, he is saying that
the way we categorize ideas and analyze them, is of no con-
cern to the sociology of knowledge. Even if the word
"category" were used in a very restricted Kantian sense so
that it meant simply time, space, and causality, it could
still be challenged.

Assuming this is the definition, the only reason
that Stark thinks that such things as time, space, causality

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[46]Ibid., p. 107.

[47]Ibid., p. 109.

concepts can be ignored is because they seem so obviously constant and the same to all human beings. This I would like to stress is exactly what is challenged by some other thinkers, as we will see in a later chapter.

The same emphasis on content can be seen in the writings of other sociologists of knowledge we have mentioned. I have read Tawney's book carefully and although I find a myriad of references to what specific people thought at one time, I have yet to pin-point reference to the _way_ in which that thought was perceived, or how the experience of that person was divided and categorized.

Weber also talks of what people in different situations think. For example, he says that the peasant thinks of a God who is treacherous, undependable, capricious, etc. Again, there is no mention of how the peasant categorizes experience.

In Calverton, exactly the same emphasis can be seen.

In summary, I believe it is correct to say that those sociologists who have traditionally been associated with the sociology of knowledge emphasize the "content" of thought to the exclusion of the "categories of thought".

THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR

One of the most important similarities which all of
these sociologists have in common is the idea that behavior
comes before thought and that thought is determined by
behavior. Behavior, it is presumed, is in turn determined
by what Mannheim calls "existential factors", which are
social and environmental influences. This whole concept
might be diagrammed in the following way:

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existential situation   behavior   thought

This, I maintain, is presupposed by all of these
sociologists we have discussed. Indeed this would seem to
be the conclusion.dictated by common sense -- the one which
practically everyone would recognize as valid. As an ex-
ample, let us take the wage policy of a large company. Who
would not recognize that the attitude of various people
toward the policy is determined by their position within
the organization. If the policy is to keep labor costs down
by paying relatively poor wages, then it would seem most
logical that while the workers will not be very pleased,
the manager and president might be well in favor of such a
policy. This, at least, would seem to be the logical as-
sumption to make.

The sociologists of knowledge are following much the same line of reasoning but on a more complex scale. To them also, thought stems from behavior. Actually, thought to most of these sociologists might best be called a rationalization. Each and every one of them presupposes that some form of behavior comes first and then followed by a type of thought which rationalizes behavior or, perhaps a better word, reinforces behavior.

In Mannheim, this belief can be seen in what he has to say about what he calls the "particular conception of ideology". This type of ideology, in which he shows great interest, is "more or less a conscious disguise of the real nature of a situation, the true nature of which would not be in accord with his interests".[48] p. 55 Though it is not stated, it is clear that Mannheim is supposing that the "situation" was primary, and that "disguise" came later. It would not make sense otherwise. I cannot conceive of one thinking up a "disguise for a situation" which did not exist. Later on, Mannheim states this principle explicitly. He says, "The ideas expressed by the subject are thus regarded as functions of his existence. This means that opinions, statements, propositions, and systems ideas are not taken at

[48]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1936), p. 55.

their face value but are interpreted in the light of the
life-situation of the one who expresses them. It signifies
further that the specific character and life situation of
the subject influence his opinions, perceptions and inter-
pretations."[49] In other words, though he does not say that
"opinions, perceptions and interpretations" stem entirely
from "life-situations", it is this one-way relationship be-
tween thought and "life-situations" which Mannheim stresses.
You will see that in Tawney, this pre-supposition can be
seen very clearly, if you will refer back to our discussion
of Tawney on P. 36   I would like to reemphasize that
Tawney's point is that the old Christian doctrine, which was
anti-economic, was not readily congruent with the interests
of the newly rising middle class. These people found in
Calvinism a religious philosophy which supported and ration-
alized their economic position. For Tawney, then, the
economic interests were primary, and the religious philosophy
which made those activities commendable was adopted by the
middle class afterwards. The behavior in question is economic
and the rationalization for them is religious.

Perhaps it is in the writings of Max Weber that this
idea can be best comprehended clearly. Weber, if you will
recall, was mentioned in regard to his analysis of the re-
lationship between occupation and religious thought. I

[49]Ibid., p. 56

stated that he distinguishes between three different types
of occupations which he says tend to be congruent with
three different types of religious thought: (1) the
artisan, whose god is a demigod, (2) the peasant, who be-
lieves in a capricious, treacherous, unpredictable god,
and whose religion is filled with superstition, and (3)
the urban proletariat who tends toward atheism. Again,
the important point is that implied in Weber's analysis is
that what religious thoughts a person is apt to be most re-
ceptive to depends upon his occupation. Here the behavior
is occupational in nature and the thought thereby determined
is religious. Or again, the type of thought that Weber is
interested in is, he implies, determined by behavior.

One of the most interesting characters in all of
the sociology of knowledge is Karl Marx. In fact, one might
say that Marx is the storm center of the sociology of
knowledge, and this is the reason that I have not mentioned
him earlier. His works and contributions are so debatable
that to have a clear picture of Marx in relation to the
sociology of knowledge would take more time than it would
be worth. However, in regard to Marx's attitude about be-
havior and thought there is little doubt that Marx too be-
lieved that thought stemmed from behavior. In this regard,
Stark, quoting Barth, says, "There is, according to Marx,

the following causal series: a determined state of technique -- determined industrial forms -- determined property system . . . -- determined political superstructure -- determined social forms of consciousness which are character-ised as religious, artistic, or philosophical".[50]

In other words, thought, as it is here conceived by Marx, is ultimately determined by modes of production and the types of ownership involved. It is interesting to note that none of these sociologists of knowledge speaks of be-havior. Instead they talk in terms of social backgrounds for thought and skip directly from these to thoughts. It is my contention that in doing this they are jumping over one step -- namely that of behavior. I do not see that it is possible for certain types of existential situations to underlie thought directly.

I don't see how, for example, a person by just the fact of living in a cold climate, is forced to think in a certain way. An existential situation can, however, force a person to act or behave in a certain way. This, in turn, can determine what the person may think. To continue with this illustration, the cold climate may force a person to hunt for days on end to obtain barely enough food on which to subsist. After doing this for several years, he might come

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[50]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1936), p. 56.

to the conclusion (as have most people in very cold climates) that life is a damn hard proposition at best. But to say the situation alone can form ideas directly does not appear to be a logical deduction.

In other words, whether these sociologist give credence to the idea, or even artiéulate the idea, it seems to me that behavior is a necessary logical intermediary step between the "existential situation", which they all talk of in one form or another, and "thought".

Perhaps it is not quite fair to say that all sociologists do not recognize the importance of behavior in their scheme of things. They do, but it is fair to say that they do not spend adequate time on the subject. In Warner Stark's book, The Sociology of Knowledge,[51] a hundred and fifty pages is devoted to the problem of social determinism, which Stark identifies as one of the major problems of the sociology of knowledge, and in all of this, no mention is made of behavior as such.

In summary, Mannheim defines the sociology of knowledge as "an analysis of the relationship between knowledge and existence."[52] According to Mannheim and all of the other sociologists of knowledge mentioned so far, the relationship between the two is primarily a unilateral one with knowledge determined by behavior.

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[51] Warner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), p. 228.

[52] Ibid., chap. 6, p. 245.

SUPER-IMPOSITION OF THOUGHT

The third point I would like to stress is that when these sociologists analyze a society, they are doing so in their own terms. In other words, these sociologists we have spoken of are not interested in determining what the people of the social system think of their situation themselves or the ideas which they themselves classify. They do this in the course of events, but their major emphasis is in the super-imposition of their own ideas and categories upon the peoples they are studying. What I mean by this can be seen in a few examples.

It was Marx's idea to classify as either a member of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, and then, reacting to his own classification, he continued his analysis from that point. Marx was not interested in discovering how the people classified themselves. Whether the people involved would picture themselves as either bourgeoise or proletariat or even recognize the validity of such a classification was of no interest to Marx. The distinction is a product of Marx's own mind.

The same thing can be said of all the others. Calverton, for example, distinguishes between the "radicals" and the "Victorians".

This again is his own way of viewing the social system. It is to be doubted if any middle class person of the age would refer to himself as "Victorian". Again, no attempt is made to discover how the people themselves viewed it.

Weber also distinguishes between three different groups and excluded all others. They are artisans, peasant and worker. This is Weber's way of analyzing the social system. The classification is a product of Weber's own mind and not that of those involved. Then Weber, after making this point, goes on to say that these people in these various situations should think according to the way in which he has classified them. I think there is much in what he has to say. But the important point is that Weber is not simply report-ing what he has observed. He has "created" three different religious thought systems which he thinks should exist on the basis of his particular classification. Weber is not an ethnographer, who simply reports what he has observed about different societies, but more of an inventor -- one who takes facts and puts them into a different pattern which even those involved in the activities would not recognize.

The same criticism can be made of Tawney. He was not interested primarily in delving into what the people of the day recognized as true or valid, and describing it, but in synthesizing ideas in which perhaps even the people

involved were not aware. One could say that Tawney has taken the religious attitudes and the economic attitudes of the time, added somthing to both, and then stated something completely different as a result; specifically the demonstration that certain protestant religious ideas fused with certain economic ideas until the two became almost one. This is a significant contribution and I am not trying to disparage it. The same can be said of all of those sociologists mentioned. I am, however, calling attention to the general approach and orientation of these sociologists.

CHAPTER II

TOWARD AN INTERPRETATION OF PRIMITIVE THOUGHT

In Chapter I, we discussed the sociology of know-
ledge and the contributions of some sociologists. We
learned that a social system is usually considered as a
group of elements which are functionally interdependent,
and that one of these elements is _thought_. I stressed that
the sociology of knowledge seemed unlike other branches of
sociology in that it focused especially on those aspects of
culture of particular social systems, especially those
called ideologies. Some of the work that had been done by
some of these sociologists was discussed with a view toward
giving some idea of the field along with its scope, method,
and contributions. The purpose was to discover something of
what these sociologists had done in order to facilitate an
analysis of primitive thought, which is the object of this
paper.

Regretably, during all my study of the sociologists
of knowledge, I did not discover any central core, or specific
set of theories, or method of analysis which was common to
all. I came to the conclusion that the sociology of know-
ledge as a field was in a lamentable state of confusion.

However, my study of the sociologists of knowledge
gave me several ideas as to how the problem of primitive

thought should be approached. What these ideas were and what they lead to we shall explore presently.

The whole object of this paper is to discover what part thought played in primitive societies. Or to use the sociological term, what is the _function_ of thought in primitive societies.

Before I could discuss the social implications of primitive thought, first I had to learn to isolate thought. Isolation of a primitive thought system proved to be no easy task. In fact, it proved to be the major task and greatest obstacle I had to overcome.

I might as well confess that I still am confused as to how this is to be done completely and accurately. To be sure, I know more about the problem than when I began, but my knowledge is still minute in view of the tremendous scope of the problem at hand.

How does one isolate a thought system? This was the problem, and it is one to which the older sociologists of knowledge give no clue, for in a sense, they were not faced with the same problem to the same degree. For them, it was no trouble to discover what thought was. They are interested primarily in the thought of Western civilization and this has been described quite well by many historians. Their main problem was to reorganize the material so that the particular social implications in which they were

interested became clear.

For example, take Tawney's analysis of the relationship between protestantism and capitalism. To discuss protestantism as it related to capitalism, Tawney did not first have to figure out what the religious thought of the period was, nor did he have to spend much time doing basic research on the nature of capitalism. Certainly he fills in a few details, but he did not have to concern himself with such basic questions such as "did capitalism ever exist" or "how does it work basically". This basic work had been done by a whole miriad of scholars and Tawney simply borrowed from them.

Unfortunately no such basic work has been done where primitive peoples are concerned. There is descriptive material in the form of ethnographies, but the information they give is incomplete and disorganized at best. There is, for example, no chapter in any of these books describing the thought system of the particular people in question. Chapters are devoted to everything from art to kinship, but only rarely are ideas as such mentioned. Although I did not know it at the time, there is good reason why the thought systems of primitives remain obscure. Modern scholars, who incidently have just scratched the surface of the field, have discovered that primitives think in such vastly different

terms that it is by no means completely clear, even at this
time, if the basic principles of their thought can be under-
stood by persons speaking only Indo-european languages, or
if their ideas can adequately be translated into our
languages. Apparently the method of primitive people in
approaching basic reality is so different that it may not
be comprehensible to us at all. The main barrier is linguistic
in nature as we shall see in a later chapter.

I did not know this when I began this project. Of
course I realized that I would have to discover what prim-
itives thought before I could do anything else, but I did
not see the difficulties involved.

I began my exploration of primitive thought by ex-
ploring a clue which Mannheim had given me. If you will re-
call, Mannheim and many other sociologists of knowledge
seemed quite interested in the problem of ideology, and es-
pecially ideology in which Mannheim calls the "particular
sense". This seemed to have some special importance or in-
terest for all of them, and so I resolved to begin my
analysis of primitive thought by seeing whether or not prim-
itives had anything comparable to "ideology" in this sense.

This proved to be a blind alley of sorts, for almost
immediately I saw that primitives had nothing even approach-
ing "ideology" according to Mannheim's definition. Mannheim,
if you will recall, defines this type of ideology as "more

or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would be in accord with his interests".[53] This definition presupposes several conditions which are generally not present in primitive societies. First of all, it is presumed that the society is divided into factions which are in conflict with each other. These factions are generally classes. Furthermore, it is presumed that one group uses thought as a weapon against the other faction, and that the former is at least consciously aware of the use it is making of ideology.

These two factors are universally mentioned in all discussions of ideology. There may be others, but these two seem most crucial. Erich Fromm makes the following statement in connection with the transformation of what he calls the ideal into ideology.

> "How could the ideal of freedom remain alive
> among those who had to submit to the
> demands of the few who had power over them?
> Yet people could not live without faith in
> these ideals, and without the hope that in
> time they could become realized. The
> priests and the kings who came after the
> prophets made use of this need. They ap-
> propriated the ideals, systematized them,
> transformed them into rituals, and used
> them to control and manipulate the majority.
> Thus the ideal was transformed into an

[53]Karl Mannheim, _Ideology and Utopia_ (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1936), p. 55.

> ideology. The words remain the same, yet
> they have become rituals, and are no longer
> living words. The idea becomes alienated;
> it ceases to be the living, authentic ex-
> perience of man, and becomes instead an
> idol outside of him, which he worships, to
> which he submits, and which he also uses
> in order to cover up and rationalize his
> most irrational and immoral acts".[54]

In this statement of Fromm's the emphasis on these two

factors can clearly be seen.

In general, both of these conditions are not found

in primitive communities. First of all, primitive com-

munities are very well integrated. Their culture con-

figuration and pattern fit together so closely that it is

sometimes difficult to distinguish between them even for

purposes of analysis. The distinctions we draw between the

economic, the political, the artistic, etc. are not drawn

by primitives. In these societies, though classes do exist,

there is almost invariably a unity which is so striking that

it is emphasized over and over again by anthropologists.

There is a unanimity of opinion and attitude unknown to

those of us in the West. Certainly, no one group deliber-

ately invents an idea system which it manipulates to its

benefit. Equally certain, primitive social systems do

benefit a group at the top of the social ladder more than

those at the bottom, and there are ideas which tend to

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[54]Erich Fromm, May Man Prevail (Garden City, New
York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 123, 124.

reinforce the status quo. They are not deliberately contrived for purposes of exploitation, for in general they are accepted by the people of all classes. The chief is as much taken in by them as is the commoner.

When exploitation does occur, it takes place without the aid of anything which could remotely be called an ideology. In all human groups, it would seem, there are the shysters, the clever ones who are not above taking advantage of others. Ability has not been distributed equally, and almost without exception, there are those who use their gifts for their own selfish ends. If a generalization can be made concerning this point, it would be that those of this case of mind find their way into trade of medicineman, priest, shaman, or what have you. It is true that these people manipulate ideas and in so doing serve their own interests, but to call the ideas which they utilize by the term ideology would be stretching a point. Let me give you a few examples. Among the Eskimo, one of the simplest peoples on the face of the earth, the shaman is called the "Angekok".[55] Though the Angekok wields little formal power, his informal influence is considerable. The power of the Angekok is derived from the belief that he (the Angekok) is

[55]Knud Rasmussen,"Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimo", Reports of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-1924, Vol. 7 (1929), p. 131-140.

able to manipulate the spirit forces to hiw own ends by the possession of magical trinkets. Certain Angekoks work this for all it is worth. Some charge outrageous fees for their services, and a favorite trick is to direct women clients to have intercourse with them on the pretext that the magic will not work otherwise.[56]

Among the Trobriand Islanders and the Bathonga of Africa, which are fairly well advanced tribes, the shamen hire themselves out to a chief or a king. These shamens have one duty; to kill magically the enemies of their employer. In return they are paid handsomely by the chief or king as the case may be.[57]

In both cases, I suppose, the thoughts involved function as an ideology. They aid in gaining and maintaining political and economic power (in the case of the Angekok the pattern is only incipiently developed), but to place an idea about the magical potency of a charm, or magical formula in the same category as an ideology, as we think of it, is rather far-fetched.

Among the tribes which I have investigated is one in which a primitive people might well be said to have something closely approximating an ideology. The tribe of which I am speaking are the Aztec of central Mexico.

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[56]Ibid., p. 130-140

[57]Bronislaw Malinowski, Coral Gardens and Their Magic: A Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands (New York 1935), p. 175-176.

To illustrate my point, a short abreviated history of the Aztec is necessary. There is almost no doubt in the minds of the most distinguished Aztec scholars that the Aztec tribe began as a small warlike tribe that migrated down ónto the central plains of Mexico from the north. Somewhere around 1168 they gave up their nomadic ways, took up agriculture, and settled down in Central Mexico permanently.[58] They never did lose their warlike habits, however, and by a process of gradual conquest, they managed to put almost all of what is present day Mexico under their control.[59]

At first, they simply conquered small neighboring tribes, looting and retreating and repeating the process periodically. After a time they simply occupied the territory which they conquered and extracted loot from their victims in the form of an annual tax. It is interesting to note that the Aztecs never attempted to incorporate their victims into their own system; they never forced their own religion and language on them, nor did they attempt to alter the internal political structure of the conquered tribes. Their only interest was tribute, without which the Aztec civilization could not have existed.[60] As long as the

[58]Victor W. Von Hagen, The Aztec: Man and Tribe (New York: The New American Library of World Literature Inc., 1958), p. 24.

[59]Ibid., p. 143

[60]Ibid., p. 174-178.

chiefs of these captive tribes made sure that the tribute
was paid, they were left pretty much alone. Needless to
say, should they fail in paying the taxes, the Aztec would
swoop down and force it from him. In short, one could
profitably compare the taxation system of the Aztec to a
protection racket.

In time the Aztec became a full-fledged military
society and this, it has been said, was the major cause of
their downfall. Apparently, as time went on, the Aztecs
diverted more and more of their manpower and resources from
agriculture to policing the captured tribes. Thus the Aztecs
were no longer able to support themselves through their own
agricultural efforts, but depended upon the tribute for
their very existence. When the Spaniards defeated the
Aztec army, the captive tribes revolted and the whole
system came crashing down.

What is of basic interest to us is that the Aztec
urge to build this empire came basically from an "ideology"
which was mainly religious in nature. Aztec religion,
which permeated every aspect of Aztec life, did not stim-
ulate directly the building of an empire, but indirectly,
by stimulating war.[61]

It is important to note that this religious thought
or theology was completely under the control of a

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[61]_Ibid._, p. 169

priesthood, and that this priesthood manipulated religious ideas to their own ends. Moreover, the priesthood was in the employ of the emperor. At the time of the Spanish Conquest Montezuma kept over 800 priests. Among the Aztecs there is more than a hine of an unholy alliance between the emperor and the priests.

The Aztecs held the idea that their Gods demanded sacrifices if they were not to cause trouble.[62] It is interesting to note, however, that around 700 A.D. when Aztec history began, their Gods were satisfied with very little. A few bags of grain or a couple of chickens would do nicely. As time went on the Gods acquired a liking for human blood which became so strong that, at the end of the Aztec era, nothing else would suffice. Indeed, at the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the Aztec priesthood demanded 20,000 sacrificial victims a year, according to Prescott.[63]

Now it is impossible to expect the Aztecs to offer themselves in endless lines for immolition. The only possible way to get so many sacrificial victims was through conquest. For this reason, the Aztecs instigated numerous religious wars.

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[62] William H. Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico (Boston, Mass: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1857), Vol. I., p. 75-85.

[63] Ibid., p. 79

Of course, after their armies had conquered a certain territory and taken the necessary victims, they kept the territory under subjugation in order to extract both taxes and more victims in the future. Needless to say, the loot they took accrued to the Emperor. Thus the wars, which were ostensibly for religious purposes, resulted in a great deal of wealth for the Emperor.[64]

Certain other religious ideas also seem to have been conceived with the benefit of the Emperor in mind. One such notion concerns the way in which the Emperor was defined. In early Aztec history the Aztec chief apparently was thought to be superior to other men, but still a human being. As time went on the status of chief was slowly redefined. He became associated with the diety first and then as time went on he was declared a god. According to Aztec dogma, the highest god was called quetzalcoctl, who ruled the whole universe.[65] Under him were a whole myriad of other lesser gods who were arranged in a hierarchy. Each of these gods controlled matters in a specific part of the universe.[66] One of these gods was the sun god. One of the

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[64]Victor W. Von Hagen, The Aztec: Man and Tribe (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1958), p. 64.

[65]William H. Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico (Boston, Mass.: Philips, Sampson and Company, 1857), Vol. I., p. 59.

[66]Ibid., p. 57.

sons of the sun god was sent to earth to rule over matters. Needless to say this was the Aztec emperor. Thus the emperor was incorporated into the hierarchy of gods. The manner in which this redefinition tended to reinforce his power can well be imagined. Who would dare to go contrary to the wishes of one of the diety?

Can it be said that these Aztec religious thoughts constitute what could be called an ideology in the "particular" sense? In my opinion, it comes closer than any other instance I know of, off hand. Both of what I believe are the important criteria are present. They are: (1) Aztec religious thought definitely worked to the advantage of the political rulers, (2) it was definitely manipulated with this in mind. The latter is a very unusual event among primitives. Ordinarily, thought springs up purely spontaneously, and while it may work to someone's benefit, it is not designed usually with that in mind.

The question that arose in my mind was how the priesthood viewed their own religious theory in comparison to the people at the bottom of the social ladder. It seemed quite plain that the priesthood manipulated the theology for their own benefit, but how did they view it? This was the important question, and this not one of the texts on the Aztecs examined into.

At any rate, it seemed to me that there were three apparent possibilities (1) The priesthood could have coldly and deliberately concocted their theology with the manipulation of the lower classes in mind, while remaining uncommitted, and uninvolved in it. (2) They could have accepted it implicitly, as did the people whom they duped. (3) They could have accepted it, but in a different manner than the masses.

Of these three possibilities, the third seemed the most logical, by a process of elimination if by no other method. The first did not seem plausible because there is much evidence pointing to the fact that the priests were the most fanatical adherents to theor own theology. It seems impossible that the priesthood would undergo some of the tortures they devised for themselves had they not a strong belief. Moreover, few human beings are able to cheat others openly for a long period of time. This seems to be psychologically impossible. Usually such activities are disguised by some sort of rationalization. To openly extort and recognize it as extortion seems to be impossible.

Number two seems equally improbable. It seems highly unlikely to me that one who deliberately set out to dupe others would fall into his own trap. In other words, it seems to me that we are presented with a dilemma. It does

not seem likely that the priesthood could have completely divorced themselves emotionally from their theology, nor be completely manipulated by it. Obviously, there must be some third alternative.

It occurred to me that it was possible for the priesthood to believe their own theology if, having invented it for their own ends, they must not have looked at it in the same light as those in the lower class. The situation might have been analogous to that which exists in the Roman Catholoc Church today. Both priest and peasant believe and it is hard to say which is more devout; but certainly they do not perceive the church and all its paraphanalia in the same light.

It appears that there is some evidence to support this conjecture.

It would appear that religion, to the Aztec priesthood, was intermixed with a sort of pseudo-science, some of which was extremely accurate scientifically. Their religious dogmas concerning the stars, etc. prompted them to study the movements of the celestial bodies. With time, they gained a knowledge of astronomy which was perhaps unequalled even in Europe at that time.[67] The Aztec priesthood was also involved in a great deal of esoteric

[67]Victor W. Von Hagen, The Aztec: Man and Tribe (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1958), p. 155-153.

mysticism, which, while mostly worthless from our point of
view, must have taken a certain amount of intelligence to
master. Certainly it took a long time.[68]

The knowledge gained thus in the priestly schools was
apparently filtered down to the populace in the form of
myths, stories, superstitions. There is also much evidence
to the effect that, in the outlying areas, the peasants
never did give up their own tribal beliefs completely in
favor of the state ordained religion. Instead, the theology
of the priesthood was simply superimposed upon already ex-
isting beliefs, and both were altered in the process.

The important point is that while the Aztec religious
beliefs were essentially the same throughout the society, the
terms by which the different social classes understood these
religious beliefs must have differed considerably. This
would seem to be the case, but this is only conjecture. One
thing did seem certain. It did seem that one could make a
case for the existence of an ideology among the Aztec.
Both the elements seem to be present: (1) A thought system
which benefits a social class, and (2) definite manipulation
of that thought system by this class. Therefore, it cer-
tainly appears that the Aztec have an ideology. But then I
began to speculate, how did I know this was so? Did the
Aztecs really have an ideology or is it that by our own

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[68]_Ibid_., p. 74, 163.

study.we can interpret certain actions ideologically? Did
it really exist or is it a product of our interpretations?
*Did the Aztecs really think these things in an ideological
way?* The important question is not what we think but what
they thought. How do we know what the Aztecs thought? The
Aztecs may have had an ideology, but were they aware of it
as such? Did these Aztec thoughts work ideologically or
was it, as I had begun to suspect, that we had just in-
terpreted them that way? Did an ideology really exist
here, or is it that Aztec scholars have only been invented
to make them fit an ideological pattern? Certainly one can
make a case for an Aztec religious ideology, but whether
such an interpretation is valid or not is another question.

These questions seemed important to me and, in com-
parison, the problem of ideology looked petty indeed.

The question was no longer one of how could I interpret
Aztec thought, but how did the Aztecs interpret it? How did
they see things? How did the world appear to them? How did
the world appear to any primitive?

These questions seemed so fundamental that I resolved
to spend some time trying to answer them. As things turned
out, I spent the rest of my time attempting to answer such
questions.

Basically, the problem is this. Can we interpret

primitive ideas in the light of our way of looking at the world, in view of ᵃᵘⁿ Waltanschaung, or do they make sense only within the context of the minds which conceived them? Can ideas be lifted from one culture and translated into the language of another adequately. Or are basic ways of perceiving the world so different that an idea cannot be understood separately from the point of view in which it was conceived? The more I looked into the situation, the more certain I became that no primitive idea could be interpreted properly according to our own set of values and ideas. Can we, for example, ever understand black magic? It is obvious that we cannot see it in the same light as one from a society in which there is a strong belief in black magic. But how does a person from one of these tribes perceive black magic? Is he just innately more stupid than we? This question has been well argued and the conclusion seems to be that thoughts, and the way they are accepted, is a matter of culture rather than merely intelligence. Of this, I am sure the reader is well aware. The question, then, is what culture forces are likely to produce what outlook? These are not easy questions. Before we can go about answering these questions we must figure out exactly what these primitives think. We must, in short, learn to isolate primitive thought, and this is a major task in itself.

How do you go about isolating primitive thought?

This was now the primary problem. I decided that the best way of getting at thought was to see what had already been done in the field and then try to apply what I learned to other thought systems.

So I began to hunt through anthropological literature to find out who had attempted to analyze primitive thought and how they went about it. The results were very disappointing. From what I could discover, there were few anthropologists who had attempted to analyze thought as I now conceive it, and these few did not give any hint as to how they accomplished this feat.

To be sure, there were many who talked about primitive thought as it appears to us in the West, but virtually no one who had attempted to get behind the obvious to the primitive point of view, in the way in which they really saw the world.

Two anthropologists whom I discovered at this time were Adamson Hoebel and Clyde Kluckholn, both of whom have attempted to outline the philosophies of specific tribes. Kluckhohn, I believe, especially has done a very fine job in this field, and is considered a foremost expert in the field of primitive thought.

Neither Kluckholn nor Hoebel attempts to analyze primitive thought in general, as did some of the earlier anthropologists, for it is commonly recognized that all

primitives do not think alike, but have different systems of
thought according to cultural differences. Accordingly,
Kluckhohn and Hoebel restrict their discussion to a few
specific tribes.

Curiously enough, neither Kluckhohn nor Hoebel gives
a long detailed description of any primitive thought system,
although they obviously know a great deal about them. In-
stead both express the thoughts of these tribes in the form
of short abreviated outlines, which might profitably be re-
peated here.

Hoebel is interested in thought as it bears on the
problem of law and he chooses his material accordingly.
It is my guess that his outlines do not represent a well-
rounded description of the complete thought system of these
tribes. Nevertheless, his outline of the Comache, Kiowa
and Cheyenne is as follows:

Postulate I.   Man is subordinate to supernatural forces
                and spiritual beings which are benevolent
                in nature.

Corollary I.   Individual success and tribal well-being
                are abetted by the beneficent assistence
                of the supernaturals.

Postulate II.   The killing of a Cheyenne by a fellow Cheyenne
                pollutes the tribal fetishes and also the
                murderer

Corollary I.   Bad luck will dog the tribe until the fetishes
                are purified.

Corollary II.   The murderer must be temporarily separated
                from the social body.

Corollary III.   Violent Behavior that may lead to homicide within the tribe must be avoided.

Corollary IV.   Killing an enemy while in the presence of a tribal fetish is imimical to the supernaturals.

Postulate III.   The authority of the tribal council is derived from the supernaturals and is supreme over all other elements in the society.

Postulate IV.   The individual is important and shall be permitted and encouraged to express his potentialities with the greatest possible freedom compatible with group existence, but at the same time the individual is subordinate to the group, and all first obligations are to the maintenance of the well being of the tribe.

Corollary I.   Rehabilitation of the recalcitrant individual after punishment is extremely important.

Postulate V.   War is necessary to defend the interests of the tribe and to permit individual self-expression of the male.

Postulate VI.   All land is public property.

Postulate VII.   Except for land and the tribal fetishes all material goods are private property, but they should be generously shared with others.[69]

Kluckhohn's paradigm on the Navaho is somewhat shorter and is as follows:

Premise I.   Life is very dangerous.

Formula I.   Maintain orderliness in those sectors of life which are little subject to human control.

Formula II.   Be wary of non-relatives.

Formula III.   Avoid excesses.

Formula IV.   When in a new and dangerous situation, do nothing.

Formula V.   Escape (This is an alternate for formula IV)

[69]E. Adamson Hoebel, The Law of Primitive Man (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 142-145

Premise II. Nature is more powerful than man

Premise III. The personality is a whole.

Premise IV. Respect the integrity of the individual.

Premise V. Everything exists in two parts, the male and the female, which belongs together and complete each other.

Premise VI. Human nature is neither good nor evil -- both qualities are blended in all persons from birth on.

Premise VII. Like produces like and the part stands for the whole.

Premise VIII. What is said is to be taken literally.

Premise IX. This life is what counts.[70]

After each of these premises, Kluckhohn gives a little explanation of what each entails. I have left out this explanation as too long and irrelevent for our purposes. But enough has been said to demonstrate what these two men have accomplished.

These two paradigms delineate what these two men call primitive thought. Since they were experts in the field, I used them as possible models for my own work. In other words, I thought the end result of this study was to be able to produce such a paradigm for any given society. This at least was the goal toward which I was working.

If I was to use these outlines as a goal toward which I was to work, I thought it important that I understand

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[70] Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton, _The Navaho_ (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 223-23?.

something about them. Concerning these paradigms, there were two conclusions I cam to almost immediately.

1. There was nothing, either in the paradigm or anywhere else for that matter, to indicate the process that these two anthropologists had to go through in order to come up with these results.

2. However, it is fairly obvious that these premises are the end results of a great deal of digging and that they are on a fairly high order of abstraction. This means that they are abstracted from statements of a lower order of abstration which in turn were taken from more concrete material and so on. So in order to come up with such a paradigm, it seemed to me, one would have to first get low order abstractions from concrete data and then, abstracting from these, produce the higher order abstractions which underlie the whole thought system.

And I still think this is how it would have to be done basically. Unfortunately, it is a task more easily stated than accomplished.

So now the problem resolves itself into the attempt to uncover from descriptive data the underlying thoughts and then abstracting thought from it. The first problem with which I was presented was what source of concrete data I was to use.

I could think of at least two sources of primitive

thought. First, there are the expressions of the primitives
themselves in the form of myths and stories. Secondly,
there are those thoughts of primitives which are given by
anthropologists in their monographs.

Let us stop here for a moment. In order to make it
more evident to the reader what is going on and also to
better organize the paper, I would like to point out that
in my analysis of thought, I went through at least three
distinct stages which it might be wise to label as such.
First of all, I resolved to attempt to analyze primitive
thought through myths and stories. Let us call this the
first stage.

I resolved to analyze these myths in order to get
at thought because these myths and stories seemed to be the
purest expression of primitive thought to which I had access.
Certainly, I thought, such an analysis would lead to more
accurate results than simply taking those thoughts which
had already passed first through the mind of an anthropolo-
gist, for these would bear the scars of his own point of
view, interests, and prejudices.

Moreover, the reports of anthropologists are apt to
be colored because of innacurate information. Primitives
have no philosophers who state explicitly the assumptions
of their particular culture. Even the most persuasive

anthropologists have a difficult time in urging these people to state their own thoughts in anything other than mythical or parable form. This is made quite clear by Radin in his book <u>Primitive Man as Philosopher</u>. For these reasons, I thought the expressions of these anthropologists might be inaccurate and thus I thought it best to attempt to get at the thought content without relying on what they had to say.

I still think that what they have to say about the thoughts of these primitives is inaccurate, but as things turned out, it proved impossible for one in my position to ignore them entirely.

At any rate, I began trying to elicit thought from myths and stories.

Let us begin by taking a primitive expression and attempting to analyze it with a view toward extracting the "thought" it might contain.

The Trobriand Islanders have a chant that will serve as an adequate introduction. It has been translated by Bronislow Malinowski in the following way:

> The belly of my garden lifts
> The belly of my graden rises
> The belly of my graden reclines
> The belly of my garden is a bushhen's nest-in-lifting.
> The belly of my garden is an anthill
> The belly of my garden lifts-bends,
> The belly of my garden is-an-ironwood-tree-in-lifting.
> The belly of my garden lies-down,
> The belly of my garden burgeons.[71]

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[71] Bronislow Malinowski, <u>Coral Gardens and their Magic: A Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands</u> (New York, 1935) Vol. II, p. 635.

How does one go about analyzing such a poem. What does it mean? What place could such a poem have in Trobriand thought? The initial attempts seemed justified, but it was not long before I ran into the well-known brick wall. All of my lack of success can be attributed to several factors, which will be apparent as we continue our study.

The first problem we are faced with is the one of allegory. Can the terms used in this chant be taken at face value or do they have meanings other than those expressed here. Is the term "belly of my garden" a symbol for something else, or is it a part of the garden, or just what?

I failed completely as far as this problem is concerned. In many cases myths are undoubtedly allegorical, and yet just what the terms stand for is not mentioned and I was in no position to hazard a guess as to the meanings of the allegory or symbolism.

Consequently, I had no choice but to regard all myths, stories, and chants, as straight-forward renditions, which of course they are not. I recognized that this would lead to inaccuracies, but I hoped that these would not incapacitate me completely. Unfortunately, such an approach was not to find fruition, but it did lead to a few interesting discoveries.

How does one attempt to interpret a poem in a straight-forward manner?

After looking over this poem, it becomes almost immediately obvious that we can do nothing more until we know more about it. The crucial phrase seems to be "belly of my garden". What is a belly of a garden to the Trobriand Islanders? Of what importance is it, and why should it bend and recline, etc.?

After much "grubbing around" in Malinowski's Coral Gardens and their Magic I discovered that the belly of a garden is believed to be the essence of the garden; the place where the important spiritual forces reside. This little poem, I discovered, is a magical chant addressed to the belly of the garden with a view toward making the garden more fertile. It is considered a very powerful and important chant.[72]

Now what does this tell us about Trobriand thought? Just what can be deduced from it? It is a magical chant we know, so would it be fair to say that from this chant we may deduce that the Trobriand Islanders are believers in magic?

This would seem to be a fairly safe assumption.

We know further that the chant is addressed to certain spirits who ostensibly dwell in the belly of the garden

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[72] Bronislow Malinowski, Coral Gardens and their Magic: A Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands (New York, 1935) Vol. II, p. 327

and who are implored to make the garden produce. Might we
not conclude from this that the Trobriand Islanders believe
that fertility is controlled by spiritual forces? It also
seems that the spirits will not hand over this food unless
they are manipulated by magic. So can we say from this that
the Trobrianders believe that magic is necessary for the
production of food? This would seem to be the most obvious
conclusion we might draw out of this myth.

But are these conclusions accurate? Is this really
what a Trobriand Islander would say? At this point we really
have no way of knowing. The fact is that these conclusions
are pure speculation, and more important, they are specula-
tions from our own point of view. While they might seem
sensible to us, how do we know that they would seem equally
obvious to a Trobriand Islander? Would he recognize these
conclusions as his own working presuppositions?

So the problem is not merely one of digging out what
one considers to be the idea implicit in a certain myth or
story, but also of being able in some way to check its ac-
curacy.

The only possible check I could devise was one in-
volving the element of predictability. All of the sociolo-
gists of knowledge seem to agree that thought is intimately
connected with the social system, and reflects that social

system, and reflects that social system. Thus, if we know the thought, then it would seem reasonable that we should be able to predict something about the social system. This could provide a check on the accuracy of our speculations. That is, if we assumed for the time being that certain speculations on thought, when valid, and then try to deduce from them what kind of a social structure should be congruent with these ideas, some idea of the accuracy should result. If the deductions were accurate, then we might assume the thought had been adequately and accurately deduced. If not, then this would indicate that the conclusions were inaccurate.

I tried this several times with only partial success. At any rate, let's see how it worked. Let us assume that our conclusions about Trobriand thought are accurate. Namely, that they do believe in magic, that the spirits control fertility, and that magic is necessary to manipulate the spirits to produce good gardens. Now, what do these conclusions tell us about their social structure?

First of all, it occurred to me that the object of the chant concerns gardens, so I think one conclusion might be that the Trobriand Islanders have gardens and are an agricultural society.

We think that the object of the chant is to manipulate the spirits. Is it possible that there are specialists who make a profession of manipulating the spirits to produce

good results?

If there are a class of priests, then is it possible that the Trobriand Islanders are an acquiescent-passive type of people who might be easily led? This is usually the case where there is a highly developed priesthood. A priesthood apparently depends in part upon the gullibility and acquiescence of the population it controls.

If they are a dependent-acquiescent people, then perhaps they would allow, and perhaps need, a strong authoritarian ruler. From this hypothesis can we postulate the existence of a powerful political ruler?

Now it just so happens that all of these guesses, and guesses they are, are correct, but I don't believe there is anything in the myth that indicated it clearly, nor have these conclusions been logically deduced. Thus it does not serve as an authoratative check.

The flaws in this particular method are almost too numerous to mention. Among the most prominent is the fact that the method involves a type of logic which procedes along the lines of thinly veiled guesswork at best, and in which the margin of error can be nothing but tremendous. In any event, I came to the conclusion that this method of determining thought and of checking its accuracy was

leading nowhere and so I dropped the whole approach.

With all of this, I was still no nearer to dis-
covering how to analyze primitive thought as it was con-
tained in myth, and I was at the beginning once again.

I re-evaluated what I had done. The first thing I
had done was to try to analyze the myth as it existed by
itself. I simply needed more information than the myth
itself provides. On this particular chant, I happened to
find an explanation, and it was meager enough, but I util-
ized it, for it was all I had.

Even in the beginning, I was dependent upon
Malinowski. I had no idea about this myth until I ran
across Malinowski's conclusion that the chant was designed
to manipulate the garden spirits, and I just took this as an
article of faith and continued.

With this as a first lesson, it was beginning to
look as if the only road to primitive thought was to accept
what the enthnographer had to say about it without question.

Incidently, there is an anthropologist named Dorothy
Lee who does analyze this same chant, and by looking at
this chant in a completely different way, has come up with
a principle upon which she says all Trobriand thought is
built. I am not going to describe her analysis at this
time, but suffice it to say that Lee suggests a principle

vastly different than anything I have suggested; and as a
matter of fact, it is so different that it would not
readily suggest itself to anyone utilizing our particular
brand of logic or common sense. Indeed it is hard for us to
conceive of a thought system based on this principle.

At any rate, I tried to analyze several chants and
stories of this type from several different tribes utilizing,
with due respect, this "by guess and by God" method and gave
it up as a poor job. Although I could get out of these
stories what I considered to be the thought they contained,
there was no way of proving, that my interpretation was the
correct one. After having spent several weeks, I was no
closer to evolving a way of analyzing primitive thought
than I was when I began. The reasons are only too pain-
fully obvious.

First and foremost, my method consisted almost com-
pletely of guess work, as I have mentioned. Moreover, this
whole method is based on the presupposition that there are
principles behind these myths and chants, etc. There is
some evidence that this is not true. In other words, it is
possible that we are hunting for something that does not
exist. I don't think this is true, but even so, one
anthropologist even goes so far as to say that most prim-
itive stories and myths are developed for the entertainment

of children. It seems to me that most myths and stories must have been developed with some principle in mind. This is not to say that their inventor necessarily is aware of the principles, but I think it is a safe assumption that peoples of different cultures have a specific cast of mind which is reflected in what they say and do. It seems impossible that people could act and tell stories with no principles or frame of reference whatsoever. The principles do exist, I believe, but to uncover them is another matter.

Having no real luck analyzing these ordinary chants, stories, etc., I began to look around for simpler myths, stories, and expressions to analyze. I did this with a view toward developing a method of analyzing primitive thought which then might be applied to all myths or stories.

Let us take one of these myths which I consider more simple and just see how I went about analyzing it. The analysis of one Ojibway myth stands out as a notable example of my thought at this time. This is the myth:

> At the time of which my story speaks people
> were camping just as we are here. In the
> winter time they used birch bark wigwams.
> All the animals could then talk together.
> Two girls, who were very foolish, talked
> foolishly and were in no respect like the
> other girls of their tribe, made their bed
> out-of-doors, and slept right out under the
> stars. The very fact that they slept out-
> side during the winter proves how foolish
> they were.

One of these girls asked the other, "With
what star would you like to sleep, the
white one or the red one?" The other girl
answered, "I'd like to sleep with the red
star." "Oh, that's all right," said the
first one, "I would like to sleep with the
white star. He's the younger; the red one
is older." Then the two girls fell asleep.
When they awoke, they found themselves in
another world, the star world. There were
four of them there, the two girls and the
two stars who had become men. The white
star was very, very old and was grey-headed,
while the younger was red-headed. He was
the red star. The girls stayed a long time
in this star world, and the one who had
chosen the white star was very sorry, for
he was so old.

There was an old woman up in this world
who sat over a hole in the sky, and, when-
ever she moved, she showed them the hole
and said, "That's where you came from."
They looked down through and saw their
people playing down below, and then the
girls grew very sorry and very homesick.
One evening, near sunset, the old woman
moved a little way from the hole.

The younger girl heard the noise of the
mitewin down below. When it was almost
daylight, the old woman sat over the hole
again and the noise of the mitewin stopped;
it was her spirit that made the noise.
She was the guardian of the mitewin.

One morning the old woman told the girls,
"If you want to go down where you came
from, we will let you down, but get to
work and gather roots to make a string-
made rope, twisted. The two of you make
coils of rope as high as your heads when
you are sitting. Two coils will be
enough." The girls worked for days until
they had accomplished this. They made
plenty of rope and tied it to a big
basket. They then got into the basket

and the people of the star world lowered
them down. They descended right into an
Eagle's nest, but the people above thought
the girls were on the ground and stopped
lowering them. They were obliged to stay
in the nest, because they could do nothing
to help themselves.

Said one, "We'll have to stay here until
someone comes to get us." Bear passed by.
The girls cried out, "Bear, come and get
us. You are going to get married sometime.
Now is your chance. Bear thought, "They are
not very good-looking women." He pretended
to climb up and then said, "I can't climb
up any further." And he went away, for the
The girls didn't suit him. Next came Lynx.
The girls cried out again, "Lynx, come up
and get us. You will go after women some
day." Lynx answered, "I can't, for I have
no claws," and he went away. Then an ugly-
looking man, Wolverine, passed and the girls
spoke to him, "Hey, wolverine, come and
get us." Wolverine started to climb up, for
he thought it a very fortunate thing to have
these women and was very glad. When he
reached them, they placed their hair ribbons
in the nest. Then Wolverine agreed to take
one girl at a time, so he took the first
one down and went back for the next. Then
Wolverine went away with his two wives and
enjoyed himself greatly, as he was ugly and
nobody else would have him. They went far
into the woods, and then they sat down and
began to talk. "Oh!" cried one of the girls,
"I forgot my hair ribbon." Then Wolverine
said, "I will run back for it." And he
started off to get the hair ribbons. Then
the girls hid and told the trees, whenever
Wolverine should come back and whistle for
them, to answer him by whistling. Wolverine
soon returned and began to whistle for his
wives, and the trees all around him whistled
in answer. Wolverine, realizing that he had
been tricked, gave up the search and departed
very angry.[74]

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[74]Smith Thompson, _Tales of the North American
Indians_ (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,
1929), p. 126-127.

As a work of art, the story is of no interest to us. We are concerned with the story only as an expression of a certain thought system. Our problem is to extend the thought which is presumably contained in this myth.

How does one go about this task? After much deliberation, I decided that the only way to accomplish this was by diving right in, using common sense, and simply express those ideas which seemed obvious in meaning.

The following is an example of what I did with the myths of this kind.

In the first paragraph it is stated that when these incidents took place, presumably in the distant past, that the situation was very similar to what it is in the present, except that "all the animals could then talk together". Ostensibly, all of the animals would converse with each other and with man also.

What could this mean? Is this allegorical in any sense? Does it mean, for example, that in the past all the animals and man were much more similar, perhaps coming from a common ancestor? Can we take this to mean that the Ojibwa believe that as time went on that the animals have become differentiated and are no longer able to communicate, but are still related through some common bond which was established in the mythical past?

There seems to be some evidence that this is so.

By checking through all the material on the Ojibwa to which
I had access I found that the Ojibwa have a whole series of
rites in which the bear and fox and other animals are spoken
of as "Brother". This would tend to indicate that the
Ojibwa perhaps do believe that such a bond exists between
themselves and other animals. This is not absolute proof
to be sure, but it does give some credence to the idea.

In the second paragraph, we learned that these girls
went to sleep after expressing a wish to go to the land of
the stars "and when they woke, they were in the land of the
stars". The most obvious thing, it seemed to me, contained
in this part of the myth is the possibility that the Ojibwa
believe in the existence of another world, to which humans
can journey under the proper circumstances. Moreover, if
the myth can be taken literally, it would not seem that this
world is vastly different from this one. Notice, that
people can still talk to each other, and they seem to
portray the same emotions, etc.

Let's jump down to the fourth paragraph. The one
about the old woman who sits on a hole overlooking the
earth. In this paragraph, we learn that the old woman is
the spirit who controls the mitewin on earth. The mitewin
incidentally is a sort of celebration. So it would seem
that the Ojibwa believe that there are certain spirits who
control earthly activities. This would seem to be a fairly

safe assumption to me, if these myths can be interpreted literally.

These were the principles which I had thought might be contained in this belief.

In the last part of the story, it is interesting to note that the Ojibwa appear to place great emphasis on physical beauty. This would seem to be so, for this is given as the motivation which prompted the girls to become disgusted with both the old white star and the Wolverine.

After I extracted the thought which I believed the myth contained, I did something rather premature. I tried to relate these possibile thoughts to the social system from which they came. This seemed to be the predominant interest of the sociologists of knowledge and so I tried to see what possible functions these principles could have had for Ojibwa society.

Assuming that these ideas or principles that I derived from this myth have some connection with the social order, I then tried to relate the two.

I took the last one first. I asked myself, what possible place could such an exagerated emphasis on personal beauty have in the Ojibwa scheme of things?

My conjecture was that such an idea probably spring from a society in which youth played a prominent part and

in which the attributes and characteristics of youth were valued. I found it hard to believe that such a notion, if it did exist, could come from a society in which the aged have an important place and are accordingly honored and revered. It seemed most logical to me that a society which placed an emphasis on personal beauty would be a young society or one in which the characteristics of youth were emphasized.

There might be something in this guess. The Ojibwa are a hunting tribe whose very survival depends upon the strength and speed and skill of its hunters. Hunting is a very strenuous activity and is quite naturally the domain of younger men. With younger men, the main economic producers, it might seem logical to assume that they would be the ones to be revered and admired. Thus the emphasis on youth. At least this is one possibility.

What significance could there be for the Ojibwa that there is another world to which one could go under the proper circumstances? First of all, it would seem that going to another world is desirable in that, while it may be frightening, it does benefit the tribe. This would seem to be indicated in the myth.

Then I asked myself what possible function could this belief have on social structure? The only thing I could think of was that the belief might underlie a

priesthood or shamanhood. If there is another world which
can be reached by the proper methods, then perhaps someone
could make a specialty in learning these techniques and
thus benefit mankind. The Ojibwa do in fact have shamans,
but the logical connection between their power and this
myth is very weak.

What else could this myth do for Ojibwa society.
If you add to the knowledge given in the myth, that these
two girls were supposed to have instituted some important
Ojibwa customs, then another possibility comes to mind.
Possibly this myth acts as a rationalization and justifica-
tion for these same institutions. After all, these girls
did go to the other world, consort with the gods, and return
only to found these institutions. Might not the fact that
they were known to have consorted with the diety lend their
customs a sort of supernatural sanction? Perhaps these
customs would not be so revered if it was known that they
were instituted by ordinary men.

Unfortunately, these interpretations are none too
accurate, but I would like to point out that it is myths of
this kind with which one can do something. Most myths are
so strange to our way of thought, that no amount of guessing
and stretching of the imagination produces any results worth
mentioning.

There are two major criticisms I can make of this

type of analysis. (1) It relied heavily on guess work. Though I tried to get away from guessing, and though I realized that I _was_ guessing, there did not seem to be any other choice.

It is possible that my guesses were accurate and that my insights were correct. Unfortunately, evidence came to my attention that this was not so, as I shall demonstrate presently.

(2) Without having isolated the thought system adequately I was yet trying to relate the thought to the social system, because this was the major task of the sociologists of knowledge.

This may have been the ultimate aim of such a study but my attempt was premature. One obviously could not relate accurately thought and social structure without first knowing what the thought was.

Perhaps more important, by attempting to discover the social roots of particular thoughts at this stage inhibited my analysis of thought. Premature emphasis on social implications oriented me toward these stories, etc., which seemed to have social implications to the exclusion of others. Myths, like the following of the Eskimo, I have overlooked completely.

> A man was once on the point of spearing a
> caribou when it opened its mouth and said:
> "There is no one down here, there is no

> kayak down here. I am going into the
> water. Let me escape being speared.
> Your wife this summer has plenty of deer
> fat. Although he tried to stab me, I
> got ashore before he speared me."[75]

I don't know anything about this myth at all. It seemed to have no obvious social implications so I ignored it. It is an interesting myth, and it might contain some thought. Had I been less interested in immediate social implications, I might have explored such myths. However, I overlooked them completely.

Now I would like to refer back to number 1 -- the matter about the inaccuracies in guessing. I said that I became fairly certain that my guesses were inaccurate and I think I can demonstrate this to you. The only way in which I discovered these inaccuracies was by taking a guess at the possible meaning of a myth and then trying to verify it by checking with suitable data. Most of the time very little presented itself, but once in a while enough information was available to come to a conclusion of one sort or another. Most of the time the only conclusion I could come to was that my guesses were wrong.

In order to demonstrate this, I would like to use my

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[75] Diamond Jeness, _Report of the Canadian Artic Expedition 1913-1918_ (Ottawa: F. A. Acland Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1926), Vol. 13., p. 74A

analysis of an Eskimo myth. I have chosen an Eskimo myth

because the Eskimo have very short myths and more suited to

our needs. The myth is:

> A white woman was constantly changing her
> husbands. At last a man said to her, "You
> are always wanting to change husbands, you
> had better marry a dog.". She did, and her
> offspring were brown and white bears.[76]

What can be drawn out of this story? How is it to

be interpreted?

First, it seemed to me, that what happened to this

woman was a bad sort of thing. This was the first thing that

came to my mind and I went on this assumption. I did not

think that to give birth to a bunch of bears and having a

dog for a husband would be regarded by the Eskimo as too

desirable.

These bad things happened to her because she got

married to a dog; presumably, I thought, because she wanted

to change husbands or something of the sort. The logic of

the suggestion that she should marry a dog escaped me, but

it seemed to be acceptable to the Eskimo and so I accepted

it at face value.

Thus I came up with the idea that the moral of the

story was that it was wrong to change mates.

At this time, since I was interested in direct

social implications I began to ask myself what could be the

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[76]*Ibid.*, p. 80A.

social implications of this moral? The story seemed to con-
demn adultery and divorce; if so, then it seemed logical to
assume that the Eskimos held monogomy in high regard.

Unfortunately, nothing of this sort is true. The
Eskimos, in fact, think nothing of swapping mates. Among
the Eskimos changing mates is considered almost a game to
be indulged in by all, and certainly there are no punishments
for what we would consider adultery.[77]

The most logical conclusion one could come to is
that the myth has been interpreted poorly, and that this
supposed moral tenet condemning adultery did not exist at
all.

This seeming to be the case, I thought there might be
another principle behind the myth and so I took another tack
to see what could be developed.

It occurred to me that one other possibility was
that the myth might show that all animals stem from the
same source -- specifically human beings -- thus proving the
great universality of all living things. This seemed to be
a very common theme among all primitive myths and it seemed
to be in evidence here. After all, the woman did give rise
to the bears according to the myth.

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[77] E. Adamson Hoebel, The Law of Primitive Man
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 84.

Were this true, it would elevate the woman to something closely akin to sainthood in our own culture, and I thought this might be true among the Eskimo. So I postulated that the woman was thought to be a beneficient, good, kind, mother of all things.

I began to look around a bit and found that nothing of the kind was true at all. The woman in question is usually referred to as Sedna, and there are many varient myths concerning her. There are more than enough references to her so that her character can be discerned with some accuracy. She is a powerful god, and one upon whom the Eskimos believe they are greatly dependent, but she is not kind. She is in fact, a mean, capricious, unpredictable monster.[78]

At any rate, when I discovered this, I realized that my whole interpretation of the myth was wrong, and this is important.

So the reader will not get the wrong impression, I would like to state that I could not interpret most myths at all. Guesswork is not a very incisive instrument, and where most myths were concerned I could make almost no headway at all. With some myths, I could make some attempt at interpretation; with most of them, even the attempt seemed fruitless. What would you do with the following myth, for example?

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[78] Diamond Jeness, Report of Canadian Artic Expedition 1913-1918 (Ottawa: F. A. Acland Printer to the Kings Most Excellent Magesty, 1922), Vol. 12., Chap. 14.

> There once lived a giant who had for his com-
> panion an extremely small man. The giant
> was addicted to oversleeping, so he told
> his companion to wake him up if ever he
> observed the approach of a bear so big it
> obscured the sun. When the bear appeared,
> the small man woke the giant by rapping his
> head with a stone, whereupon he rose up,
> tied the little man to the inside of his foot
> out of sight, and slew the bear with his
> spear.[79]

What ideas are behind this myth? The only thing I could

see was the mythological proof of the existence of giants.

Again, what do you do with the following type of myth?

> "A shaman, desiring to bewitch a girl,
> said: 'Turn into a stone, turn into
> a stone.' One of the girls braids
> forthwith turned to stone. She said
> to her father: 'One of my two braids
> has turned to stone.' So the father
> took out a knife and cut it off."[80]

I, for one, didn't know what to do with stories of

this kind.

Well I could see that this unorganized method of

analyzing thought was getting me nowhere, so I decided to

concentrate on the stories of a few tribes, and see if I

could not do something by working with only a restricted

number of myths and stories.

Also, another idea occurred to me about this time.

It seemed to me, that if there were principles behind these

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[79] Ibid., Vol. 13, p. 83A

[80] Ibid., p. 85A

stories, that the principle would not be restricted to one
myth, but could be found in several myths, stories, etc.
In other words, the same theme, if the principle of thought
does in fact exist, would be threaded through several myths.

This gave me an idea which I thought might be worth
trying. The problem was to get an accurate interpretation
of the ideas which might be contained in these myths. Now
if a valid idea could be found in several myths, then one
method for checking the validity of an interpretation
would be to take a guess at what was between the lines of
any story or myth, and then checking to see whether the same
idea could be found in other stories or myths. If it could
be found, I would assume that the interpretation was cor-
rect; if not, I would assume that it was incorrect.

So I continued for a while, attempting to check one
possible interpretation against others. Unfortunately, the
results here were also disappointing. In most interpretations
there was good reason to suspect that I had made many pos-
sible mistakes in interpretation. Granted, there is not
much known about the principles behind these stories and
myths, but what little is known did not agree at all with my
conclusions. I see no reason to go into a long explanation
of exactly what was done at this time. Let it suffice to
say that it was more of the same and that it didn't work out.

I was aware of some of these errors at the time and others I did not see until recently. All the flaws are too numerous to mention, but among the most blatant are:

1. The problem of allegory. With this problem I did not even attempt to deal. I recognized immediately that I was not capable of coping with the symbolic nature of primitive myths. They are highly symbolic and much of their meaning is contained in their symbolism. Consequently, any attempt to overlook the symbolic nature of myth is bound to lead to inadequacies. However, there was nothing I could do to alleviate the situation. My few excursions into the symbolism underlying myths and stories came to nought and so I did not pursue the subject with the rigor demanded.

2. We are assuming that there are ideas contained in these stories and myths. That is to say, that these stories and myths are constructed with some presuppositions in mind. This is a dangerous assumption on two counts. One has already been mentioned. I pointed out that one anthropologist has suggested that most primitive mythology is for the amusement of children. If this is so, then the whole project of analyzing primitive thought through myths and stories is doomed to failure from the beginning because one will be dealing with material that is insignificant in the social sense.

I don't think this is true. As Malinowski has

pointed out in his essay on <u>Myth in Primitive Psychology</u>, myth is "a direct expression of its subject matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious want, moral craving, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirement. Myth fulfilling primitive culture an indispensable function; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the effeciency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hard-working active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom."[21]

From this I think we can see that Malinowski believes that myth is a prime container of the social thought of a culture. To get at it is another matter. Malinowski himself does a very good job of demonstrating his assertion about the nature of myth. However, it is interesting to note that he is so intent on proving his assertion that myth is more than an "idle tale" that he neglects to say just exactly what ideas are contained in these myths and how one goes about abstracting them.

3. The third mistake turned out to be decisive. Going on the assertion that ideas and principles are implicit in

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[21] Branislaw Malinowski, <u>Magic Science and Religion</u> (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954), p. 101.

myths and stories one must try to extract them. The only
method of analysis which I had at my disposal was guessing.
I could dress it up in more scientific terminology, but
guessing it remains. As I have pointed out, conjecture was
bound to lead to many inaccuracies.

Moreover, this is compounded by the fact that the
guess is from our own point of view. One possible interpre-
tation is emphasized and others downgraded according to what
seems most logical, crucial, and reasonable to one in one's
own culture. When you get right down to realities, it is
the interpretor who is speaking and not one of the primitives
himself.

4. Then after I got what I supposed was _thought_ from a
specific myth, etc., I immediately tried to relate it to
the social system. To reiterate, this was a mistake from at
least two points of view: prematurity, and the fact that it
reoriented me more toward the social system than to the
analysis of thought.

In any event, my whole method seemed to be leading me
nowhere, and was certainly getting me no closer to an ac-
curate method by which primitive myths and stories could
be analyzed for their thought content. So again I attempted
to solve my problem by analyzing the works of anthropologists
who had tried to analyze primitive myths and stories.

One anthropologist, who had much to say on the subject, was Paul Radin. His comments on the analysis of stories and myths were very interesting. But what he had to say disappointed me.

In essence, Radin seems to think that analyzing myths is a very good way to get at the thought system of a people, but he says that this can only be done by one who is very familiar with the culture in question.

It seemed to me that Radin and I were involved with the same problem though he approached it from a more knowledgeable and sophisticated point of view. The method, however, did not differ substantially from my own, in that they are the results of intuition, impression, and some guess work.

Radin himself is the first to admit that his interpretations indeed are the result of conjecture.

He says:

"Perhaps it is not necessary to emphasize the dangers besetting the path of anyong venturing to describe and characterize the ideas and mental working of others, particularly those of races so different ostensibly from ourselves as are primitive peoples. Added to the ordinary risk of misunderstanding, ethnologists often find it necessary to give what are simply their own impressions and interpretations. But to this there can hardly be objection provided a person who spent many years among primitive peoples

must possess a value in a high degree . . .
I must confess myself to have had fre-
quent recourse to impressions and in-
terpretations which I have then sought
to illustrate by appropriate examples."[82]

Just for purposes of comparison, let us take one

myth that he analyzed and see how he goes about the task

and what conclusions he is able to evolve. One myth which

Radin analyzes is the Winnebago creation myth which I think

should be repeated in its entirety.

"In the beginning Earthmaker was sitting in
space. When he came to consciousness nothing
was there anywhere. He began to think of
what he should do and finally he began to
cry and tears flowed from his eyes and fell
below him. After a while he looked below him
and saw something bright. The bright object
below him represented his tears. As they fell
they formed the present waters. When the
tears flowed below they became the seas as
they are now. Earthmaker began to think
again. He thought, *It is thus: If I wish
anything it will become as I wish, just as
my tears have become seas.' Thus he thought.
so he wished for light and it became light.
Then he thought: 'It is as I thought, the
things that I wished for have come into ex-
istence as I desired.' Then again he
thought and wished for the earth and this
earth came into existence. Earthmaker
looked at the earth and he liked it; but
it was not quiet. It moved about as do
the waters of the sea. Then he made the
trees and he liked them but they did not
make the earth quiet. Then he made some
grass but it likewise did not cause the
earth to become quiet. Then he made the
rocks and stones but still the earth was
not quiet. It was however almost quiet.
Then he made the four directions and the
four winds. At the four corners of the
earth he placed them as great and power-
ful people, to act as island weights. Yet

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[82]Paul Radin, Primitive Religion (New York: Dover
Publications, Inc., 1959) p. 164

still the earth was not quiet. Then he
made four large beings and threw them
down toward the earth and they pierced
through the earth with their heads east-
ward. They were snakes. Then the earth
became very still and quiet. Then he
looked at the earth and he liked it.

Then again he thought of how it was that
things came into being just as he desired.
Then for the first time he began to talk
and he said, 'As things are just as I
wish them I shall make a being in my own
likeness.' So he took a piece of clay
and made it like himself. Then he
talked to what he had created but it
did not answer. He looked at it and
saw that it had no mind or thought. So
he made a mind for it. Again he talked
to it, but it did not answer. So he
looked at it again and saw that it had
no tongue. Then he made a tongue. Then
he spoke to it but still it did not
answer. He looked at it and saw that
it had no soul. So he made it a soul.
Then he talked to it again and it very
nearly said something, but it could not
make itself intelligible. So Earthmaker
breathed into its mouth and then talked
to it and it answered."[83]

The myth is not so interesting to us as what Radin
has to say about it. The following is Radin's own in-
terpretation:

"Now this is obviously the expression of
temperament craving for a logical co-
ordination and integration of events.
The creation of the earth is pictured
as a physical incident. Once in ex-
istence, however, the diety infers that
it came into being through his thought
and thereupon he creates everything else.
Explanation and progress there must be
and the explanation must be in terms of
a gradual progression. In the case of

[83] Ibid. p.177

the shaping of our present world it is
in terms of the evolution from motion
to rest, from instability to stability
and fixity; in the case of the develop-
ment of human consciousness it is in
terms of a specific endowment of newly
created man first with thought, then
with the mechanism for speech, with the
soul, and finally with intelligence."[84]

To be sure this interpretation is, as Radin himself

says, "his own impressions and interpretations", but the

important point is that Radin is entitled, I believe, to

interpret myths and stories in this way. He is probably

the world's expert on the Winnebago Indians and if he isn't

capable of interpreting them correctly, no one is.

It is to be noted that this interpretation was not

made casually. What he has done is the result of having

literally steeped himself in Winnebago thought and culture.

It apparently required a great knowledge of the language and

and many years of experience among these Indians.

It is interesting to note that the only anthropolo-

gists who have attempted to analyze the thought of any par-

ticular tribe are those who are very familiar with that

tribe. In this class are Walinowski and Radin, who analyzed,

in part, the thought systems of the Trobriand Islanders, and

the Winebago, respectively. There are two or three others of

whom I shall take note in a later chapter. They are the

only persons who have attempted this task and it seemed that

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[84] Ibid. p. 111

their success was due in great part to their familiarity
with the tribes they analyzed. It is interesting to note
that Malinowski never attempted to analyze any other tribe
but the Trobriand Islanders with whom he was very familiar,
and that Radin does his best work with the Winnebago.
If a knowledge of the language and many years experience is
a necessary prerequisite to interpreting myths and stories,
then clearly, I was not qualified.

Fearing that this was indeed the case, I changed
my whole approach.

Before I continue, I would like to say that while I
did not succeed in analyzing myths, a successful analysis
of myth would be very valuable. If one was to formulate
some way of analyzing primitive myths and stories correctly,
one would have gone a long way toward the understanding of
primitives. As it is, there is no magic key; no tool by
which one can unlock the secrets of primitive stories and
the like. It is just not the type of thing that can be put
into a computor. The only way to understanding is a slow,
torturous process of steeping oneself in a primitive culture,
during which intuition and insight play a prominent role

One Eskimo myth that interested me greatly was the
following:

> "Once there was a woman who was always
> changing her husbands till at last her
> father made her marry a dog. Her children

> were a brown bear, a white bear, human
> beings, and dogs. The human children
> wandered off to different places, some
> turning into white men, others forming
> different tribes of Eskimos."[85]

As in many other Eskimo myths, the main principle behind this myth seems to be that human beings came from the same source and hence might be considered brothers. If this is in fact the proper interpretation, the one the Eskimos themselves would recognize as their own -- it might go a long way toward explaining why they have managed to live in comparative peace and have, as of late, accepted the ideas of the White man with such calm and tranquility. The Eskimos appear to be very unethnocentric. I wonder if their attitude that all men are basically alike (if they actually think this) might not underlie their tolerance.

I suspect that there might be something in this speculation, for the theme seems to be very prevalent in Eskimo stories. I cannot verify this guess in any way and no Eskimo ethnographer reports such a notion, to my knowledge.

I could elaborate and mention many possibilities which might prove fruitful. These possibilities cannot be easily tested, and so they must linger in a kind of semi-factual limbo -- a somewhere between scientific guess and

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[85]Diamond Jeness, Report of Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-1918 (Ottawa: F. A. Acland Printer to the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, 1922), Vol. 13, p. 81A.

just plain fiction. Gradually, I came to see this and
dropped the attempt to analyze primitive myths and stories.

Having come to a dead-end in my attempt to get at
thought by an analysis of myth, I began anew and looked at
Hoebel's and Kluckhohn's works even more closely to dis-
cover how they had gone about the process of studying
thought.

Kluckhohn has done a great deal of work on the
Navaho and is well qualified to give an interpretation
concerning them. He has spent many years with the Navaho,
and I felt he probably went about the process of eliciting
thought in much the same manner as Radin -- a method which
was impossible for one in my position.

Hoebel, however, gave me a clue that I thought might
lead to something of significance. Hoebel, you see, does
not attempt to analyze the philosophy or whatever of only
one tribe, but several. In one book called The Law of
Primitive Man, Hoebel outlines the thought systems of the
following peoples: Eskimo, Comache, Trobriand Islanders,
Ifugao, and Ashanti.

For Hoebel to know each of these tribes intimately
is more than one could expect, that is, intimately enough
so that he could speak their language. It would seem, then,
that Hoebel has elicited the thought of these peoples by
utilizing a different method than either Kluckhohn or Radin.

There is only one possible source of information on
these various tribes. I am referring to the monographs
themselves. The monographs do not adequately express the
thought system of the people studied. When a monograph does
refer to ideas or beliefs, they seem to be the odd, bazaar
and unique -- those ideas which stand in stark contrast to
our own. And none give a balanced, accurate report of the
mental process of the people involved. All monographs do
contain some mention of the thought system. How could it be
avoided? But all too often, what they do contain is frag-
mented, incomplete and unorganized. One rarely, if ever,
finds a chapter devoted to ideas. Thus I believe that it
was impossible for Hoebel to obtain his outlines of thought
from the description of thought contained in the monograph.
In this, I believe, Kluckhohn is different from most
anthropologists, in that he tries to give a systematic,
thorough, very brief description of Navaho thought.

By far, the greatest bulk of information contained
in the ethnological reports concerns social relationships
and customs, etc. There is no dearth of information con-
cerning these.

Since Hoebel did not know these tribes intimately,
and since knowledge of their thought systems is not contained
in the ethnographies in any usable form, then I thought that

there was only one other source of information he could possibly have used -- the reports concerning customs and social relationships. In other words, I thought that Hoebel obtained thought from the description of their social relationships. That is, he may have noticed that there were new formal social controls in the Plains tribes, and that they seemed markedly reluctant to coerce others, and so he might have inferred from this that the Comache think that man should be allowed to "express his potentialities".[86]

This was only a guess which I could not verify as being either true or untrue. At any rate, it gave me an idea which I considered worth trying. I thought that if Hoebel could obtain thought by analyzing other elements of the social system, I might possibly be able to do the same.

Theoretically I believe this is possible. In chapter one, if you will recall, the social system was defined as an interconnected, interdependent group of elements one of which was thought. Thought, in other words, is presumably intimately tied up with other aspects of the social structure such that it is merely a reflection of them. That is to say, thought is intertwined with every other activity, both influencing and being influenced by them.

If this is true, would it not be possible to elicit thought through a study of some of these other elements in

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[86] E. Adamson Hoebel, The Law of Primitive Man (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 143.

the social system? At the time, I did not know whether it
would work out, but I resolved to try this approach.

After spending a great deal of time, I came to the
conclusion that this method was leading me far off the track.

The basic trouble was that this approach led me to
concentrate on other elements of the social system to the
exclusion of thought. I came up with some very interesting
theories, all of which may have contained an element of
truth, but which had only a passing bearing on thought and
problems of analyzing it.

Let me take you through some of the work I did dur-
ing this period. At this time I did a chapter on the
Trobriand Islanders, and in this chapter this over-emphasis
on elements other than thought can be seen clearly. One
section of this chapter concerns the relationship of the
Trobriand origin myth to the political system. I would like
to relate that section completely. Note especially that the
emphasis of this section is on the political rather than the
thought.

At its root, the "political theory" of the Trobriand
Islander is based on the ideas that people are basically un-
equal. According to Trobriand myth, this innate difference
has existed since the beginning of time -- when the first
ancestors crawled out of the rocks on the Island of Tuma

to populate the world. Basically, according to this myth, the ancestors of the Trobrianders emerged from a hole on Tuma. Each person who emerged that day is the traditional founder of one of the sub-clans. That is, each sub-clan traces its lineage to one of these original ancestors.[87]

According to this myth, those who emerged first were the most powerful; they were just innately more valuable than the rest. Those who emerged next were slightly less powerful and so on, each person who emerged having slightly less power than those who preceeded him.

Ostensibly the degree of power has been transmitted hereditarily along clan lines to the present day. That is, people of sub-clans which were favored with great power in the beginning still retain the same relative degree of power today; which the descendents of those not so favored, are in a correspondingly inferior position today.

According to this origin myth, human society was from its inception, and always has been, a rigid hierarchy in which humans are rated according to the amount of power they have inherited from the mythical past.

The notion of natural inequality finds more concrete expression in the rank system. Specifically, those of families of high power -- those that emerged first -- are

[87]Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic Science and Religion (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Company, 1954) p. 215-233.

allowed to hold the highest offices.[88] While those whose ancestors emerged last have correspondingly low rank, and are not privileged to hold any office. Some of those in between these two extremes are allowed minor offices. A Trobriand Islander might say that there are some who were destined to lead, and others were ordained followers.

In reality, this is not only the normative model, but the actual pattern determining political and social relationships. That is, the origin myth does more than simply outline how things should work. It is actually rigidly adhered to always. One of a high sub-clan can look forward with reasonable certainty to becoming a chief; a boy of low rank has almost no chance to work his way upward. Exceptions to the rule have been noted, as no society can either afford excessive incompetence or the waste of unusual talents. Such exceptions among the Trobrianders are rare however. In more sociological terms, Trobrians society might be described as a highly static society and one in which little social mobility is allowed.

The origin myth does more than just explain the origin of the present system; it also lends itself nicely to the exercise of political power. If we can judge by the

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[88]E. Adamson Hoebel, _The Law of Primitive Man_ (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 193.

origin myth, in the mind of the Trobrianders, it seems only
natural that people of the ranking sub-clans, by virtue of
their innate superiority also have privileges not accorded
commoners.[89] The recognition of higher status is expressed
in a number of ways. This can be seen most clearly in the
numerous tabus concerning the kind and his personage. It
is tabued, for instance, to have one's head higher than the
king's, so when the chief passes everyone must bow down.
Also one may not say the word for defecation in front of
the chief. An exalted personage such as a chief cannot
tolerate such crudeness. Of course, one may not swear at
the chief or argue with him. The only emotions allowed in
the chief's presence are those indicative of deference and
acquiescence. One may not even swear at the chief's pig,
although one is allowed to call his dog a few names.[90]
All of these tabus are quite strictly enforced; the punish-
ment dealt out for infraction vary with the rank of the
chief. Thus is the recognition of the chief's innate
superiority codified into concrete rule.

The more active manifestations of power take the form
of a whole series of right-duty obligations between chief and
subject. On the whole these are reciprocal.

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[89]Ibid., p. 195.

[90]Ibid., p. 195-196.

And so, though the chief's position is defined as one of innate superiority, his power is not absolute. He, too, has certain obligations which must be fulfilled.

One such obligation concerns the milamala, which is the Trobriand harvest festival. At the milamala, the populace has the right to a feast at the chief's expense, and the chief has the duty to provide it.[91] On the whole, however, the chief has many more rights and fewer duties toward the populace than they have toward him. The chief has the right to the services of any of his subjects for a whole variety of duties which may include anything from paddling the chief's canoe in a Kula expedition (trading expedition to other islands) to fighting the chief's enemies. When the chief demands the services of his subjects he has the duty to pay them with food he has collected through taxation, but his right to their services is unquestioned, and his orders are obeyed implicitly.[92]

The chief, according to the way his position is defined, has other rights which are even more unpopular. He has the right to tax, and the taxes are never paid

[91]Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic Science and Religion Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 176-180.

[92]E. Adamson Hoebel, The Law of Primitive Man Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 195.

gladly. The chief has many agricultural duties also, one of which is to divide up the land into individual garden plots,[93] for although the land is owned and cleared by the community as a whole, it is worked by individuals on their own little plots. This is done semi-annually and since it is impossible to please everyone, the chief's decisions are inevitably the cause of a good deal of griping. However, no matter how displeased one may be with the chief on account of the division of land or the taxes, one never even complains to the chief. One always pays the tax and accepts the garden plot regardless of how unhappy one may be. To challenge the right of the chief to levy such burdens is unthinkable, so ingrained is the message of the origin myth.

In many affairs the power of the chief is almost absolute. The trobrianders regard this tyrannical power as the normal state of affairs; the right of the chief through virtue of his rank. Such power is established through birth and the acceptance of this state of affairs is so thoroughly ingrained as to constitute one of the inviolate truths of the Trobriand thought system.

With this in mind, I think it is safe to say that in this one culture the idea that people are innately unequal is congruent with concentrated political power.

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[93]Ibid., p. 193

There is a theory implicit in all of this, I think. It is perhaps one whose scope might extend well beyond Trobrian society. If this same pattern were present in other systems then it would not be reasonable to expect it to have quite the same twists and peculiar characteristics as in Trobriand society, but nevertheless, I have reason to suspect that concentrations of political power in practically any society will have at their roots similar sorts of ideas. For the present, let us hypothesize:

1. To the extent that people are thought basically unequal, a social hierarchy will exist.

2. To the extent people are thought basically unequal, political power will be concentrated in the hands of a few.

Now let's take a look at what has just been done and said in these last few pages.

First it may all be very true. I have no doubt that the origin myth does act as a sort of rationalization or ideological buttress for the political system. But what does it have to do with thought? This is the important question. If you will take a careful look at the preceeding section, you will see that it really has little to do with thought. Thought is the subject, but only in a tantengial sort of way. The subject was the origin myth and the

political system, but in all of this there is no attempt to get at the underlying ideas behind this myth. So when all has been said and done, this discussion contributed very little to an understanding of Trobriand thought.

In regard to this one might ask is this what a sociologist of knowledge is interested in? The major problem of the sociology of knowledge as a whole, and of this paper specifically, concerns the relationship between thought and other elements in the social system. With this in mind, can we say that the study of myth as it relates to the political system is a legitimate object of inquiry? It would seem to me that such a subject should be of prime concern.

However, before one can talk about thought, one must first know what thought is. This is the first task with which one must concern oneself. And in all of this, the main problem -- the problem of the analysis of thought -- was systematically avoided.

STAGE THREE

Along about this time I became convinced that it was completely fruitless for one in my position to attempt an analysis of primitive thought completely on my own. As far as I could see, there was only one other possibility

available, only one other way in which to get at primitive
thought, and that was by relying completely on the ethno-
grapher's interpretations. I realized that this was
objectionable on several counts, but I could see no other
choice.

As I have indicated, this was by no means an easy
task. The ethnographers do not give a complete, balanced
report of the thought system of the tribe, rather the thought
is incomplete, fragmented and references to it are scattered
throughout the text. Thus the problem of gathering up these
minute fragments of thought and organizing them into some
coherent pattern is a major task.

I spent a great deal of time in describing thought
systems. Unfortunately, that is all it was -- description.
Even so, at last I had something which I thought I could
call thought of a particular tribe. There are serious ob-
jections which could be raised in regard to what I did, and
in fact much of it proved to be worthless. This, however,
we shall come to later.

For the present, I think a short description of what
I did during this period might be useful. For this purpose
I would like to utilize a small portion of my description
of Trobriand beliefs concerning the spirits.

First of all, I would like to take up Trobriand
ideas concerning spirits. It is important to realize that
the Trobriand beliefs in spirits are important only in re-
gard to the clan system. Ideas on spirits have bearing on
other areas, such as magical rites, but they do not carry
great weight. In any case, ideas about spirits among the
Trobrianders do not play the vital role that they do in the
thought systems of other tribes.

In a nutshell, the Trobriand view of human existence
is one of successive reincarnations. A man is born, dies,
and returns to the land of the dead only to be reborn again.[94]
The Trobrianders think it of great significance that in
these repeated cycles one always belongs to the same clan.[95]
This has the effect of defining the clan as the basic social
unit. Moreover, Trobriand ideas about the spirits are tied
up with a form of ancestor worship. The Baloma, as these
spirits are known, are the souls of friends, relatives and
other Trobrianders who have passed on to the other world.[96]

When a man dies, his spirit leaves his body and
travels to another world where it leads another existence.
Upon death, the spirit apparently splits into two parts.
One part, the Kosi, remains around the grave and the village

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[94] Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic Science and Religion
(Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954)
p. 215-228.

[95]Ibid., p. 220.

[96]Ibid., p. 149.

for some time. The Kosi seem to delight in playing tricks.
It might throw stones at someone out of the night, call out
a name, or roll someone out of bed, and in general, make a
general nuisance of itself.[97] These tricks are more play-
ful than terrifying; never has a Kosi been known to do any
real harm.

After a time, the Kosi, perhaps tiring of these
stunts, goes away. Exactly where it goes, or what happens
to it, is a matter of conjecture.

The important part of the soul, Baloma, goes to Tuma,
which is an island located a few miles north of the main
body of islands.[98] On Tuma, the Baloma lead a life very
similar to the one on earth. The Baloma are not restricted
to Tuma, and often come back to visit old friends and rela-
tives. Almost every Trobriander has had one or more such
visitations from the Baloma, and many people are visited
quite regularly. At lease once a year, all the Baloma leave
Tuma and go back to their original villages. The presence
of the Baloma at this time occasions a great celebration of
which we will say more. In any case, the spirits are cer-
tainly not strangers.[99]

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[97]Ibid., p. 151

[98]Ibid., p. 154.

[99]Ibid., p. 152.

Despite their omnipresence, neither the Baloma nor the Kosi inspire great terror. Certainly the Trobrianders do not look forward to meeting them on a dark garden path at midnight, but when they do, they do not seem to experience the deep paralyzing fear that people in our own culture feel upon such an occasion.

The Trobriand Islanders are not completely free from fear however. The mulukousi, or sorceresses, instill great fear. These mulukuausi are supposedly part human, part spirit. They are real living women, whom one may know and talk with, but who are able to change themselves into an invisible form in which they are powerful and virulent. They are especially dangerous to ships at sea and no one goes on a voyage without taking the proper magical preventatives. Even on land anyone who is exposed to them is sure to be attacked unless he is able to ward them off magically.[100] The mulukuausi are also known to have an infinity for human carrion. After death, the mulukuausi swarm around, and, if it were not for preventative magic, would eat the body. After a death has occurred, there is a great increase of fear in the village.[101] However, Mulukuausi is most definite stating that the fear is of the sourceresses and not of the ancestoral spirits.

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[100] Ibid., p. 153.

[101] Ibid., p. 154.

In other words it is other human beings that are to be feared, and not the dead.

It is interesting to note that the Mulukuausi are never in one's own village, but everyone knows women in far off villages who are positively known to be Mulukuausi.

At any rate, when a Baloma reaches Tuma, he is greeted by his old friends and relatives who guide him to the land of Baloma. The location of this land is the subject of some controversy. Prevailing opinion has it that this world is located somewhere deep in the ground under Tuma.[102] This view harmonizes well with the Trobriand myth which tells that the world was originally populated by people who emerged from holes in the ground on Tuma.

Very soon after arriving in Tima, the Baloma must pass Topileta's inspection. Topileta, the head chief over all Baloma, lives exactly as every other man in Tuma, but he does have big flappy ears. Purportedly, Topileta may refuse admission to Tuma should he wish; apparently this rarely happens, however.[103] Even so, the relatives of the dead man adorn him with jewels and sing all the necessary chants, etc.

After passing Topileta, the newly arrived Baloma goes to the village where he is to live henceforth. For

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[102]Ibid., p. 154.

[103]Ibid., p. 156.

a time the new arrival mourns leaving earth. The other Baloma, especially those of the opposite sex, try in every way possible to make him comfortable. According to the male opinion, there are many more women than men on Tuma, and they are none too shy. Consequently, a new arrival is literally pestered by the advances of the opposite sex. If he does not succumb immediately, then these female Baloma use a love magic of the same type found on earth, but of such potency that no man can possibly resist. Needless to say, the new arrival soon forgets his sorrow and begins to take part in the activities of his new life.[104] Not an altogether unpleasant picture of heaven.

Though the Trobrianders might not exactly look forward to going to Tuma, they certainly do not find it an entirely unpalatable prospect. This is well in keeping with their whole way of life with its easy going, fearless, accepting philosophy.

In general, everything is exactly the same in Tuma as it is in the upper world. The food, activities, interests acquanitances, etc., are not changed. Even more important, rank is still maintained. A chief on earth will still be a chief on Tuma.[105] Whether he has much actual power is really not know, but he is a chief in all essential respects.

[104]Ibid., p. 159.

[105]Ibid., p. 158.

This also holds true in a degree for other nobility. In other words, the spirits are arranged in exactly the same hierarchy as found on earth.

Though the spirits confine their activities to Tuma in the main, they still have a great influence on happenings in this world. Certainly they are not out of touch with it. The Baloma come to relatives in dreams, and many times they are seen and heard by people when they are going about their daily tasks. There is no mistaking Baloma, for they are known to retain the shape of the person they represent and they speak the same language so they can be recognized by voice as well.[106]

During the milamala, the great annual feast, a great many people are visited by ancestral spirits, due to the fact that the Baloma take a great interest in the event and come back to visit en masse on this occasion. At least this is the Trobriand explanation. A more objective observer might possibly trace some of these visitations to the alcoholic beverages, which are consumed in great quantities at this time.

To Contunue, the Baloma carries on life as usual in Tuma, marries again, visits the upper world periodically, and on the whole, leading a very satisfactory existence.

Now the Baloma also age in Tuma. If a man died young, then his Baloma will be young, but will age in time, so that

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[106] _Ibid._, p. 168.

in the end, his life in Tuma will cease. If the man was old

at death, his Baloma will be old and will also age in Tuma

as usual, and after a comparatively short period of life in

Tuma, will also be reincarnated.[107]

A very simple version of this reincarnation process

is as follows:

> "As the Baloma grows old, his skin becomes
> loose and wrinkled, his teeth fall out, at
> which time he goes and bathes in the sea.
> This loosens his skin further; then he slides
> out of his skin and becomes a small human
> embryo-like creature called a waiwaia.
> Another Baloma, usually a woman, seeing the
> waiwaia on the beach, picks it up. Then she
> takes it to the upper world and places it in
> the womb of a young woman of the same clan
> as the waiwaia. After a time, the waiwaia
> is reborn as a human being. The human then
> goes through another life on earth, becomes
> a Baloma again and so on, ad infinitum."[108]

The foregoing is a description of what I considered

to be Trobriand ideas on the nature of the spirits as they

related to human existence. It is a composite piece, the

result of a great deal of reading and synthesis.

It is, however, pure description. It is no more

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[107]Ibid., p. 215.

[108]Ibid., p. 216.

than an outline of what the Trobrianders think on one small particular subject. This is not sociology. It is good history perhaps to be able to describe fairly accurately what a particular people thought at a particular time, but the sociological approach demands that one do something with the material to relate it to factors of social significance. Even if we were to regard the foregoing as thought, we should first have to know more about it. We would be interested in relating this particular thought to certain other social factors. We would be interested in knowing of what significance this thought had for Trobriand society as a whole. A sociologist of knowledge is not merely interested in what people think. His problem is finding out why they think what they do, of relating it to certain social patterns.

The strange part of it all was that I could do nothing with it. I could neither relate it to anything else, nor could I predict anything about the social system from it.

To be sure, I hypothesized that Trobriand ideas of spirits were connected with several other areas of social life, but I could not prove that any such relationship existed. Moreover, the relationships which I did see seemed peculiarly without substance.

Moreover, and this is the important point, I recognized that another old problem had come back to plague

me. This was the problem of what I was calling thought.
In this description, I was supposed to be giving the thought
of the Trobriand Islanders. But I was really describing
their thought -- even their latent thought? Was it their
thought or was it mine? Certainly no Trobriand Islander
gives such a description of their beliefs on the spirits.
Even Malinowski does not give such a composite picture. In
reality, the picture is mine. I took many different clues
which were in Malinowski's writings and put them together in
a way that made senee to me. I picked, chose, and selected
the material which I thought was significant, and then I
organized it into what I thought was the logical congruent
order. But is this what a Trobriand Islander actually
thinks? Is this an accurate cross section of his views of
spirits? Or is it just my own invention, which at best,
only partially describes their point of view? I really had
no way of knowing. Could I with any certainty say that this
is what the Trobriand Islanders think? I was not certain.
There is a distinction to be made here between overt and
latent thought. To be sure, no Trobriander would <u>overtly</u>
express such ideas. But are these ideas even <u>latent</u>? Are
these ideas he possesses, but which are inarticulated?

Thus the same problem remained. How does one go
about isolating primitive thought? How does not get behind

the cultural facade of a primitive? How does one rid one-self of cultural bias in interpretation?

Lest the reader think that these are insoluble problems, it should be pointed out that a few anthropologists, by using a method which I have not even suggested here, have penetrated the thick veil of primitive thought and come up with some amazing conclusions. However, the task is not an easy one, and even the most successful of these anthropologists have had only partial success. But we shall investigate these interesting conclusions in a later chapter.

Although I was getting no nearer the solution of the basic problem, which of course is the question of the analysis of primitive thought, my efforts were not in vain completely. On several occasions I explored areas, which were not really related to the prime problem at hand, but which proved worthwhile. I would like to report in some detail one of these intellectual detours, for it resulted in a theory which I think has some merit.

It was during my study of the Eskimo that I perceived the initial idea which was to lead to this hypothesis. I was looking at some Eskimo myths, and instead of concentrating on their thought content, I happened to notice how terribly depressing these myths were. In general, Eskimo myths are tales of terror, fear and evil. They have no happy tales, and the best they have to offer are what seem to be rather neuter, innocuous myths dealing with

animals. Perhaps this is a false impression, but it seems
to me that the whole tone of these Eskimo myths is so ex-
treme that there is no mistaking their basic character.

Several Eskimo myths have been related earlier, but
I would like to quote a few more for further illustration.
The following three tales are reported by Diamond Jeness,
one of the most famous Eskimo ethnographers.

1.

There once lived a giant woman named
Nahaingalaq, the daughter of a man named
Akulugyuk. She carried an adze and a
ulo for killing people whom she used to
slip inside her coat and carry off. Once
she found an Eskimo fishing on a lake.
He fled, but she pursued him and was on
the point of seizing him when he turned
and shot her with his bow and arrow. He
left her lying where she fell, but other
Eskimos found the body and laid it out
properly for burial.[109]

2.

Near the country of the Netsilingmiut
a large ship was crushed in the ice long
ago, and many white men went down in her.
In the same locality a number of Eskimos
once died of starvation.[110]

3.

A brown bear once lived at Killivid or
Magyuktok (in the south of Victoria
Island). One day it grew very gib,
bigger than any other living animal.
Tt crossed over the strait to Kilusikok

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[109]Diamond Jenness, Report of the Canadian Arctic
Expedition 1913-1918 (Ottawa; F. A. Acland Printer to
his Kings Most Excellent Magesty, 1926), Vol. 12, p. 83A.

[110]Ibid., p. 82A.

and ate all the Eskimos there. This
region at that time was thickly inhabited,
much more than it is now. But all these
Eskimos were eaten by the brown bear, and
the present day inhabitants are imigrants
from surrounding places.[111]

4.

A young man named Ilornaq was once very ill
and his leg came off about the knee. He
kept the severed limb near him in his hut,
and whenever he looked at it would sing a
song. For a time he appeared to be recover-
ing, but then his malady increased and in
the end he died.[112]

These are very typical tales. Their themes seem to
revolve around destruction, illness, death and starvation.
Most Eskimo tales convey a feeling of ever present danger.
This pervading theme of pessimism is well summed up in
Hoebel's words that "the margin of safety is small and life
is hard". These stories are fatalistic to the last degree.
In them, an overwhelming nature, about which man can do
little, presses in on all sides just waiting its chance to
snatch away a human life.

This tragic sense of life can be seen, not only in
their myths, but in other concepts as well. Their concept
of heaven is vague, but it is conceived as a rather gloomy,
depressing place; certainly not a prospect to look forward
to with hope. The Eskimos also believe that the world is
inhabited by a whole myriad of spirits upon whom man is

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[111]*Ibid.*, p. 82A.

[112]*Ibid.*, p. 98A.

dependent for the important things of life. While these spirits might be beneficent, they are usually capricious, unpredictable, treacherous, malicious and just plain mean most of the time.[113]

There sense of horror and dread can also be seen in their ideas about death. The Eskimos believe that when a man dies, he becomes a spirit. The spirits of the dead, however, are not friendly, helpful creatures, but are known to be very dangerous to human beings. Consequently, when a man dies, the Eskimos pack up in haste, bury the body, and get as far away as fast as possible, covering their tracks as they go so that the spirit cannot follow.[114]

Concerning the Eskimo's tragic sense of life, his state of mind is somewhat of an enigma to us. To the Eskimo, if his myths and stories are any indication, the world appears tragic and gloomy. He feels the dice are loaded against man, and time can only bring tragedy. The best that one can accomplish in such a world is to avoid disaster. This is the best, and usually the fates are not kind enough to grant man even this solace. The worst they would rather not think about.

From this fear ridden state of mind emerges a whole myriad of tabus designed to avoid danger and which encompass

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[113]Ibid., p. 171-172.

[114]Ibid., p. 174.

literally every aspect of life. Curiously, the Eskimos react to this world by simply repressing thoughts of the unpleasant past, and the morrow with its inevitable troubles, and concentrate on being happy today. By and large, they have succeeded in this attempt. To the casual observer, they appear one of the happiest of peoples; people who genuinely live by the philosophy of "eat, drink, and be merry", and are perfectly capable of laughing at everything and everyone -- even their spirit gods. To the discerning eye, the other side of their nature sometimes peers through the comic mask. To such an observer, they can be seen as a people who, at the core, are filled with fear and fore- boding. This feeling is reflected in their myths also.

Essentially, their myths give a pretty depressing picture of the world. It would seem to me that such a con- ception of the world would be espoused by a people who are in trouble, or on the edge of it, most of the time. They are ideas which spring from minds which have experienced hardship. This much would seem obvious. Indeed, if we look at the condition of the Eskimo, we find that they are in difficulties most of the time. Thus their myths, stories, etc., reflect a very realistic image of the world as they have experienced it. They must struggle continually to at- tain even a sustinence level of existence, and in this

struggle, they are all too often unsuccessful. Their life
is so hard, so risky and dangerous that the dire possibilities
presented every day cannot escape them. It is little wonder
that when they think of the world they picture something
far less than a bright rosy Utopia. Anything else would
be self delusion.

Let us stop for a moment to examine this thought.
It seems to me that there is one obvious, but quite profound,
interpretation.

Our discussion of the Eskimo would seem to suggest
so far that the world outlook of the Eskimo may be con-
ditioned by an adverse environment and this outlook is
really a very accurate description of their experiences.

It would seem that much of Eskimo thought is con-
ditioned by this attitude. In some way their very rational
idea that the world is an evil place carries over into
other ideas. Perhaps this can be seen most clearly in their
ideas about spirits. They know the world is a bad place and
so when they think of the spirits which inhabit this world,
the latter become bad also.

Eskimo ideas about the spirits interested me con-
siderably. I began to ask myself if their conception of
the spirits was conditioned entirely by environmental
factors, or do other factors enter in also.

I began to look at the information on their spirits
more closely and I recalled again that they were not only

mean, but capricious, treacherous, and unpredictable as well.[115]

Then the thought struck me that these characteristics were those of the Eskimo themselves. Like their spirits, they too were unpredictable, treacherous, etc. Their ideas about the spirits seemed to reflect their own basic character traits. Could there possibly be some connection?

After thinking the problem over, I came to the conclusion that if we employed a more psychological approach that the case for a reasonable connection between these two might be made.

Actually, I thought that this particular conception of the spirits might be regarded as an outward projection on the universe of certain social situation and experiences.

In short, projection is an ego defense mechanism in which an attempt is made to relieve anxiety by attributing its cause to the external world. The essential characteristic of projection is that the subject of the feeling is reversed. That is, the assertion, for example, "I hate you" is converted to "you hate me". From a freudian point of view, projection relieves guilt. One who feels guilty about aggressive impulses, for example, may obtain relief by thinking that it is other people who are being aggressive

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[115]Diamond Jeness, Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-1918 (Ottawa: F. A. Acland Printer to His Kings Most Excellent Majesty, 1926) Vol. 12, p. 135-136.

and not he.[116]

The function of this subject transformation is to change the internal danger to the personality into an external danger which seems to be easier for the ego to handle. Objective fears (like "the spirits are dangerous" in the case of the Eskimo) are easier to master than neurotic fears. Objectively, there is much for the Eskimo to fear in terms of his environment, and social situations, and these fears may be easier to handle in this form than in any other.

Projection can take another form which would seem to be more defensive in character. Its salient feature is the sharing of thoughts and feelings with the world. One feels happy and thinks that the world is a happy place; one feels unhappy and thinks that others are unhappy also. The same is true for other traits like honesty, truthfulness, aggressiveness, etc.

Such projection is defensive in that, if one can convince oneself that everyone is dishonest, for example, it makes it easier to be dishonest without feeling guilty. This type of projection does not involve elimination of the real motive, but the anxiety or guilt is reduced by

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[116]Calvin S. Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1954), p. 89, 91.

projecting the motive onto others and making them seem equally involved.[117]

This is a milder form of projection than the psychological projection. It involves the projecting on (a) that which we are used to in situation, (b) which is presumably a situation with which we are already familiar.

The Eskimos are a very violent and unpredictable people. By projecting outward and endowing the spirits with their own traits -- those of ficiousness, treacherousness, unpredictability, etc., they might make these traits easier to excuse in themselves. If the spirits are evil, then an Eskimo can feel that treachery and violence are inherent in the universe (as personified by the spirits) and therefore when he acts violently, he is only conforming to a natural law.

Among the Eskimo, one can make a clear cut case for the existence of projection as far as ideas about spirits are concerned. This cannot be done quite so easily with other tribes. In most cases, their gods do not so nearly reflect the characteristics of the people of that culture.

In general, one can asy that the traits of the people of a culture will also be the traits of their gods, but this is by no means universally applicable.

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[117] Ibid., p. 91

There is, however, one trait which is almost always projected -- social structure. Almost without exception, if the social structure is organized into a well defined hierarchy, the gods also will be organized into a hierarchy. If the people of the culture are perceived as equals, their gods will be equals as well. This can be seen in at least two tribes which we have discussed. Among the Eskimo, where social relationships are notably equalitarian, the spirits are thought of as equals also.[118]   Among the Aztec, who are organized into a strictly delineated caste system, the gods are thought of as organized into a strict hierarchy.[119] There is evidence for this theory from a number of other tribes as well.

However, there are two very important discoveries which I made during this limited study of the projection of social ideas.

1.   Environmental conditions have a marked influence on general outlook.   This might be stated by a theory such as the following: the more adverse the environmental conditions, the more likely one will conceive of the world as a hard place.   The opposite of this also

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[118]E. Adamson Hoebel, The Law of Primitive Man Cambridge, Mass.:   Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 69.

[119]William H. Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico (Boston, Mass.:   Philips, Sampson and Company, 1957) Vol. I, p. 59.

seems to be true. For example, among the Trobriand Islanders, who lead a relatively carefree existence compared to the Eskimos, the world is thought of as a good place. This is reflected in their ideas about the spirits, who are taught to be rather beneficient creatures. Moreover, their concept of heaven is quite pleasant.

2. Certain experiences are projected outward on the universe. Ideas about spirits seem to be especially affected. Moreover, the one characteristic which seems to be projected among the spirits more than any other is social structure.

I felt that these were two very significant discoveries. They were, however, somewhat removed from the main subject at hand, which was still the analysis of thought. At any rate, since this did not seem to fit in well with the main problem at hand, I did not try to develop the idea any further.

Besides it looked as if there were more important notions with which I would have to deal.

PART THREE

Language and Thought

I don't recall exactly when I ran across the writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf, but upon reading his book I realized that he had come up with a whole new approach to the problem of primitive thought. Since the publication of Whorf's book, several other scholars have expanded upon his ideas and together they form a whole new school of thought. For the sake of expediency, I would like to call Whorf and his followers as the "new school".

In fact the "new school" approaches the study of primitive thought through linguistics, and while its work is neither perfect nor comprehensive, it has developed a method of approach which has been the most fruitful of any to date. This, at least, is my opinion and I think it can be demonstrated.

In order to show just what this school has done and how it has done it, I will have to give a great deal of description. However, I believe the effort will prove worthwhile, for the "new school" has come up with some revolutionary notions and some startling conclusions.

Let's take Whorf first..

Whorf, as I understand him, makes two major hypotheses:

1. That all higher levels of thinking are dependent on and

determined by language.

2. The structure of the languate one habitually
uses influences the manner in which one understands his en-
vironment.[120]   (By environment is meant not only physical,
but social as well.)

The first is psychological in nature, and therefore,
somewhat out of our province. It should be pointed out that
the first is well substantiated by a great deal of evidence
from a great variety of sources.

Our interest is in the second hypothesis, and this
one has been discussed by both Whorf and a number of
anthropologists so that one may be sure that it too has
great validity.

Concentrating on the second hypothesis for a moment,
its most important implication is that the thinking pro-
cesses of people differ with the languages which they
employ. They think not only different things, but in a dif-
ferent way as well. If you will recall back in Chapter One,
Mannheim used two words -- "content" and "category"[121] --
by which this notion might well be expressed. It might well

[120]Benjamin Lee Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality
New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1956) p. vi

[121]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936), p. 55.

be said that not only the "content" of thought differs,
but its "categories". This is a very crucial idea in at
least two ways: (1) In order to understand the thought
processes of a people one must approach it linguistically.
This has methodological implications. (2) It is probably
impossible to translate an idea accurately from one language
to another, or for a person speaking one language (and to us
having one mode of thought) to understand the thought system
of another.

In other words, language and thought are inter-
dependent, and any attempt to understnd one without the
other will not succeed. If this is the case, then it is
easily seen why my attempt to analyze myth was bound to
fail. The different languages involved were not taken into
account. This is an over-simplification, but one which is
largely accurate.

Whorf's most important contribution is that he pro-
vides a keyhole through which one can see the inner work-
ings of the primitive mind without one's vision being
blurred by one's own cultural leanings and background.
This has been the major problem all along. Take my analysis
of myth, for example. I realized at the time that any at-
tempt to understand a myth or story is always done from
one's own point of view and not from the point of view of

the believer. Thus the results reflect the thought of the analyst more than the analyzed. I realized that this was true all along, but could not solve the problem. Whorf, however, provides a method by which we might throw off our cultural bias and penetrate the workings of the primitive mind with some degree of accuracy. What this method is and how it operates we shall come to presently.

These linguistically oriented anthropologists make some pretty broad claims for their way of approaching thought through language. It would be no exageration to say that Whorf believes that it is through language, and language alone, that thought can be approached.

In Language, Thought and Reality, Whorf states this in no uncertain terms. His statement of the aims of his particular approach is contained in the following statement:

> "The ethnologist engaged in studying a living primitive culture must have often wondered: 'What do these people think? How do they think? Are their intellectual and rational processes akin to ours or radically different?' But thereupon he has probably dismissed the ideas as a psychological enigma and has sharply turned his attention back to more readily observable matters. And yet the problem of thought and thinking in the native community is not purely and simply a psychological problem. It is quite largely a cultural. It is moreover largely a matter of one especially cohesive aggregate of cultural phenomena that we call language. It is approachable

through linguistics, and, as I hope to
show, the approach requires a rather new
type of emphasis in linquistics, now be-
ginning to emerge through the work of
Sapir, Leonard, Bloomfield, and others. . . "122

This is a very clear statement as to the goals of

his approach. It is also a very patronizing and condesend-

ing one, in that it implies that no other anthropologist

has even tried to get at the problem of thought. This is

not so. Many other anthropologists have been greatly in-

terested in the problem of thought, though few have had

Whorf's success.

Edward Sapir, who is perhaps the most eminent

anthropological linguist, makes equally broad claims for

his method, though in less blatant language. Sapir's state-

ment is more subdued and the implications of what he says

are less obvious. Sapir's statement of interest is the

following:

"This common understanding constitutes
culture, which cannot be adequately
defined by a description of those more
colorful patterns of behavior in society
which lie open to observation."123

This, in and of itself, is a rather broad statement

when you stop to think of it. He is saying, if I understand

122Benjamin Lee Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality
(New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1956), p. 66.

123Edward Sapir, Culture, Language and Personality
(Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California
Press, 1958), p. 7.

him correctly, that it is impossible to understand thought by an observation of activities or other aspects of the social system. In short, thought cannot be deduced from activities.

Yet it is interesting to note that some very eminent sociologists have tried this and have succeeded to a degree. Of these Max Weber comes to mind most readily. Weber, if you will recall, was interested in the effect of occupational activity upon religious thought. The groups whose thought he is interested in he called artisans, peasants, and proletarians, and he concludes that these three groups, by virtue of their different occupations, have different religious thoughts.

This is quite clearly an attempt to determine thought from activity, which is precisely the type of study which Sapir says is impossible. Does this mean that Sapir is wrong? Does it mean that Weber's conclusions must be inadequate? I don't think either conclusion is justified.

I am fairly sure that what Sapir says holds true for the analysis of primitive tribes, but does not nec- essarily hold true for the thought systems of our own Western civilization. They are two different problems and the way the one approaches one should not be the method by which one approaches the other.

Had Weber ever attempted to analyze primitive thought as related to occupation, my guess is that he would not have succeeded.

Sapir never makes this distinction clear; namely that there is a great difference in the way one must go about analyzing primitive thought system as compared to the way in which we can discuss our own. As far as primitive thought is concerned the big obstacle is to get by the barrier of culture and the differences of categories of thought which it implies. This is a problem which Weber never encountered to a degree that would incapacitate him. But the culture barrier is the big obstacle that the anthropologists must overcome in order to get at thought. This is the problem which had me stymied from the beginning. Also, it is the type of problem which Sapir and Whorf overcome by using their linguistic approach. This is one of their most important contributions.

CONTENTS AND CATEGORIES

There is still another difference in the way in which these anthropological linguists approach the problem of thought. The big change is that they have redefined thought. They have changed the whole object of the search.

If you will recall, I began my study of primitive

thought by attempting to elicit from the data what Mannheim calls "contents"[124] of thought. Thought, in other words, was defined in terms of "contents", or distinct from "categories" of thought. "Content" here refers to the ideas themselves, while "categories"[125] refers to the way in which experience is ordered. The object then of this search has been to say that these people think A, B, and C. In this search an exploration of the "categories" of thought has fallen by the wayside. In other words, I never attempted to explore how these people thought.

The "new school" anthropologists are not interested in "content" at all. They concentrate almost exclusively on what could be called "categories".

Before we go much further, it might be a good idea to get a clear idea of the difference between "content" and "categories". The "categories" we shall come to shortly, but for purposes of contrast it might be a good idea to get a clear idea to what the term "content" refers.

The only way I know of doing this is by means of an example. Content refers to the ideas themselves. In a little article called, Words to the Wise -- From Africa are given many proverbs which could be analyzed for both content

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[124]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936), p. 82.

[125]Ibid., p. 57.

and categories. The author, however, is interested only in content. The way in which these proverbs depict reality does not interest him in the slightest. He is interested solely in what they have to say. It is interesting to note that the African point of view is so similar to ours that the meaning of these proverbs is self-evident. For example: "Ashes fly back in the face of him who throws them."

"A greatly worried person will even answer to the braying of a jackass."

"Borrowing is a wedding: paying back is mourning."

"Pipe a tune in Zanzibar, and the drums of the Great Lakes will answer."

"When two bulls fight it is the grass that suffers."

"One tree alone does not make a forest."[126]

Most sayings do not yield their accepted meaning to the outsider as easily as these. The physical, psychological, and cultural differences are too great to be easily overcome.

For instance, take the following proverb: "A beast that is passing finishes no grass."[127] That is the Zulu's way of saying that strangers are to be treated with consideration. We would never get this meaning from the proverb, for our experiences are much too different.

From this it should be quite clear that we mean by the term "contents". Perhaps the term accepted meaning, or

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[126]The New York Times Magazine, January 28, 1962, "Words to the Wise -- From Africa", George H. T. Kimble, p. 51-52.

[127]Ibid., p. 52.

message, confers the idea.

The new school is not interested in accepted meaning at all. They concentrate instead on the **presuppositions**, and the **ways of categorizing experience**.

It is of passing interest to note that while the "new school" has had great success in applying their technique to some areas of thought, they do not extend it to include more than a few of the many different types of thought. They seem particularly interested in analyzing what could be called ideas concerning cosmology and the categories of thought involving concepts of time and space. What they do, they do well. The problem is that they don't do enough. They give excellent interpretations of particular areas of the thought of a culture, only to ignore the rest.

Is this failing indicative of a lack of interest in other aspects of thought, or is it perhaps indicative of an innate weakness of inadequacy in the method which they employ? This is a problem with which we shall have to deal as we go along.

Primitive Categories of Thought

As I have stated, the "new school" is interested primarily in the basic categories of thought such as those of time, space, and reality. There is a reason for this

particular type of emphasis. As I became more familiar
with the writings of the "new school" I came to realize
that before we can understand anything else about the
thought system of another people, we must know what their
categories of thought are, of which their way of analyzing
time and space are primary. To get at such basic categories
is fundamental to understanding a thought system. Ideas
are made always to fit some framework and if one is not
aware of the way in which the tribe categorizes experience,
one tends to superimpose one's own weltanschauung or
categories of thought upon them. This produces all sorts
of inaccuracies and does not result in true understanding
of the thought system under study. Thus, the first task
in understanding primitive thought is to discover the basic
categories.

An example of what can happen when basic categories
are not recognized can be demonstrated. It might be said
that one of our basic categories of thought is religious
thought. It is actually a separate field and recognized
as such. We seek of religion, and have recognized theology
as the specialized study of religious issues. Coming from
our culture, it is not surprising that many anthropologists
have assumed that primitives have religious thought as well.
However, in the case of most primitives this assumption is

not justified. To be sure, all peoples have what could be
called religious thoughts, but that they would recognize
them as a separate category of thought or even speak of
religion as such is to be doubted. Religion is apparently
so well integrated and intermixed with their existence that
it may be difficult for them to see it as a separate entity.
I happen to believe that this is in fact the case, for I
have yet to run into an account where a primitive spoke of
religion as such. Moreover, I have come across several ac-
counts of anthropologists trying to elicit information on
religious issues. In these descriptions, a complete lack of
communication between the primitive and his interrogator is
evident. In one case, I am fairly sure the primitive had no
conception of the thought about which he was being questioned.

This being the case, how do we get at the categories
of thought and what does language have to do with it all?
Basic to the "new school" approach is the assumption that
members of a society categorize, codify and classify life ex-
periences through a specific cultural pattern. And in ad-
dition, they actually understand or comprehend life ex-
periences only as they are presented to them in their
language. The assumption is not that reality itself is
relative; but rather that it is punctuated, or emphasized
differently by the participants of different cultures.
These various categories and differences in punctuation are

recorded in language.

Thus, by working through language, it is possible to discover these categories of thought. Language then becomes the tool or the method through which clues can be discovered as to the way in which different people comprehend their life experiences. First, language gives us a clue as to what is important to these people, and moreover, it gives an insight into how they perceive things.

That language reflects what is of importance and of interest is not very difficult to see. Take the concept of ice, for example. We have only one basic word for ice. When we wish to describe a particular characteristic of ice, we use one of many adjectives before the noun ice. This serves all our purposes, but when one stops and thinks of it, this is really quite inaccurate.

The Eskimo, however, have several hundred different words for ice. There is a separate word for black, shiny ice, and another for chunky, cracked ice, and still another for ripply ice. The reason for the great stress and interest in ice is not difficult to see. Ice is very important to their lives; in fact one might easily say that their very lives depend upon their knowledge of it. Thus the ability to discuss ice and describe it with great accuracy is very important; hence their development of all these words by

which to describe it.

In a similar vein, the peoples of North Africa and the Near East are very dependent on camels and so camels have great importance for them. Thus it is not surprising that they have over one thousand words for camel, each of which describes a different kind, type, condition, or sort of camel.

Whorf points out that Hopi, to whom water is very important, have at least three words for water, where we have only one.[128] Moreover, where we have only words "rough" and "smooth" to describe the texture of physical things, the Hopi have three comparable words. It is not surprising that a people who are forced to live by the very land itself should have more words to describe it.

While primitives have oftentimes more words by which to describe their surroundings and things of special interest to them, so we have more words than they were things of interest to us are concerned. I once heard a Marine sergeant tell how he tried to teach an Indian from one of the Western reservations the rudiments of driving a truck. First of all, he had to teach "this bird", as he referred to the Indian, that there was a basic difference in the different control mechanisms and that the steering wheel was very different from the fender. As far as I could find out the

[128]Benjamin Lee Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1956), p. 210.

Indian did not differentiate between the various parts of
the truck. The truck appeared to him as one unified whole
and it was impossible for him to understand the basic oper-
ating principles until he could differentiate between the
various parts of a truck. Incidentally, the Marine ser-
geant failed in his pedagogical attempt. This is none too
surprising, since his only heuristic device was swearing,
apparently. The important point is that where we have many
words with which to describe various parts of a truck, this
Indian had one phrase only. This was more than just a
problem of translation, his own language just did not have
the meanings inherent in the English words.

Another example. We have three words to discuss
different flying objects, where the Hopi have only one word.
To us it is important to distinguish between an airplane, a
pilot, and a flying insect; to the Hope, these are all
classified together and called one term.[129]

The importance of this is _not_ that different peoples
have a greater or lesser number of words by which to describe
things, but that different peoples classify experiences
differently and that these classifications are embedded in
language. In other words, both the Hopi and we perceive
physically the same thing when we look at water. Yet we
think all water is the same, whereas to them, water in a oup
is a vastly different thing from water in a lake. They are

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[129]Ibid., p. 210.

two different substances entirely.

To us there is quite a difference between an insect and an airplane; to the Hopi, they seem the same, and yet the people of both cultures perceive exactly the same thing from a physical point of view.

Some things are elaborated upon and differentiated, while others are lumpted together. I would like to suggest that whether a particular thing is differentiated such that its many different aspects are covered by different words, or whether it is an aspect of experience that remains amorphous so that it will be covered by only a generic term, will depend entirely upon its importance. To the Eskimos, ice is important; in Arab circles, it is the camel; and to us, automobiles.

Moreover, if Whorf is correct, these words reflect not only greater or lesser emphasis, but a different way of looking at them -- a different conception of reality.

This difference in categorizing reality is significant not only linguistically, but sociologically as well. How people perceive the world and the things around them should have some bearing on their cultural thought patterns. Thus, by analyzing language can one approach these categories and modes of thought.

This being the case, then it would seem that the

"new school" approach involves the following four steps:

1. Analysis of the language.

2. Discovery of categories of thought.

3. Characterize the thought of a particular culture.

4. Discovery of the part which the thought plays in the social system as a whole.

Now it is one of the interesting traits of the "new school" anthropologists that there have been several anthropologists who have done either one or more of these various steps, but no one has attempted to use all of them in a systematic and complete fashion for a tribe so that a total explanation of the thought pattern of this tribe becomes clear. Both Whorf and Sapir tend to concern themselves with outlining the problem in a broad way, and Whorf does attempt to realize some of the time and space categories of Hopi thought. Kluckhohn discusses some Navaho categories of thought but does not expand on them to include the whole culture. Two other anthropologists whose work we shall discuss are Edmund Carpenter and Dorothy Lee. In my estimation both have done outstanding work. Even Carpenter, however, who is interested in Eskimo art, remains on the level of discovering categories of thought. The one who does the most complete job is Dorothy Lee. Through a linguistic analysis, she not only discovers some categories of Trobriand thought, but tries to show the implications of these

categories of thought in the society as a whole. She con-
tinues to expand this idea to explain some of their customs
in terms of these categories. All in all, she does a
brilliant and very imaginative job. Even Lee, however,
discusses only certain aspects of Trobriand thought.

One of the major criticisms that can be made of all
of the "new school" anthropologists is that they skip around
so much that they do not thoroughly analyze even one thought
system. Nevertheless, their work has tremendous theoretical
implications. Certainly, it has changed the whole scope and
outlook of the sociology of knowledge and perhaps all of
sociology as well. But before we get into the broader im-
plications, it is necessary that we have more specific in-
formation concerning the achievements of the "new school".

Just what has been done in the field? What has the
so-called "new school" been up to actually? We know that
the "new school" regards thought as a function of language,
but specifically, how does one go about the process of dis-
covering the categories of thought through language?
Dorothy Lee gives several examples of how this is done in
Freedom and Culture. In this book, she demonstrates how a
different segmentation of experience results in a different
basis of classiciation which, in turn, is reflected in
language.

She begins by analyzing the Wintu verb stems. One such stem is <u>muk</u>. This stem is embodied in the word <u>mukeda</u>, which means "turned over basket"; <u>mukuhara</u>, which means "turtle moving along"; and also <u>mukurumas</u>, which means automobile".[130] Each of these words has the same root. Then she asks by what principle can an automobile be put in the same classification with a turtle and a basket? There is such a principle, but it certainly is not immediately obvious to us. Let's take another example. The same principle is operating in the case of the stem <u>puk</u> or <u>puq</u> and it appears in all of the following words:

> "pukeda: I just pushed a peg into the ground.
> olpuqal: he is sitting on one haunch.
> poqorahara: Birds are hopping along.
> olpoqoyabe: There are mushrooms growing.
> Tunpoqoypoqoya: You walk short skirted, stiff-
> legged ahead of me."[131]

What is the common principle here. It is again not obvious, though once we know it, the classification of these words together become understandable.

Basic to these classifications is the fact that the Wintu apparently thinks of himself primarily as an <u>observer</u> who stays outside the event. It is the observation itself which is important to him and upon this basis are classified varying things. In other words things are classified by the

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[130]Dorothy Lee, <u>Freedom and Culture</u> (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., A Spectrum Book), p. 108.

[131]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 108.

way they look -- by outward form. This is in sharp contrast to our own way of naming objects, which is from a more participatory or "kinesthetic" point of view. We pass judgment on the essence of an object and name it according to its function or action as seen by the one involved. To the Wintu it is the outward form, the recurrent shapes which are all important -- shapes have meaning, and form the basis for a classification.

This being the case, it is rather obvious why the turtle and automobile are classified together. Again by this principle, the fist on the peg, the stiff leg under a "shortskirt",[132] or a bird hopping on one leg, or a man sitting on a haunch, obviously belong in the same category. Again, outward form, and not action is important. In contrast, we, who see things kinesthetically, see the jumping of a boy similar to the jumping of a grasshopper. The fact that they are jumping is common to both. But the Wintu, to whom shape is all important, see no similarity and so name the two with entirely different stems.

With this principle in mind, it is not difficult to see why, when beer was introduced to the Wintu, it was named laundry.[133]

Unfortunately, Lee does not carry this idea any

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[132]Ibid., p. 108.

[133]Ibid., p. 108.

further and show how this particular method of codifying

observable reality links up with other ideas, or what it

causes the Wintu to do in terms of a social system. This,

however, would be the next logical step. She is simply in-

terested, at this stage, in showing that reality is cod-

ified differently by different cultures and that the dis-

covery of the way in which it is codified may be approached

through language.

By examining words concerning Ontong Javanese kin-

ship arrangements, Lee gives still another example of a

different codification of reality. The Ontong Javanese have

exactly the same kinship arrangement as we do, but they have

chosen a different emphasis of meaning. We name relatives

according to formal definitions and biological relationships,

and we think that this represents reality. Yet when we ap-

ply our categories to the Ontonganese, we become confused,

and cannot proceed to figure out the principle behind their

kinship system. Let's take a look at some of these words.

The Ontong word for relative is "kainga".[134]   At

least it is translated as relative. Now just to what does

this word refer? Does it refer to a blood relationship?

The answer is "no" because a wife's sisters and a husband's

brothers are called kainga. This also includes a sexual

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[134] Ibid., p. 106, 107.

classification. Then it must refer to a formal definition.
This is not true either, for the term applies to a number
of individuals, some of whom are not related ceremonially
or formally in any way.

Then neither sex nor blood, nor formal definitions
are basic to the term, nor almost any other form of class-
ification which we would normally assume. Their term
"Kainga" is designed according to every day behavior and
experience. "Kainga" are people with whom one works and
with whom one spends a large part of one's time. Thus the
people with whom one works and lives are called "Kainga".
The term, then, denotes face to face informal relationships.
"Kainga" refers to an emotional tone, a mode of behavior,
characteristic of a group of people.[135]

The antithesis of a "Kainga" relationship is "Ava",
originally reffered to relative sex of siblings, but now,
evidently, has come to include a whole variety of people
with whom one is not familiar. Thus the term "Kainga", as
meaning relative, is somewhat of a misnomer from our point
of view, for it does not refer to a relative as we generally
understand the term. The important point is that these
terms are indicative of a different classification of
people. In our own terms, I would like to suggest that

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[135]Ibid., p. 106, 107.

the word "Kainga" might best be translated as <u>insider</u> and
<u>ava</u> as <u>outsider</u>.

What principle of thought does Lee draw from this
classification? She hypothesizes very tenatively that
"names among the Ontong Javanese describe emotive ex-
periences, not forms or functions."[136] She does not seem
sure that this is the case, however, for she says that
"we cannot accept this as fact, unless further investiga-
tion shows it to be implicit in the rest of their patterned
behavior, in their vocabulary and morphology of their
language, in their ritual and other organized activities".[137]
This presumably would be the next step, and unfortunately
she does not extend her study to include these other areas.

At any rate, her important point is that through a
study of words designating relationship, it can be shown
that the Ontong dissect the universe differently than we do.

I would like to stop here for a moment to discuss
what I consider one important point which is implicit in
this last statement. Lee insinuates that a principle of
thought is not only located in one area of a social system,
but works throughout a whole social system. This is a
statement of goals first of all. Lee is looking for
principles which are universal in that they can be found in

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[136]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 107.

[137]

many areas of the social system. Moreover, this statement
contains a methodology. If these principles in which she
is interested are contained in more than just language,
then to check the validity of any suspected principle, one
should be able to find its influences in many areas of the
social system. Thus a discussion of a principle will in-
volve a discussion of the total social system.

In any case, these are two very excellent discoveries
of different categories of thought. Neither the principle
behind Ontong kinship, nor the one behind Wintu classifica-
tion of words, may seem particularly profound to the reader,
but to one who has worked in this field, they are examples
of the best work so far accomplished.

I would like to digress for the present, and will
give further mention of Lee's work at another time.

Edmund Carpenter is another anthropologist who has
done an excellent job of discovering categories of primitive
thought. I am interested in only one of Carpenter's works
and that is a small book entitled <u>Eskimo</u>, in which the re-
lationship between Eskimo concepts of time and space are
discussed in connection with art forms. I think that
Carpenter has done an extremely good job in detecting
Eskimo presuppositions on space and time. What is more
important, I think that what he has to say applies not only
to art, but might also apply to, and underlie, many other

aspects of the Eskimo social system as well. Regrettably, Carpenter emphasizes Eskimo categories of thought only in connection with art, and ignores all other implications of what he has to say.

Without further introduction, let us get down to the specifics of Carpenter's theory of Eskimo art.

It is immediately obvious that what Carpenter has to say, that the Eskimo have a vastly different concept of space than we in the Western world. There are certain tangible ways in which this different outlook is evidenced. It is one, for example, which allows them to utilize their powers of observation to a greater degree than we, and thus allows them to accomplish much that would be impossible for us. One of their most striking achievements is the ability to draw maps very accurately. When George Sutton visited Southhampton Island in 1929, a land mass of nearly 20,000 square miles, no accurate maps of the island had yet been made. Therefore, he commissioned two Kivilik Eskimos to draw some maps for him. When compared with modern maps made afterward by aerial photographs, they are seen to be amazingly accurate, especially in the details of the shoreline with which they are most familiar.

According to Carpenter, congruent with their ability to produce such maps, is their ability to navigate over both land and sea, the two being equally undifferentiated as far as points of reference are concerned. They don't conceive

of the land in the same manner as we who orient ourselves in
relationship to certain landmarks. Indeed, they could not
take note of landmarks even if they were inclined, for
there are none. Their land, the Tundra, is featureless and
undifferentiated. Yet the Eskimo find their way with great
accuracy, for to them, the land is filled with meaningful
reference points. On the whole, these reference points are
not locations or objects, but relationships. "Relationships
between, say, contour, type of snow, wind, salt air, ice
crack."[138]

The most important of these reference points are the
winds. This is indicated by the fact that they have at
least twelve different words for winds; where we see one
phenomena, they recognize twelve.[139] Surprisingly enough,
the words for the different winds do not refer to direction,
but to types of winds. "When ooangniktook carries out the
flow, seal hunting will be good; when kongniktook brings the
flow back, walrus can be taken. The source of it is in-
cidental."[140] Yet their emphasis on the wind is so great
that they seem almost unconsciously to notice its direction
and every little variation in change of direction. It is
understandable how one so atuned can orient himself by the
winds and thus find his way. The important point is that

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[138] Edmund Carpenter, "Eskimo", Explorations (Toronto,
Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1959.)

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

the Eskimo do not regard the universe in terms of fixed
static points of reference, but rather in terms of dynamic
processes; not in terms of geographical features with names,
but kinesthetically, by the very changing winds and shifting
beds of snow.

Again in congruence with this view of nature, the
Eskimo do not navigate by the stars. They know about the
various constellations, and their nights are often very clear,
so obscurity does not preclude celestial navigation, but the
stars are relatively fixed things and as such are not of
great interest to the Eskimo.

Their acuteness of observation, which is tied up with
their kinesthetic way of emphasizing and dividing reality,
also has ramifications in their ability to mimic or create
art forms as well. Of this, Carpenter says:

> "as observers in both detail and precision, the
> Aivilik contunually amazed me. Again and
> again, they saw what I did not. A seal on
> the ice was known to them long before I
> could see it, even when the direction was
> indicated. Yet my eyes are 20-20. Stand-
> ing at the flow edge, they could tell at
> a glance whether it was a bird or seal, seal
> or square-flipper. The shout 'tingmisut!'
> (plane) usually went up long before I could
> see anything and the children would con-
> tinue to watch long after it had disappeared
> from my view. The same was true of boats."[141]

Carpenter then goes on to say that their acuteness
of observation is related to their ability to become one

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[141]Ibid.

with the thing they are observing. In his own words:

> "I am not suggesting that their eyes are
> optically superior to mine, merely that
> such observations are meaningful to them
> and that years of unconscious training have
> made them masters at it. Moreover, they
> enter into the experience not as an observer,
> but as a participant. This is the only way
> I can describe or rather account for, the
> wonderful naturalism of their carvings and
> mimicry of animals. Here the artist or
> hunter participates in seal-ness, becomes
> one with the seal, and thus finds it easy
> to portray, for he is now, himself, Seal."[142]

The outstanding mechanical aptitude of the Eskimo is
also apparently tied up with his way of categorizing the
universe.

Carpenter describes their ability with machines in
the following words:

> "If arctic literature rarely mentions the
> Eskimo's mechanical aptitude, it is simply
> because it is so often silent about those
> things which are taken for granted about
> Eskimo life. Yet all observers to whom I
> have spoken agree there is something here
> not easily explained. I have heard stories
> about Eskimo mechanics, some difficult to
> credit were it not for the fact that such
> achievements can be observed daily. . . .
>
> Part of this ability is obviously hand
> dexterity, particularly in manufacturing
> small objects. But there is more involved.
> One day I was asked by a missionary to look
> at a complex machine of his that had
> stopped working. I removed the top plate
> and realized at a glance it was far too
> intricate for me to repair or even to
> understand. As I hesitated, an Avilik,

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[142] Ibid.

who had been watching, slipped a hand under
my arm, made a few quick adjustments, and it
was fixed."[143]

Carpenter goes on to explain this phenomena in
rather vague terms. He says, while speaking of mechanical
aptitude, that "the explanation for this phenomenon lies in
the over-all picture of Aivilik time-space orientation."[144]
At least three factors are involved: "1. The Aivilik do
not conceptually separate space and time, but see a situation
or machine as a dynamic process; 2. their acute observation
of details, 3. their concept of space, not as a static
enclosure such as a room with sides or boundaries, but as
direction, in operation."[145]

Just exactly what he means by these three factors is
not completely clear in my own mind, and I wonder if he
wholly understands them himself. One idea does filter
through, however. Their conception of space is so different
from ours that it may be difficult for us to conceive of it
at all. However, I will try to clarify what he means here.

The first, the welding of time and space, is re-
flected in the Eskimo language. The Eskimo have a number
of words which express both concepts simultaneously. One
such word is ti-me which means here-now. (Both concepts
together.) Another such word is tatpam which is usually
translated on top, but which really means on top of something

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[143] Ibid.,

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

in past time.[146] Many other such words, together with pre-
fixes and suffixes, are used to indicate time-space orienta-
tion. Compounded words of this type are the only way in
which their language enables them to indicate time. They
have no tense system, for apparently time as such does not
interest them. Whether something happened in the past or
will happen in the future, is of no great importance to them.
They are apparently satisfied with only an inaccurate in-
dication of time.

Analysis of the Eskimo language reveals a great
concern with position. This is reflected in their case
system, which is as important for the Eskimo as tense is for
us. By piercing words together with the proper particles
they are able to describe special relationships in purely
verbal terms. They can communicate in words what we are re-
duced to using our hands to describe. In short, the stress
we accord time, the Eskimo lavishes on space.

Their concepts of space we shall cover more fully
in a moment.

Regarding the second factor mentioned by Carpenter,
that of acuteness of observation, this is reflected again in
their language. The Eskimo does revel in great abstractions

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[146] Diamond Jenness, Report of the Canadian Arctic
Expedition 1913-1918 (Ottawa: F. A. Acland Printer to his
Kings Most Excellent Majesty, 1926), Vol. 12., p.

like we in the West, but chooses words designed to force one
to speak only of things which one can touch and see.[147]
Concepts, as such, have no great attraction, but the Eskimo
is master over the definite, the detailed, the particular.
Missionaries, who have tried to teach the Eskimo our vastly
abstract theological doctrines find themselves confronted by
a people who find these concepts incomprehensible. Jesus, a
man who lived long ago and who is credited with various
specific acts can be communicated, but notions of the
mysteries do not find a receptive audience among the Eskimo.
The Eskimo do not believe in a whole myriad of invisible
spirits upon whom man is dependent, but these spirits are
conceived in very concrete terms, in that they are credited
with definite acts, and thought of as particular entities.
Spirits are not thought of as a class, but as individuals,
with quite tangible characteristics.

Of the third, the fact that the Eskimos do not con-
ceive of "space as a static enclosure with sides or bound-
aries, but as direction, in operation",[148] I can only repeat
what I said earlier about their ability to navigate being
dependent upon their perceiving nature as primarily a pro-
cess, or as relationships between dynamic elements such as

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[147]Edmund Carpenter, "Eskimo", Explorations (Toronto,
Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1959),

[148]Ibid.

winds, rather than in terms of fixed geographical points.

Moreover, this principle can be seen also in the architecture

of an igloo.

As Carpenter himself describes it:

"The familiar Western notion of enclosed
space is foreign to the Aivilik. Both
winter snow igloos and summer sealskin
tents are dome-shaped. Both lack vertical
walls and horizontal ceilings; no planes
parallel each other and none intersect at
90 degrees. There are not straight lines,
at least none of any length . . . .
visually and acoustically the igloo is
an open labyrinth alive with movement of
crowded people. No flat static walls
arrest the ear or eye, voices and laughter
come from several directions and the eye
can glance through here, past there, catch-
ing glimpses of the activities of nearly
everyone. . . ."[149]

To say that Eskimo ideas of space operate in relation to

their mechanical ability, the ability to orient themselves,

and their powers of observation, is not to say what these

spatial concepts are. It is to say something about them,

but it is not a definition by any means.

Behind all Eskimo concepts of space, Carpenter says,

is one basic core of emphasis: the Eskimo notions of space

are auditory. The concept of "auditory space" is so foreign

to our categories of thought, that it is only with great

difficulty that it can be communicated to a Western audience.

[149] Ibid.

I believe I know what he means by this term, but understanding has come only after having read extensively in regard to arctic literature. Carpenter begins by contrasting the Eskimo idea of "auditory space" with our own concept which we might call visual space; for in our world, space is defined in terms of that which separates objects. We conceive of outer space as empty when in actuality the physicist tells us that it is filled with all sorts of things. Yet we find this hard to accept. We cannot see anything and so our first instinct is to call space empty. By this same token, we call a barrel or the Great Plains empty because there is nothing to see in either case.

To be real, a thing must be visible, and preferably constant, according to our way of thinking. We have several little aphorisms to the point. Among them are: "seeing is believing", "believe only half of what you see and nothing of what you hear", etc. Much of our thinking is done in terms of visual models. A favorite heuristic device is the diagram. Where would teachers be without their lines and circles?

The important point is that the Eskimo just don't think in this manner. Carpenter explains their way of categorizing experiences of time and space so well that I can do little more than repeat what he has to say on the subject:

"With them the binding power of the oral
tradition is so strong as to make the eye
subservient to the ear. They define space
more by sound than by sight. Where we
might say, "Let's see what we can hear,
they would say, "Let's hear what we can
see."

"To the Aivilik, truth is given through
oral tradition, mysticism, intuition,
and cognition, not simply by observation
and measurement of physical phenomena.
To them, the ocularly visible apparation
is not nearly as important as the purely
auditory one."[150]

Of the nature of "auditory space" Carpenter says:

"Auditory space has no favored focus.
It's sphere without fixed boundaries,
space made by the thing itself, not
space containing the thing. It is not
pictorial space, boxed-in, but dynamic,
always flux, creating its own dimensions
moment by moment. It has no fixed
boundaries; it is indifferent to back-
ground. The eye focuses, pinpoints,
abstracts, locating each object in
physical space, against a background;
the ear, however, favors sound from any
direction."[151]

In this last paragraph is contained the background for

everything we have said about the Eskimo so far, and more.

First, that "auditory space" is "dynamic and always

in flux" certainly underlies much of what has already been

said about Eskimo notions about space as it related to

mechanics; their ability to orient themselves by conceiving

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[150]Ibid.

[151]Ibid.

of the world in dynamic terms. "Auditory space", in other
words, lends itself nicely to a kinesthetic approach toward
nature and the world.

"Auditory space" is also tied up with a de-
emphasis on time. Of this, Carpenter says, "They don't re-
gard space as static, and therefore measurable; hence they
have no formal units of spatial measurement, just as they
have no uniform divisions of time."

That "auditory space" is focusless is perhaps its
most important characteristic. Lack of focus lends an air
of formlessness to much of what they do. We rely on focus
so much that we would regard many Eskimo activities as
"sloppy", at best. But the Eskimo see no reason why all
should be clearly definable. A sharply ordered shape means
little to them. Where we are interested in seeing a patternm
they are concerned with the dynamic, many-sided and unfixed.

I realize that this is vague and uncertain in
meaning and much of it must unfortunately remain so, but I
will try to give a few examples to try to demonstrate the
principle.

Carpenter is most interested in the concept of
"auditory space" as it affects art forms. Carpenter says:

> "The Eskimo artist is indifferent to the
> demands of the optical eye; he lets each
> piece fill its own space, create its own
> world, without reference to background or

anything external to it. Size and shape,
proportions and selection, these are set
by the object itself, not forced from
without. Like sound, each carving creates
its own space, its own identity; it im-
poses its own assumptions."[152]

Their art has no best or favored focus. Turned one
way, one sees one aspect; turned another, something else.
Congruently, Eskimo carvings are not made to be looked at
from any one angle. When held in the hand, they roll around;
they were meant to be handled, twisted, and turned; not set
on a shelf and seen in one static position.

Likewise, their drawings are remarkable in their
lack of focus. Figures run rampant over a drawing in all
different sizes and angles. Some are turned on their sides
and some are standing on their heads; others seen from a
side view, and still others from a top view. The notion
that the object should be depicted in some constant and
consistent manner, and from the same angle, doesn't occur
to the Eskimo, nor does this wierd art form inhibit their
understanding. They can look at a picture from any angle
and tell just exactly what it is.

As Carpenter says of their art: "Neither artist
nor observer is the centre of focus; the work of art can
be seen or heard equally well from any direction."[153]

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[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

Their whole attitude towart art is one of respect,
and this also is determined by their auditory conception
of space. Where the eye imposes form from without, accord-
ing to preconceived notions of what should be, the ear, in
Carpenter's words "favors sound from any direction and this
attitude of open receptivity seems to carry over into their
attitude towards art. They don't try to carve something
out of a piece, but rather regard art as bringing out what
is already in the piece."[154] Carpenter describes the act
of creation as follows:

> "As the carver holds the unworked ivory
> lightly in his hand, turning it this way
> and that, he whispers, 'Who are you?
> Who hides there?' And then: 'Ah, Seal!'
> He rarely sets out, at least consciously,
> to carve, say, a seal, but picks up the
> ivory, examines it to find its hidden form
> and, if that is not immediately apparent,
> carves aimlessly until he see it, humming
> or chanting as he works. Then he brings
> it out: Seal, hidden, emerges. It was
> always there: he didn't creat it; he
> released it; he helped it step forth."[155]

This attitude of respect is reflected again in their
language. The Aivilik, according to Carpenter, have no word
"for _make_ which presupposes imposition of the self on matter."[156]
Their closest approximation is _to work on_ which indicates
only a passive respect.

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[154]_Ibid._

[155]_Ibid._

[156]_Ibid._

Again the Eskimo distaste for definite outline and form can be seen in their tales and myths. Eskimo ideas and stories do not follow in, what is to us, a natural sequence. Instead, they may begin with the middle of a story, go on to the conclusion, and then end with the beginning. Moreover, they do not have themes or morals, nor do they build up to a conclusion or resolution of the problem. They begin and end with no scheme in mind, and thus their stories seem rather indeterminate and inconclusive. to those accustomed to the crises and resolutions of our own stories. In an Eskimo tale, there is no single focus, nor any central feature.

Carpenter calls attention to this feature of Eskimo myths but does not give any examples, and unless one sees a direct translation of an Eskimo myth the full impact of this is not evident.

Diamond Jeness provides several such direct translations. The following is one:

> "A man, it is related/ a raven/ asked it/
> what are thou going off to do/ grandfather/
> his piece of neck/ I am going to take back
> to him/ where to/ patitaq/ on the windward
> side/ who pray/ they grandfather/ the
> thinker/ who pray/ they mother/ the dog-
> trace/ who pray/ thy grandmother/ old big
> ice/ by what pray/ thee/ do they name
> these/ by the name poor little thing/ they
> name me/ also/ its song/ exists/."[157]

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[157]Diamond Jenness, Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-1918 (Ottawa: F. A. Acland Printer to his Kings Most Excellent Majesty, 1926) Vol. 12, p.

This is a very typical direct translation. The thing that holds our immediate attention, the thing upon which we concentrate, is trying to piece these different parts together; to make some sense of them; to see how one follows the other. The Eskimo don't follow this process. They see nothing out of the way if one part does not follow the other and if one aspect is not congruent with another. Sequence and cause and effect are not the rules by which their minds work. This seems very strange and almost incomprehensible to us, who are always asking why and what are the antecedents of this and what is the logical conclusion of this? It is hard for us to imagine that some peoples think without these rules, and yet, such is the case.

As mentioned in previous instances, Carpenter is interested in the notions underlying art. He does an excellent job of showing how their categories of thought (of which the most important is that of "acoustic space" with its dynamism, formlessness, concreteness and lack of limits and focus) affect art.

However, Carpenter stops too soon, for I believe that there are implications in what he says that extend far beyond the range of art.

One of the characteristics of Eskimo art is its formlessnes. This is also the most characteristic thing

about Eskimo social structure as a whole. Is there any
connection? I think there might well be, yet Carpenter
does not pention the fact. What is meant by lack of form?
A description of csrtain aspects of the Eskimo social
structure will convey the idea.

The Eskimo live in little bands which are widely
separated and among which there is little contact of any
kind. Though these bands are related by the bonds of a
common culture, there is no political structure encompassing
two or more of these groups.[158]

Within these local groups there is again a lack of
political form. There is no social structure or hierarchy
of any kind, and no organized political leadership.
Periodically, a temporary leader does arise, but his powers
are informal and the control he exerts is really quite
slight.[159]

There is no extended kinship system and even the
nuclear family le not strongly welded together. Marriages,
in fact, are made and broken at random, by either partner,
in almost the spirit of a game.

There is absolutely no differentiation due to

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[158]E. Adamson Hoebel, _The Law of Primitive Man_
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 67.

[159]_Ibid._, p. 71.

specialization of occupation because no specialists exist. There is only slight differentiation due to age and sex.

One might be led to say that their lack of social distinctions and political structure is only a reflection of their general underdevelopment in all areas, for there is some truth in the statement that the Eskimo are among the world's most backward and primitive people. This is undoubtedly true in part, but there is more to it than this. The Aranda of Australia, who are also very backward, have one of the most elaborate social and kinship systems yet devised by man. Clearly then, economic and technological retardation does not necessarily preclude the possibility of complex social relationships. Certainly other factors are at work.

I wonder whether or not the concept of "auditory space", which plays such an important role in Eskimo, mechanics, art, navigation, etc., is not also a determining feature of the Eskimo social system. "Auditory space" is marked by focuslessness and boundlessness, and if it were to carry over into the social realm, it might have a certain loosening and leveling effect.

There are other aspects of the Eskimo social system which might be related to some of Carpenter's observations concerning art. Eskimo society is in constant flux, for

example. This is evidenced in a number of ways, perhaps
most clearly in the way the headman is chosen. In the true
sense of the term, the headman is not chosen by a conscious,
demonratic process. It would be more accurate to say that
he arises spontaneously. He is headman only as long as
other Eskimos do what he says, when they no longer obey him,
he is no longer headman. There is no process of selection,
no specific duties attached to the job, nor is there any
increase in status. Moreover, there is no obligation to
follow the directions of the headman.[160]

Thus the headman's powers are more dependent upon
his personality than any other factor. He may have great
influence at one time and almost none at another time; in
one situation, he may command, in another situation he may
be just one of the mass. Thus the position of leadership
is far from static, but rather,, changes and fluctuates
with time, situation and personality. Leadership is viewed
in kinesthetic terms, just as Eskimo art. Does the Eskimo
emphasize on the dynamic and kinesthetic rule in both
situations?

Assuming that the Eskimo do stress change and tend
to perceive the world in dynamic kinesthetic terms, then it
might throw some light on still another very puzzling event.

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[160]Ibid., p. 74.

It occurs to me that their view of life might be the explanation for the relative ease with which they have accepted and adopted the civilization of the white man. If they viewed life as constantly changing, then change would seem only natural, and the vast changes which the white man brought to the north would perhaps not be such a great shock to them.

One might say that they have been happy to accept the ways of the white man in order to escape from the poverty in which they lived. This might have some truth in it. Yet it is not the whole story, because other peoples who have lived in very similar circumstances have resisted fiercely the white man and his ways. The Alaskan Indians are a case in point. Their situation is much the same as that of the Eskimo, and yet they have not adopted the ways of the white man with anywhere near the alacrity of the Eskimos. Again, other factors are at work. I think that perhaps the Eskimo conception and emphasis on the dynamic, flux, and change, might be part of the answer, and yet I cannot find any corroborating evidence.

To change the subjects again for a moment, take the matter of concreteness. The Eskimo emphasizes hearing and the ear does not abstract, says Carpenter. Instead, it accepts even the most detailed sounds on the same level of

concreteness. Eskimo language and thought are consequently concrete, and this has an effect on art. It might also have some effect on the social situation. It occurred to me that an emphasis on concreteness might partially explain the Eskimo's lack of political offices, kinship relationships, and law as we know it. An office is an abstraction of a fairly high order. The office of President of the United States, for example, exists irrespective of the actual man who is filling the role at the time. The duties, rights, privileges, and obligations which the President assumes are not attached to his person; they are his only so long as he retains the office.

The idea of an office is a very obvious idea to us in the Western world who are used to thinking in abstractions. To a folklike the Eskimo, who like to think concretely, the idea of an office might not suggest itself so readily. They have a headman, but the headman is not filling an office as we think of the term, for what he does depends upon his own abilities and personality and is not defined in terms of an office.

Law is also an abstraction. It is abstracted from specific cases and it may be applied to specific cases, but there is nothing concrete about the law itself. Thus it is not surprising that the Eskimo, who have no love of the abstract, have no law. They will decide a case one way in

one situation, and a similar case in an entirely different way at some other time. How a case is decided depends upon the circumstances and, more important, the personalities involved. Whether a murderer is punished will depend upon whether he was an "Angekok" or an unpopular person. In other words, it would seem as if abstract, consistent principles of law are not as important as the particular personalities involved.

Whether all of this is true or not is debatable. I have a feeling that what Carpenter says may be applicable to other areas such as the political and the social features, but Carpenter mentions only the implication upon art. However, I have tried to extend his ideas to the social sphere. How accurate my attempt has been can only be a matter of speculation. With this, let us leave Carpenter's analysis of the Eskimo.

The next person I would like to take up is Whorf. Benjamin Lee Whorf, along with Edward Sapir, were two of the first anthropologists to work extensively in the field of linguistics. Both he and Sapir concentrate mainly on outlining the field in general, and do not do many specific studies. Whorf was interested mainly in showing how language determines patterns and ways of thinking. Not only is the logic different but facts and reality itself differ

according to language. In his own terms, "Facts are unlike
to speaker whose language background provides for unlike
formulation of them."[161] p. 135 LTR.

In other words, what one thinks depended on the
language used. What determines the ideas implicit in the
morphology of a language? Whorf never does give an adequate
answer to this question. What he does say is that the ideas
in a language depend upon the "social needs" of a people.

> "He will assert certain ideas as plain, hard-
> headed common sense; which means that they
> satisfy him because they are completely
> adequate as a system of communication
> between him and his fellow man. That
> is, they are linguistically adequate to
> his social needs, and will remain so
> until an additional group of needs is
> felt and is worked out in language."[162]

According to Whorf, language reflects the needs of a people.
Also, a language is not only a way of seeing the world, of
seeing reality, but as an expression of deepest need and
aspirations of these people as well. Whorf himself does
not develop this idea, but concerns himself primarily with
proving that reality appears differently to people speaking
different languages. Dorothy Lee enlarges upon this idea,
as we shall soon see.

All this aside, what does Whorf do specifically?
What contribution does he make to the analysis of primitive

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[161]Benjamin Lee Whorf, _Language, Thought and Reality_
(New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1956), p.235.

[162]_Ibid._, p. 251.

thought? Most of his work was directly in the field of linguistics itself. He did a great deal of work in deciphering Maya hieroglyphics and much work on Shawnee verb stems, and grammatical categories, etc. The only work he did directly in the field of primitive thought, that I can find, is a little article entitled An American Indian Model of the Universe, in which he discusses Hopi concepts of time and space. The ideas he brings out in this article might be interesting to explain.

The Hopi think of time and space in an entirely different way than we do. It seems self-evident to us that time flows at a smooth rate out of the future, through the present and into the past. Although it seems inconceivable to us, Hopi ideas of time are vastly different.

Whorf discovered after an analysis of the Hopi language, that they have "no words, grammatical forms, constructions, or expressions that refer directly to what we call time or to past, present, or future, or to enduring or lasting, or to motion as kinematic rather than dynamic. .."[163] He concludes that the "Hopi language contains no reference to "time" either explicit or implicit."[164]

Yet the Hopi are able to describe and account for all experiences and observable phenomena.

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[163]Ibid., p. 57.

[164]Ibid., p. 58.

The Hopi have a conception of time and space, but it is so different from ours that it is difficult for us to comprehend. First of all, the Hopi do not have the "homegenous and instantaneous timeless space of our supposed intuition or classical 'Newtonian mechanics'".[165] Taking the places of these concepts are completely new concepts which allow the Hopi to describe their activities without reference to either time or space. Whorf says that:

> "These notions will undoubtedly appear to us as psychological or even mystical in character . . . . They are ideas which we are accustomed to consider as part and parcel either of so-called animistic or vitalistic beliefs, or of those transcendental unifications of ex.erience and intuitions of things unseen that are felt by the consciousness of the mystic. . . ."[166] p. 58.

Then Whorf goes on to say that the Hopi categorize reality into two great "cosmic forms"[167] . . which might be called "manifested or unmanifest"[168] or "objective or subjunctive."[169]

Whorf defines these terms so exactly and aptly that I can do little more than quote him.

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[165]Ibid., p. 58.

[166]Ibid., p. 58.

[167]Ibid., p. 58.

[168]Ibid., p. 58

[169]Ibid., p. 57.

"The objective or manifest comprises
all that is or has been accessible to
the sense -- the historical physical
universe -- with no attempt to dis-
tinguish between present and past,
but excluding everything we call
future. The subjective or unmanifest
comprises all that we call future, but
not merely this; it includes equally
and indistinguishably all that we call
mental -- every thing that appears or
exists in the mind."[170]

The manifest which is a lumping together of all we
would call past and present is easy enough for us to under-
stand. The subjective needs some explanation, however.
The subjective includes all events which we would say were
to happen in the future and also all mentality, emotion
and feeling. To the Hopi, all that will happen in the
future is just speculation or thought anyway, so they do
not make the distinction. The subjective is in the realm
of expectancy, of desire, in which no distinction is made
between hopes and thoughts; between ideas and emotions.
Emotion, hoping, and thinking are all considered as one.[171]

The future is classified as subjective because to
the Hopi there is no future -- the future is here with us
already in mental form. There is a relationship between
subjective and objective, however, for they see the sub-
jective as moving toward, and becoming, objective.

Understanding of the objective gives great insight

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[170]Ibid., p. 60.

[171]Ibid., p. 60.

into Hopi magic and the supernatural. The Hopi have many
ceremonies in which they are trying to propitiate the gods.
In our minds, we think of the Hopi as begging for something
in the future, or trying to manipulate the gods for favors
which are to be bestowed in the near future.

The Hopi, however, don't conveive of their own
actions in quite this way. The Hopi think that what is
being prayed for is already with us in mental form.[172] The
vital aspect of the cosmos -- the subjactive -- is present
and moving always toward fruition and objectivity. The
ceremony is not prayed in order to get something else, but
to actualize what already is.

The subjective state -- of prime importance -- the
Hopi see as a state of becoming and they are greatly con-
cerned with it. Here lies their concentration and most of
their ceremonials are designed to help along these natural
processes.

Of this Whorf says:

"as anyone acquainted with Hopi society
knows, the Hopi see this burgeoning
activity in the growing of plants, the
forming of clouds and their condensation
in rain, and the careful planning out of
communal activities of agriculture and
architecture and in all human hoping,
wishing, striving, and thought; and as
most especially concentrated in prayer."[173]

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[171]Ibid., p. 60.

[172]Ibid., p. 61, 62.

[173]Ibid., p. 62.

This discussion of the objective and subjective is connected with motivation and especially with ritualistic activities. In Hopi eyes, because subjective becomes objective, it is possible by thinking and hoping (forming subjectivity), to determing what will be. This is what Hopi ceremonials are. It is an attempt to conjure up thoughts which will become real.

And here we have it; this is all that Whorf says about the Hopi way of categorizing the universe.

After all has been said and done, it is Dorothy Lee who does the best job of really determining the thought systems of primitives. She has concentrated her attention on two tribes; the Wintu, on which she is the foremost expert, and the Trobriand Islanders. Her analysis of Trobriand concepts of reality is, in my opinion, the best article I have seen in the field. Lee does not attempt to cover all of Trobriand thought, but concentrates on their apprehension of reality which she maintains is "nonlineal"[174] in contrast to our own "lineal"[175] phrasing. Not only does she state their conceptions of reality, but she also relates it to other aspects of their social system through a discussion

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[174]Dorothy Lee, _Freedom and Culture_ (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 105.

[175]_Ibid._, p. 105.

of their source of motivation and their goals. In short, she gives all of Trobriand society, and our own, a whole new perspective.

Initially, Dorothy Lee admits that she uses language as an analytical tool, but it is apparent that she does not depend upon language entirely. It is in language that she gets her clues which then can be seen in other areas of a culture. In her own words, "My own study was begun with an analysis of linguistic formulations, only because it is in language that I happen to be best able to discover my clues."[176] She insinuates that the same results could be obtained by other methods. She never uses any of these other methods, however, nor does she mention them by name specifically. It was through a linguistic analysis that she came to the conclusion that the Trobriand Islanders thought "non-lineally".

Let's go through some of Lee's observations on the nature of the Trobriand language. The Trobriand language has no objectives. Where we would have to say "it is a beautiful garden" or some thing of this sort, the Trobrianders have one word which includes both the idea of beauty and garden. If it is an ugly garden that is being discussed, then a single Trobriand word is then a self contained concept in which both subject, adjective, and sometimes even predicate, are fused and indistinguishable. One cannot remove one part,

[176]Ibid., p. 106.

replace it with something else, and come up with a slightly different concept. A beautiful garden is not only one type of garden. If it is not a beautiful garden, then it becomes something else entirely. One of the examples of this type of language form that Lee describes concerns a specie of yam. At a certain degree of ripeness, firmness, roundness, bigness, etc., the yam is called a taytu ; and if it loses some of these ingredients, then it is something else, a different thing, perhaps bowawata. When it is overripe, then the taytu is a yowana which contains overripeness. And a yowana does not put forth shoots, does not become a sprouting yowana. When sprouts appear, it ceases to be itself; in its place appears silasata.[177]

It would be my guess that different types of yam would be more clearly differentiated than perhaps many other things because of its importance in Trobriand society. A taytu for example, has great ceremonial importance. It is the only type of yam which can rightfully be given to one's chief for a tax payment, or to one's sister's family in order to fulfull one's obligation of support. One keeps the bwanawa[178] for one's own use; and it is the yowana which is planted, of course.

But what interested Lee was that there were no connections between events. The notion that the same yam

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[177]Ibid., p. 109.

[178]Ibid., p. 109.

could go through various different stages did not occur to the Trobrianders, instead they perceive of many different distinct items, where we see the same form only slightly modified. There is a series of being, but no becoming

In general, this is true of all Trobriand thinking. In Lee's own words,

"there is no arrangement of activities and events into means and ends, no casual or teleologic relations. . . . There is no automatic relating of any kind in the language. Except for the rarely used verbal it-differs and it-same, there are no terms of comparison whatever."[179]

Moreover, the concept of time seems to be missing completely. There are no tenses, no linguistic distinctions between past or present,[180] and there is no temporal relationship made between events. The notion that a thing changes with time to become something else is completely absent. What the Trobrianders do perceive are patterned wholes, which we shall explore later.

We think in terms of lines, and without the lines we are lost. The line is present in the philosophers' phrasing of means and ends. A favorite heuristic device is the diagram, which is a whole series of lines. We perceive of both history and evolution as following a lineal path. The line is even imbedded in our language. We speak of a

[179]Ibid., p. 118.
[180]Ibid., p. 117.

pattern as a "web of relationships", we "draw conclusions",
and we trace the "relationship between facts". We assume
the line metaphorically when we speak of "following a line
of thought", a "course of action" or "the direction of an
argument."

One example that Lee uses is,

"If I make a picture of an apple on the
board, and want to show that one side is
green and the other red, I connect these
attributes with the pictured apple by
means of lines, as a matter of course;
how else woud I do it."[181]

Where there is no line, we make one. We assume
the presence of a line when we describe a circle of stones
or a line of trees. Even in ancient times a favorite
nocturnal pasttime was to connect the stars by lines such
that an outline was formed.

More important, the line underlies the meaning which
we give life itself. It is connected to the emotional
climax which has so much meaning for us. Our very lives
are ordered lineally, and when the line is broken, we are
disturbed. Everything we do must lead to something. I
know a young man in my own city who recently quit his job
at the local paper mill because "it wasn't getting me
anywhere". What he meant was that it wasn't leading to

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[181]Ibid., p. 110.

wealth, or power, or prestige, or any other thing he valued. This is a very common attitude and one to which we are accustomed. Very little of what we do is done for its own sake. We need a reason to get a higher education; a better job is usually the desired end. Our atheletic programs are undertaken as a means to better health, and in some circles an endless round of social engagements is suffered through, not for the fun of it, but because it will lead to a wider circle of acquaintences, resulting in a position of status.

The line is present in, literally, the way we think and practically everything we do.

The Trobriand Islanders most emphatically do not think this way. Take the matter of gardening, for example. Trobriand gardening is quite complex and has many specialized activities connected with it. If we were to think in our own terms we would see all their planning and magical activities as conceived in terms of leading to a rich harvest; further, that their kula, involving the cutting down of trees, the communal dragging of the tree to the beach, the rebuilding of the large sea-worthy canoes, and all the magical activities involved, could only be carried out if conceived lineally -- as leading to some goal. This is what one would think who simply tried to superimpose our own categories of thought on the Trobrianders and their activities. Yet Lee shows rather conclusively through a

linguistic analysis that this probably is not so.

From our point of view, it would be possible to describe much of Trobriand activity lineally, yet the Trobrianders themselves do not see it that way

This is indicated first of all through their language. Linguistically, nothing they do, or speak of, is ever the cause of, or the result of, any other thing. Each act is a separate activity and their language accordingly is jerky and composed of points rather than connected patterns.

The whole notion of cause is apparently foreign to their way of thinking. When Malinowski pressed the Trobrianders to think in terms of cause and effect, they did so, but their answers were "confused and contradictory; their preferred answer was 'It was ordained of old' -- pointing to an ingredient value of the act instead of giving an explanation based on lineal connection."[182]

When asked for evidence to verify the validity of their magical spells, they were completely stumped. Evidence was not important to them. The validity of the magical spell lay, not in its evidence, but in its being; in the fact that it was performed by the appropriate person, that it had the proper mythical basis, and that it was within the patterned activity.

There is coherence and organization in Trobriand society, not because it is organized toward some lineal end,

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[182]Ibid., p. 112.

but because it is patterned. One act of this pattern
brings into existence a whole order of acts. There is a
distinction to be made between a patterned activity as the
Trobrianders think of it, and an act which is caused. A
parallel from our own culture might be in the building of
a house. In building a house certain skills are necessary
and a certain pattern must prevail. One cannot put in the
plumbing or work on the roof until the basement is finished.
The plumbing follows the building of the basement, and yet
one cannot say that the building of the basement caused the
plumbing. They are both part of the pattern and the pattern
itself sets the sequence.

Most Trobriand activities are comparable to building
a house in that one part of the activity does not cause
another, but rather the existence of one calls another into
being. It is the pattern as a whole which determines their
being.

The line, in our culture, not only connects, but it
moves. We speak of a road running from point to point. A
Trobriander does not speak of a road as _running_, but as
being at. A road is not _to_ one locality from another, but it
is _at_ a certain place.

Perhaps it might be said that where we emphasize the
line, the Trobrianders emphasize the _point_. This can be

demonstrated by an analysis of their language. There is a myth where a Tudava (medicine man) goes -- from our point of view -- from village to village. His sojourn is described as "Kitava it-shine village already he-is-over. I-sail I-go Iwa; Iwa he-anchor he-go ashore. . . . they drive him off. . . . he go Kwaywata."[183] In this story the points are mentioned, but sailing to and from is submerged so as to be almost absent. The first thing that would interest us is where he had gone from, and to, and we would be very interested to know that in this journey he followed a southeasterly course. This has meaning for us. It doesn't for the Trobriander, for directions are never mentioned. Points are important, but lines and their directions are not.

Non-lineal phrasing can be seen in many Trobriand descriptions. One of these is a description of a canoe which goes as follows: "Mist. . . surround me my mast. . . the nose of my canoe. . . my sail. . .my steering oar. . . my canoe gunwale. . .my canoe bottom. . .my prow. . .my rib. . .my threading stick. . .my prow-board. . .my transverse stick. . .my canoe side."[184] One will notice that no particular order is being followed.

This can also be seen in another story told to Malinowski. The Trobriand story is: "They-eat-taro, they

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[183]Dorothy Lee, Freedom and Culture (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1959) p. 114.

[184]Ibid., p. 114.

spewptary, they disgusted-taro."[185] To people who think
lineally, the disgust would naturally come before the
vomiting if time is lineal.

We think lineally for two reasons:

1. Our sense of Time demands it. With time per-
ceived and moving from the future through the present into
the past, it seems only right that in telling a story or
writing history that we should begin with the oldest and
relate things in sequence in order to explain the present.
The Trobrianders, who do not distinguish between past and
present, do not find it important to give things in sequence.

2. The line, or arranging of things in a sequence,
is important to us for another reason. We arrange things
and objects in a sequence which is climatic in both size
and intensity. The emotional climax has great meaning and
importance for us; and it apparently has almost none for
the Trobriander.

Literally, practically everything we do is arranged
in a climactic way. At graduation, our college faculties
are arranged according to rank; the students are arranged
alphabetically, according to surnames. When we eat a meal,
we begin with the small appetizer and end with the climax
of the meal, the dessert.

Our notions of history are climactic with the

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[185]Ibid., p. 116.

present as the climax.

All of our stories, etc., also must lead up to a climax, or a resolution, to be considered acceptable. It is a rule of expository writing that one begins with the most obvious point and concludes with the strongest. If this rule is violated, we are conscious of the error, and are disturbed by it. For example, The Caine Mutiny violates this cardinal rule. The author, Herman Wouk, begins by building up to one climax and one morality, only to re- pudiate it at the last moment and end with its antithesis. This builds up a tremendous amount of tension in the reader because things don't end as they should have. The principle of consistency was violated. The story did not build up lineally by a logical set of events to a resolution and does not leave us with a feeling of satisfaction.

Most important of all, the emotional climax has great meaning for us because it acts as an emotional goal; a means by which we are motivated to achieve the proper ends. Much of what we do and the activities we undertake are not pleasurable in themselves. We undertake them be- cause they lead to some sort of reward at the end. Our school marking system is nothing more than this. Only a handful of students work for the love of learning, but the others keep plugging our of fear of receiving a bad mark,

or to gain the reward of a good one. The same can be said of most laborers. They don't find fulfillment in their work, but simply put in their hours in order to get to the climax of the week -- Friday night -- and the pay check.

Our sense of freedom is also related to the line. To be free means to be allowed to move along a given course. Any interruption or interference with our course of action is perceived as a restriction of our freedom. Fulfillment is envisioned by a means of a line -- as the completion of a course or a career. Our whole notion of success and failure is postulated on the principle of lineality. One is successful to the extent that one completes a particular course of action, and a failure to the extent that one is blocked in this attempt.

It is not only a particular course of action that is perceived lineally, but our whole personality develipment is thought of in the same way. Perhaps this is why failure is of such significance in our own culture. Failure to complete a lineally conceived course of action means not only failure of the enterprise but failure for the lineally conceived self.

Again, the Trobriand Islanders do not share our attitude, and as a result the goals they set for themselves, the ways in which they are motivated, and their whole

perception of what is good and bad, is clearly changed be-
cause of this difference.

To reiterate, the Trobriand Islanders do not think
in lineal patterns. Cause and effect have no value for
them, and more significantly, neither does the idea of an
emotional climax.

This lack of climax can be seen in their literature
and magical chants. As an instance, the chant which I re-
peated earlier:

        The belly of my garden lifts
        The belly of my garden rises
        The belly of my garden reclines
        The belly of my garden is-a-bushhen's-nest-in-lifting
        The belly of my garden is-an-anthill
        The belly of my garden lifts-bends
        The belly of my garden is-an-ironwood-tree-in-lifting
        The belly of my garden lies-down
        The belly of my garden burgeons.[186]

This is neither climactic nor anticlimactic. To
us it is merely sloppy and repetitious. This can be seen in
all Trobriand ceremonials. In the Kula procession the head
chiefs come neither first nor last, but are scattered some-
where in the middle.

Lee also points out that, in our culture, child-
birth is the climax of a long pregnancy. It is not so in
Trobriand society. There, pregnancy for its own sake is
the cause of a series of festive occasions. These ceremonies

[186]Dorothy Lee, Freedom and Culture (Englewood Cliffs,
N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 116.

have no purpose or end. They neither ensure the health of
mother or baby, nor make the birth more comfortable. They
simply celebrate the pregnancy and that is all.

I would like to stress that no Trobriand activity
is fitted into a climactic line. All labor finds its satis-
faction of reward inherent in the activity itself.

What we call monotony and repetition might be the
key to the whole Trobriand outlook. The Trobriand Islanders,
linguistically recognize no distinction between past,
present and future. Where we use references to time they
refer to events in the lives of their ancestors. Where we
might say "a few years ago", they might say "in the days of
my father". Thus the event is placed situationally and not
temporally. To the Trobrianders, what happened in the
mythical past determined what will happen in the present
and future. Lee expresses it very well when she says,
"Past, present, and future are presented linguistically as
the same, are present in his existence, and sameness with
what we call the past and with myth, represent value to the
Trobriander."[187] In other words, where we strive for change,
they strive for sameness. Where we see a developmental line,
they see at the most only a repetition of what was pre-
ordained. Where we see climax, they see only an increase.in
value. "Where we find pleasure and satisfaction in moving

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[187]Ibid., p. 117.

from the point, in change as variety or progress, the
Trobriander finds it in the repetition of the known, in
maintaining the point."[188] I.e., what we call repetition.

As a further illustration, certainly their Kula ex-
peditions are not lineally arranged. The Kula is certainly
not economically profitable, so one cannot say that a Kula
expedition leads to anything like wealth, etc. One always
trades with the same partner, and the more one trades with
him the more valuable the partnership becomes. The object
is neither economic nor does the desire for adventure or
change enter into the picture. The Kula is valuable be-
cause it is a repetition of a time-honored traditional
custom which is maintained in the same manner as was sup-
posedly ordained in the beginning of time. The more it is
indulged, the more valuable it becomes. The Kula does not
lead to anything; its value lies in its maintenance.

I wonder if this same principle is not connected
also with Trobriand politics. Ostensibly in the beginning
of time the original ancestors emerged from a hole in the
ground, and their order of emergence determined their
social position which is maintained to the present day.
Those who emerged first were the chiefs, as are their de-
cendents today, and those who came last were the commonere,

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[188]Ibid., p. 117.

as are their descendents. The people of different classes
are considered as almost different species of human beings.
The leaders recognize that their duty is to lead and they
take to leadership naturally. The commoner recognizes that
it is his position to follow. Any attempt at social mobility
is not allowed. The Trobrianders go to great trouble to
preserve this system. They never ask why it is or what is
its purpose. It simply is, and that seems to be reason
enough for its existence and maintenance. The principle
of nonlineality holds here also in that political validity
stems from a traditionally established pattern, and living
up to the pattern is of utmost importance to the extent
that the political system is maintained and perpeduated on
the same principles which have existed always, increasing
its value.

It is not that the Trobrianders are incapable of
perceiving lineality. They can, but when they see it, they
don't like it. For example, a boy who wishes to make love
to a girl must give her a present. This has been ordained
of old. But should he give the present with a purpose in
mind, of giving to win her favors, he is considered des-
picable. Giving the present is valuable only as part of a
long established pattern, and not as a means to an end.

In summary, it can be said that the Trobriand

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Islanders think non-lineally. Time is not perceived as
flowing in a line, and experience is not presented as
flowing lineally from nadir to climax, and this is re-
fleoted in their stories as well as their activities.
There is no _external_ motivation; each activity _contains_ its
own reward. Therefore, the whole notion of success and
failure are absent, because such a concept presupposes a
line. Success means reaching the goal which is at the end
of a lineal sequence, and failure is frustration of that at-
tempt. All that is of value is conceived not in terms of
change or moving toward something, but in maintaining the
same point, of swelling a _traditional_ point, by repetition
of that point.

Dorothy Lee's article on non-lineality in Trobriand
culture is by far the best article that I have read. In it,
she starts with the idea of the absence of the line and
then relates this absence to Trobriand culture, especially
the basis of their system of value and motivation. It is
a short article, and not complete by any means, and yet
far better than anything else I have seen. Unfortunately,
there are few such artioles, and even fewer anthropologists
interested in continuing what she has begun.

Kluckhohn has some ideas which might prove fruitful
if carried to their logical conclusion. In discussing the
Navaho, he points out that the Navaho do not think of the

universe as a closed or completed entity. This conception of the universe can be discovered in their myths, which, from what Kluckhohn says, are never complete, and never offer any resolutions or solutions which are true absolutely. Kluckhohn also points out that this can be seen in Navaho weaving. Every Navaho rug, for example, has a corner which is incomplete; and every pot has a break in the design.

The same thing can be seen in their traditions -- they always leave something out. These acts are indicative of their view toward the world. The world, they believe, is in the process of becoming. It is a world always moving toward completion. Once it reaches consumation, there is nothing of value in it anymore. A complete thing is value- less and, therefore, the Navaho are careful never to finish anything.

Unfortunately, this is as far as he carries the discussion. He never says what effect this attitude has upon the political or religious ideas. He does not mention what the connections of this idea are with behavior. Nor does he indicate how this notion influences goals and motives.

The first thought that comes to my mind, is that perhaps this idea is indicative of a deferential attitude toward the universe; as an indication that the Navaho do not feel all-powerful or all-knowing, but recognize that

there is much that they do not know and perhaps never will know. I expect that this would have some connection with behavior. Perhaps it could be connected with an un-authoritarian, rather light-hearted approach to life. Certainly I would not expect one who admittedly did not know all the answers to be the type given to ordering others around, and behaving in an authoritarian manner.

If this is so, then one would expect some connection with the political structure. I would think that a people who are not authoritarian would not have a well organized political hierarchy. This, of course, seems to be the case; the Navaho are not given to a strong centralized political system. But whether there is a connection between this political system and their perception of the universe as incomplete is debatable.

At any rate, these are the types of questions that must be answered, and this is the type of study that must be done before any real conception of the idea system comes into focus. This is the type of study that must be done in order to get at primitive thought, and this is the type of work that seems to have been avoided.

The problem, and what it entails, has been recognized by a good many writers, but apparently, the problem is more easily recognized than solved.

James Feibleman is one who certainly recognizes the

scope of the problem and its importance, but seems to avoid
the problem of uncovering concrete thoughts. Yet, he is well
aware that the ideas systems, the way of looking at the world,
is imbedded in language.

One quote demonstrating the point is the following:

"Language touches culture at every point
through other institutions. At the bottom,
transportation could almost dispense with
it and at the tip, theology finds it in-
adequate for the expression of the re-
ligious experience. But between these
extremes, it permeates everywhere. For
instance, in science, language is required
for expression and record and even for
thought. In addition to being necessary
to these procedures, language itself con-
tains philosophies. The accepted dominent
ontology of a culture is to be found im-
bedded in its language, and its myths are
almost inseparable from it. Unfortunately,
it is too often the highest expressions
of a culture which prove the most per-
ishable. Abstract ideas and esthetic
feelings must cease to exist unless they
can perpetuate themselves in some way or
other, and this they do not always suc-
ceed in doing."[189] p. 107.

From this one can see that Feibleman recognizes that thought
and language are inextricably bound up together, yet recog-
nizing this, he still makes no attempt to reach thought
through language.

When he analyzes Hopi culture he begins by attempt-
ing to comprehend culture through what is observable,[190]

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[189]James Feibleman, The Theory of Human Culture
(New York: Sloan and Pearce, 1946), p. 107.

[190]Ibid., p. 203.

which is the wrong approach according to Sapir. Sapir's
contention seems to be illustrated in Feibleman's work be-
cause Feibleman does a very poor job of analyzing Hopi
culture. In fact, in his description, there is not one
mention of an idea. In other words, Feibleman tries to
describe Hopi culture while overlooking what is perhaps the
most important part of a culture -- its idea system. Small
wonder that his description is inadequate.

Though his analysis of Hopi culture is superficial
and unrevealing, he uses the linquistic approach in analyz-
ing Mayan thought, and his results, I think, are much
better. At least, he is able to characterize their thought.
A sample of what he does is contained in the following para-
graph:

> "The most significant property of the Mayan
> language is the sharp distinction it makes
> between universal and particular, in both
> nouns and verbs. The distinction is so
> clear in Mayan, that it can only indicate
> the presence of a mental attitude as
> Gates says, or, we should say, the out-
> line of an implicit ontology. In Mayan
> the root stands for possibility, for a
> word in the logical order of being. The
> tl ending gives the root syntactical con-
> nections, that is to say, places it in
> actuality, connects it with other items
> in the flowing process of existence. In
> process, the word stands for an actual
> thing and characterizes a particular;
> otherwise, outside use, the word is a
> universal and is clearly intended as such.

To be and to function are not the same
thing; all being is capable of function-
ing, and all functioning things have
their being. But there is more to being
at any time than there is to functioning.
Mayan recognizes this fact. What is true
for nouns is also true for adjectives.
In the adjective, the -il ending denotes
abstract quality. As Gates puts it,

'every word is conceived of as standing
in its own potential only, until it
comes forth into the world of activity
to be connected with and affecting some
object, by its use or operation.'

Gates notes that for the Mayan language,
words are Ideas, in the realistic sense
in which Plato understood them; real
possibilities. The Mayan evidently was
a metaphysical realist, in that he be-
lieved in the being of a realm of
universals, powers capable of acting
ans suffering action but real when
only possible.

The emphasis quite logically led Mayan
away from subjectivism, for the realist
must objectify everything."[191] p. 196.

Whether all of what Feibleman has to say in this

regard is true or not I cannot verify, but it is amazing,

nevertheless, that by utilizing a linguistic approach he

can make some sort of an attempt to determine what they

thought, or if not specifically what they thought, at least

how they thought about it.

The Maya, we should remember, are an extinct tribe

of which only a few articles of archeological significance

remain, and also a few texts. That someone could even

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[191]Ibid., p. 196.

attempt to discover what the Mayan thought attest in my opinion to the power and possibilities which the linguistic method offers if only it can be utilized properly. It would seem that one can do much more with this than by any observation of the facts alone. This is brought forth in the work of Dorothy Lee. Lee never saw the Trobriand Islands, as far as I know, although she did talk to several ethnographers. Her information was taken mainly from the work of Malinowski, and with this information, in addition to some knowledge of Trobriand grammar, she throws a whole new light onto Trobriand thought. Perhaps she knows more about this one area of their thought than Maninowski himself.

At any rate, Lee's type of study is the type that needs to be done and the type which has not been done. It is the type of study which can hardly be attempted by anyone except one who is an expert in the field.

To attempt such a study presupposes a knowledge of a primitive language, and as one might imagine, this is relatively difficult to obtain. A primitive language is one which is mastered only after several years of intensive study, for the difficulties involved in such a study are tremendous; the most paramount being the lack of any study aids and organized texts, and also tremendous difference in syntax, grammar, and vocabulary. Moreover, the linguistic technique involves an element of intuition. As Lee expresses

it, language gives only a clue but in order to benefit from these clues offered in language one must use some insight as well.

To attempt to apply such a technique is almost impossible for one in my position, and yet I attempted to, and, if I might say, with some success. I was severely handicapped in this attempt by not knowing the language and so my source of material was limited to those linguistic references which the anthropologist threw in, often as not, purely by accident.

For the sake of expediency, I will not give a detailed report covering all the time I spent looking through dictionaries and descriptions of primitive languages, nor will I give a resume of all the ideas I had which did not prove worthwhile.

There are only two ideas of all those I "played around with" that are worth mentioning at all. A few of the others may have had something to them, but I could not get enough information to substantiate them. The best idea I had, which concerned the linguistic approach, involves Zuni ideas concerning Totemism. Basically, I think it can be demonstrated that Zuni Totemic ideas involve a different classification of experience. Bunzel states that the Zuni have thirteen matrilineal clans which vary in size; "from the Yellowwood, consisting of two male members to the large

so-called Dogwood clan, which comprises several hundreds
of individuals. All but two of these clans are named for
plants, but two, the Antelope and the Bear, are named for
animals."[192]

In order to make my next point clearer, let me state
that we place animals and plants and men in different
categories, and this system of classification might be
represented in the following way:

Men   / Animals   / Plants   / Inanimate Objects/
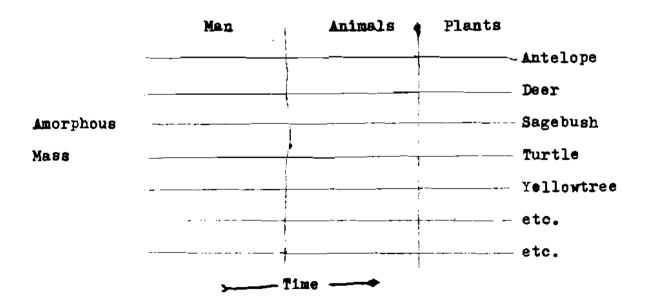   primarily stones, etc.

Of course, we are capable of classifying these things
in other ways, but in a general sort of way, this is the
type of classification to which we are prone. Our scientific
classifications bear witness to this. Our science separates,
first of all, animate objects from inanimate objects; the
science of the former is geology and the latter, biology.
Biology is further broken down into the study of botany,
and zoology. And zoology further divided into vertebrate,
and invertebrate zoology, and so on down the line.

Now the Zuni I am sure would recognize this class-
ification; they would recognize that a bear is different
from a man, but they would superimpose another classifica-
tion over this one in which some men would be classified
with bears, and others with antelopes, etc.

Like a good many other North American cultures, the

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[192]Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American
Ethnology, 1929-1930., (Washington, D. C.: United States
Printing Office), p. 647.

Zuni origin myths state that in the beginning everything
was composed of the same undifferentiated stuff. Through
various incidents, which are recounted in great detail
mythically, the various animals, trees, plants, etc., be-
came differentiated from this amorphous mass. Though they
differed in form, different classes of men remained closely
attached in essence to different animals and objects. This
of course, is the basis upon which the present day clans are
constructed. In other words, the Zuni have another way of
classifying men such that mankind is separated into
divisions and each segment classified with some totemic
animal. Perhaps their way of classifying human beings might
be represented as follows:

This chart represents two different classifications. The verticle lines divide living things as we would, which is a manner of classification the Zuni also must recognize. The horizontal lines represent the classification of certain men with specific plants or animals to form the totemic clans. Here again is another case where common experience is broken up differently by different peoples. Where we see only animals, the Zuni see some animals as the brothers of men. Where we classify men according to social status, the Zuni do it according to the man's mythical relation to a certain animal. It is a different way of looking at the universe; it throws a whole different emphasis on human society. Those things we emphasize, they do not, and vice versa. To us such things as power, prestige, and wealth are of ultimate concern and we see human beings accordingly in terms of these factors. Our anthropologists living among a primitive society are always on the lookout for these things which are of significance to us. We overlook those things which are of significance to the primitive himself. To understand the Zuni, one would have to recognize that he distinguishes between realities differently than we and then works from there. Let us leave the Zuni.

I also devoted some study to the Dakota Sioux which proved valuable. In looking over material on the Sioux of North America, I discovered what I think is a more acourate

description of Wanka Takan, or the Sioux God by looking at
the way the Dakota themselves describe him Wanka Takan is
usually translated simply as God or Great Spirit by most
ethnographers, and from this translation the reader conjures
up in his mind something closely resembling his own con-
ception of God. Wakan Tanka is something vastly different,
however. By gathering up all the definitions of Wakan
Tanka as the Dakota themselves refer to him, I was able to
piece together the following description:

The great mysterious Wakan Tanka is a unity, a one,
but composed of four different personalities -- the Head
God, the Great Spirit, the Creator, and the Administrator,
and each of these is further divided into four different
segments.

The Head God is one, but composed of the sun, the
moon, the buffalo and the spirit.

The Great Spirit is one also, but composed of the
following four individuals -- the sky, the wind, the bear,
and the ghostly spirit.

The Creator also consists of four personalities to
be considered as a unit -- the earth, the female-like, the
four winds, and the spirit.

The Administrator is one again, but composed of
the rock, the winged, the whirlwind, and the potency.[193]

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[193]This description of Wakan Fanka was synthesized
by the scholar, from a variety of sources too numerous to
mention.

The most important thing about Wakan Tanka is that he is conceived of in personal terms, rather than group terms. Wakan Tanka did not think in terms of tribes, but rather in terms of an individual. Each individual, and particularly each man, must tap this universal force if his undertakings were to be successful. Without this power a man could not achieve success in the valued activities.

Thus the Sioux were not given to many group religious activities, where one man, a priest, or whoever, spoke for the Tribe or group as a whole, each man had to approach his God in his own way.

This conception of God is very congruent with the Sioux emphasis on individuality, independence, self assertiveness, and autonomy which they prized so much. Though this idea of Wakan Tanka may not be exactly accurate, I think this is a closer definition than the usual translations presented. If this is correct, it is additional evidence that through the linguistic approach one can arrive at a closer approximation of primitive thought.

The real significance of my study of the Sioux deity is that it led to an insight into the Sioux view of the self.

On several occasions I noticed that in prayers delivered to Wakan Tanka, the plea was not for power, or wealth, but for oneness with the universe. In the purification rite they brewed grass to "make the four-legged, the

wingeds, the star people of the heaven and all things as relatives."[194] And during the passing of the sacred pipe, the holy man cried, "O Wakan Tanka, grant that this young man may have relatives; that he may be one with the four winds, the four powers of the world, and the light of the dawn. May he understand his relationship with all the winged peoples of the air."[195] And still another time, during an initiation rite, "Our grandmother and mother! This young man wishes to become one with all things.[196] And Black Elk also expressed a similar theme when he said of praying to Wankan Tanka, "It helps us realize our oneness with all things, to know that all things are our relatives; and then on behalf of all things we pray to Wakan Tanka."[197] From these quotes, we can see that the Sioux individual wanted to feel intensely related to the universe in all its aspects. Again, there is a different classification of the universe in this respect, I believe. Where we stress the difference between ourselves and others, the Sioux stressed the relatedness. Where we wall ourselves off from nature, they saw it in themselves. While we like to stress our

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[194]John G. Nerhardt, Black Elk Speaks, Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux (New York: William Mouw and Oompany, 1932),p.

[195]Ibid., p.

[196]Ibid., p.

[197]B. Joseph Epes Brown, The Sacred Pipe, Black Elk's Account of Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux, ed. Joseph Epes Brown (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p.

differences, from the rest of the animal kingdom which is reflected in such egocentric ideas that we are superior and somehow different from the other animals, the Sioux thought of himself as related to and not at all different from other forms of life. This is indicated by the Sioux idea about God. Their god shows no more preference for humans than for other forms of life. Their god was truly a god over the whole universe and not just the God of men.

The difference is reflected in the attitude toward the use of physical resources. The Sioux killed only what was absolutely necessary and no more, and even then they felt rather guilty, so they had to propitiate the spirits of the dead animals. After all, they were brothers! The white man thinks of every other form of life as put here for his own use, and acts accordingly. One of his accomplishments in this country is the wild and wanton slaughter of the trees. This is very noticeable right here in the state of Maine. Another such achievement was the stripping of the Great Plains of over 300 million head of Buffalo in less than thirty years. No Sioux would have acted so.

What is the effect of this idea in terms of human relations? The first thing that comes to mind is that if the Sioux wished to be a part of every thing in the universe

would not this idea extend itself to human groups as well?
Would he not perhaps attempt to feel closely related to
human associations?

There is much evidence for this idea. In the "Ghost
Dance" of the 1860's the medicine man could say in praying
to Wanka Takan, "Behold me, for I represent the people"
and "I am the people".[198] Moreover, when a hunter brought
in game, he shared it willingly with everyone in camp.
There was no rule about this, he simply did it. To us, who
conceive of ourselves as primarily separate units, the
feeling of relatedness implicit in such an act is difficult
to imagine and our first reaction is to try to find some
ulterior motive for such openhandedness. As far as I can
find out there is no motive. Such altruism neither merited
greater prestige or power or even thanks for it was simply
part of one's natural inclination.

This feeling of relatedness was also expressed in
initiation ceremonies, in which a boy is told to develop
himself for the good of his people. From the time a child
is very small he is urged to give to others.

With bonds this close it is interesting to note that
the Sioux were also highly individualistic. Apparently, to
them, relatedness did not entail servitude or deference to
another. Unlike ourselves, to whom relatedness in a group

[198]Ibid., p.

and taking on the ideas and attitudes of the group to which
we belong, the Sioux were encouraged to be hightly in-
dividualistic. To them, belonging to a group did not en-
tail being under the thumb of that group. No man would ever
speak for another, nor was he entitled to command others.
If one felt like hunting in a certain area, no one was to
tell him differently.

The individual, almost without exception, did what
was required of him and more, but the incentive for this was
not threat of punishment or exterior force. One did what
was right because it was the "Wakan Way" or the holy way.
And the "Wakan Way" did not entail obeying the orders of
others. Upon this basis rested Sioux democracy. The Sioux
had chiefs, but their power was immunized. Certainly they
did not have the power to coerce others against their will.
These chiefs were generally chosen by popular vote of the
council, in which every man had his say

Perhaps in this individualistic feeling were the
seeds of destruction for the Sioux tribe. When the white
man came and encroached upon their land, the Sioux, in
general, could not organize effectively against them. Only
once was a chief able to get any large group of warriors
to obey his every command, and in that instance, Sitting
Bull, with the aid of Crazy Horse, soundly beat the white
man, but such instances were rare.

I tried unsuccessfully to extend this idea to include all
areas of Sioux thought. In this attempt I was hindered to
a great extent by a lack of material. There are few good
discussions of primitive language in existence, as you might
well believe. Dictionaries are the most common material
available. There are few books around which give any in-
dication of patterns of thought, such that the ontology or
Weltanschauung of a people is immediately evident. Even if
if were available, it would take an expert to interpret it
properly.

To conclude this is an example of the type of
thing I attempted; and while these two ideas only have come
to some fruition, there were several others which had to be
dismissed.

THE NEW SCHOOL

Though the members of the New School have not con-
tributed any complete analysis of any one tribe, they cer-
tainly have left their mark. They have made a very signifi-
cant contribution to the history of thought. My only
criticism is that they tend to "jump around" too much.
They give only a partial analysis of a tribe from one point
of view and then enter into a discussion of another tribe.
As a result they have not produced a single complete
analysis of any one tribe, though they have done an

excellent job of <u>partially</u> analyzing several. This I have
tried to indicate during the course of this work.

First of all, the people who I included in the "New
School" do not recognize themselves as a "school". Whorf
and Sapir do make periodic mention of each other, es-
pecially Whorf, who mentions Sapir in several places, but
this is the exception. In Carpenter's whole essay on Eskimo
art, there is only one other anthropologist mentioned, Franz
Boas, and he is mentioned only in passing.

In other words, they are a "school" only in my own
mind and in no other. Yet I am certain that they should be
classified together because their approach is a common one,
and the problems, objectives, and goals they hold in common
also. They, however, do not recognize the similarity, and
as a result, do not work together at all. One does not build
on the work of another in the way they should, but rather,
they all go off on their own little tangents, inventing their
own symbols, terminology, and problems, as they go along.
For example, Lee does not study what Whorf has done and
then add to it, nor does Carpenter make use of what Lee has
done as a basis for his own work. There is no growth; each
one starts from scratch without benefit of the experience of
the others. Their problems are similar yet one would never
know it. They could use a similar terminology, and yet

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they do not; in each case one must struggle with a whole
new vocabulary. In other words, these people do not recog-
nize the common bonds which unite them, and I shall enlarge
upon this theme presently.

Furthermore, there is another oversight which they
make and this one may be even more dangerous. These
sociologists of the "New School"; Malinowski, Lee, Kluckhohn,
Carpenter, Sapir, etc., see themselves as anthropologists
and do not see the connections which their study has to
philosophy or semantics. To determine the categories of
thought of a primitive tribe is, to me, fairly obviously as
much of a philosophical endeavor as a sociological one. It
is perhaps one of the primary concerns of semantics. Certain-
ly semanticists recognize the tyranny which words hold over
mental functions. They also know that imbedded in language
is a metaphysics. This is indicated in the following state-
ment by Korzybski who wrote:

> ".. . .a language, any language, has at its
> bottom certain metaphysics, which ascribe
> consciously or unconsciously, some sort of
> structure to this world. . . .
>
> We do not realize what tremendous power the
> structure of an habitual language has. It
> is not an exaggeration to say that it en-
> slaves us through the mechanism of semantic
> reactions and that the structure which a
> language exhibits and impressed upon us
> consciously, is automatically projected
> upon the world around us."[199]

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[199]Alfred Korzbski, <u>Science and Sanity</u> (New York:
The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing
Company, 1933), p. 90, 91.

In this paragraph, Korzybski almost paraphrases what Whorf has said in Language, Thought and Reality. As far as goals and approach are concerned, I would say that the "New School" is closer to a semantic point of view than the traditionan anthropoligical outlook. Semanticists seem to recognize this and use some of the material which these "New School" people have presented, yet the similarity is apparently unrecognized by the "New School". In this regard it is interesting to note that one of Whorf's articles on language was reprinted in Hayakawa's book, Language in Action, but no "New School" anthropologist even so much as refers to Hayakawa. This is significant, I believe, and indicative of a general feeling among anthropologists.

I noticed that these anthropologists did not include anything but anthropological material in their discussions, and taking my clue from them, I did the same thing.

This, I believe, was a mistake. Were I to do the whole thing over again I would begin by reading anthropology and philosophy and semantics in equal amounts. I think I would concentrate especially on the work of the logical positivists, for I have the feeling that what they are doing might be very significant as far as primitive thought is concerned. Such questions as "the meaning of meaning" are of prime concern, I believe.

This oversight on the part of the "New School" anthropologists may account for their not being able to penetrate still deeper into primitive thought systems.

One reason for lack of extension in "New School" to other areas is in the nature of study. To uncover <u>ontology</u> in language is one thing. The language itself may be able to give information concerning <u>how</u> one thinks, so that ideae concerning reality, time, space, and other things in which the "New School" shows special interest could be determined. But how would one go about the task of revealing social ideas, or ideas about man? Obviously, it would not be so eacy. These ideas are not so apt to be in the structure of a language, although structure would influence them. This is quite obvious.

However, if these "New School" people have done nothing else, they certainly have changed the outlook of the sociology of knowledge.

Whatever one may think to the contrary, they have really not discovered any <u>new</u> method in that their results are as much dependent upon insight and intuition as the former sociologists of knowledge. They have not discovered any new key to the discovery of primitive thought unless their linguistic approach be considered as such. To apply their approach, a knowledge of the language involved is

required, but even then a certain amount of guess work is necessary.

What they have changed is the whole object of the search. Very basically, where the older sociologists of knowledge were interested in the contents of thought, the "New School" is interested in the categories of thought. Perhaps a list would serve as well as anything to bring out the contrast.

OLD SCHOOL	NEW SCHOOL
1. emphasis on activities	emphasis on language
2. interest in direct ideas	interest in ideas inherent in language
3. explicit ideas	implicit ideas
4. specific ideas	categories of thought
5. thought in particular instances	premises upon which thought is based
6. what they say	how they say it
7. ideas of scholars	ideas of whole group
8. mainly political ideas	percepts which underlie all thoughts
9. ideas in terms of social experience	ideas as part of psychological pattern

From ideology to ontology, this is the story of the
sociology of knowledge.

There is still another destruction between the
older sociologists of knowledge and the "New School". It was
pointed out in Chapter I that the older sociologists of
knowledge attempted to superimpose their own frame of
reference upon the material -- the cultures studied. The
"New School" is not so inclined, but instead concentrates on
eliciting the philosophy or weltauschauung of the tribes
they study.

This does not mean that the "New School" simply
translates ideas of these primitives into English. More is
involved than this. For the most part these ideas are in-
articulated. Primitives have ideas of course, but they are
not necessarily stated as such. Moreover -- and this is a
point demonstrated in this last chapter -- ideas depend on
the language used; therefore it is impossible to directly
translate ideas from one language to another.

Perhaps even more important, people are often times
unaware of what they really think. This can be demonstrated
in a number of ways, but perhaps a reference to the whole
field of psychoanalysis would be most useful. When a patient
tells an analyist something, the analyist does not accept it
at face value, but interprets it in the light of what he
knows. Removed from a theoretical context, it means nothing.
The study of thought systems is similar to psychoanalysis
in this respect.

Like the psychoanalyist, the anthropologist must not simply accept face value statements, but must pass them through the prism of his own mind if the whole spectrum of primitive ideas, is to come clearly into focus. Clearly, some interprelation is necessary in order to understand primitive thought.

Interpretation is very necessary, but the type of interpretation is most significant. The "New School" does not simply fit primitive ideas to our own categories of thought. Instead it interprets such that the Weltanschauung of the primitives involved comes most clearly into focus. To do this, the invention of new categories is sometimes necessary. These categories are such that the primitives themselves would not recognize them as their own; never-theless, they best express the primitive point of view. It is with the discovery of such new categories that the "New School" concerns itself.

Another difference between the older sociologists of knowledge and the "New School" is their conception of the relationship between thought and behavior. The sociologists of knowledge were unanimous in their support of the idea that behavior was primary and thought systems stemmed from them. Their whole concern with ideology was just this. All of these sociologists from Marx onward thought that an ideology only reinforced, or justified, an already existing behavior pattern

The "New School" turns the whole scheme around, in-
sisting that the thought system as conceived through
language is primary and from this stems a pattern of be-
havior. Take the Hopi, for example. Whorf says their
language lumps wishing and becoming together, such that if
one wishes something, it will come into being. This forms
the basis of a whole ceremonial complex -- a pattern of
behavior.

Just recently several new social scientists have
taken up this idea and attempted to expand it. One such
author is Kenneth Boulding, who in his book, The Image,
states the idea in no uncertain terms. He says: "the
first proposition of this work, therefore, is that behavior
depends on the image."[200] To Boulding, idea and image are
almost the same.

The same emphasis can be seen in all of the "New
School" anthropologists.

There is still another difference between the older
sociologists of knowledge and the "New School". Where the
sociologists of knowledge were interested in specific thought
systems, the "New School" is concerned with the larger, more
inclusive presuppositions which lie behind whole cultural
systems. To use an example, the current ideological rift
between the Communist bloc countries and the so-called free
world would have been of great interest to a Marx or a
Mannheim. Yet to the "New School" there is no real difference

[200]Kenneth E. Boulding, The Image (Ann Arbor, Mich.:
University of Michigan Press, 1956) p. 6.

since both Capitalist and Communist share the same pre-
suppositions. Seen from this view they are just variations
on the same theme.

In a sense this more inclusive approach is not re-
stricted to only anthropology, for other fields have been
broadening as well, as Laura Thompson points out in
Toward a Science of Mankind. Such fields as ecology,
psychosematic medicine, social anthropology "are in a
transition period from old ways of thinking to new".[201]
Along with this change is a change in view of reality.

The "new view of reality tend to be holistic",
in that relatedness, connections, and a view of the whole
are emphasized rather than unrelated details.

Thompson states that the cause of these changes is
to be found in their relationship with modern science, and
although I don't really wish to delve into the subject at
this time, it must be admitted that there may be something
in the idea.

The sociologist of knowledge would go one step
further and look at these new developments in the history
of thought as products of social forces. He would ask, are
these new views of reality really more accurate objectively,
or do they stem from a more subjective need? What is it,
he would ask, in our culture that makes a more inclusive
approach necessary? Can we really be objective about anything?

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[201]Laura Thompson, Toward a Science of Mankind
(New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill Book Company,
Inc., 1961), p. 75

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ABSTRACT

The object of this paper was to explore the re-
lationships that exist between ideas and other elements
of the social systems of primitive peoples. Taking a
clue from sociologists of knowledge, who are especially
concerned with the problem of ideology, I began my ex-
ploration of primitive thought by searching for primitive
ideology. An ideology might be defined as a conscious
deliberate attempt by one group of people to take ad-
vantage of another group by the manipulation of ideas.
It soon became apparent that primitives had nothing com-
parable to ideology in this sense, save for perhaps the
Aztecs.

The question then was what did primitives have?
What kinds of ideas did they entertain? I then attempted
to get at these ideas through an analysis of myth. This
attempt was doomed to failure. The interpretation of myth
could be a very important and fruitful endeavor for an
expert, or one very familiar with the cultures involved.
Unfortunately it proved impossible for one in my position.

After surveying the work of anthropologists interested in thought, I discovered that the most successful were those that approached the problem linguistically.

Basic to this approach is the axiom that all higher thought is ultimately dependent on language. Thus through an analysis of language the basic presuppositions of a culture can be discovered. I applied this method to the Zuni and Sioux with some success, which resulted in a new view of their conception of the world. However, much of my work in anthropological linguistics did not work out. In these activities I was hindered by both unfamiliarity with the field and lack of material as much as anything else.

I was, however, able to come to the following conclusions:

1. Behavior is dependent upon ideas.

2. Discovery of underlying presuppositions is more significant and will lead to a better understanding of the whole social system than concern with the specific content or the overtly expressed ideas.

3. It is impossible to comprehend the thought system irrespective of the language involved.

4. Understanding of a primitive thought system will not be facilitated by superimposition of one's own categories of thought upon primitive ideas.

5. Ideas are an expression of social conditions.